New Approaches to Human Dignity in the Context of Qur’ānic Anthropology
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The Quest for Humanity

Edited by
Rüdiger Braun and Hüseyin I. Çiçek

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................. vii

Chapter One .......................................................................................................................... 1
Dynamics of Theological Anthropology in Islamic Contexts:
An Introduction
Rüdiger Braun (Erlangen)

Section I: Jewish and Religious Studies

Grammars – The Specificity of the Qurʾānic Discourse

Chapter Two ......................................................................................................................... 42
The Deconstruction of the Adam and Eve Narrative in Bereshit Rabbah:
Variations on the Significance of the Name ‘Adam’, the Image of God
and the Fall and Redemption of Man(kind) in Jewish Late Antiquity
Matthias Morgenstern (Tübingen)

Chapter Three ...................................................................................................................... 61
Trialogical Anthropology: The Qurʾān on Adam and Iblīs in View
of Rabbinic and Christian Discourse
Holger Zellentin (Nottingham)

Chapter Four ....................................................................................................................... 132
If God is King, is Man his Vicegerent? Considering ḫalīfah in regard
to Ancient Kingship
Ruben Schenzle (Berlin)

Chapter Five ......................................................................................................................... 149
The Transformation of Mythical, Biblical and Apocryphal Narrations
in the Qurʾān: A Mimetic Approach
Hüseyin I. Çiçek (Erlangen)
Section II: Literary Studies and Exegesis

Translations – Perspectives of Interpretation

Chapter Six ................................................................. 164
Anthropology and the Religious Dynamics of Mythologising: Remarks on Various Interpretations of the Adam Myth in Monotheistic Traditions
Cengiz Batuk (Samsun)

Chapter Seven ............................................................ 179
Reasoning Humanity: Toward a Contextual Reading of the Qur’anic Anthropology
Rüdiger Braun (Erlangen)

Chapter Eight ............................................................ 221
From the Rational Term of ‘Being’ to the Theologico-Ethical Idea of Selfhood
Muhammad Nekroumi (Erlangen)

Section III: Islamic Philosophy/Ethics and Law

Hermeneutics – Secular Universalism and Religious Legitimacy

Chapter Nine ............................................................ 238
Time and Historicity of Man in the Context of His Divine Destiny: Reflections on Qur’anic Anthropology and Alterity in the Perspective of Modern Hermeneutics
Burhanettin Tatar (Samsun)

Chapter Ten ............................................................. 250
Islam, the Enlightenment and the Justification of Human Dignity
Mehmet Sait Reçber (Ankara)

Chapter Eleven .......................................................... 260
Human Dignity and the Creativeness of Muslim Fiqh: Reflections on Classical and Contemporary Muslim Approaches to the Challenges of Equality between Human Beings
Mouez Khalfaoui (Tübingen)

Contributors ................................................................. 278
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This volume owes its genesis to a symposium on “Approaches to the notions of dignity and deficiency in the context of Qurʾānic anthropology” held in September 2015 at the Chair for the Study of Religions at the University of Erlangen (FAU). Twelve Muslim and non-Muslim scholars accepted our invitation to present and discuss their respective contributions on Islamic theological anthropology, and entered into a series of vigorous and memorable debates and discussions concerning the different hermeneutical and systematic-ethical perspectives regarding the concepts of human dignity and deficiency in the context of Qurʾānic anthropology.

Their presentations on Qurʾānic and Islamic theological anthropology exhibited quite divergent views concerning this issue and bore witness to the diverse referential and multiperspective nature of the anthropology of the Qurʾān, which deserves to be continually rediscovered. As a contribution to this rediscovery, the present volume contains three sections (grammars, translations, hermeneutics), which differ considerably in length, structure and methodological approach but give a vivid testimony to the significance and complexity of theological issues relating to man and his dignity in the context of Qurʾānic anthropology. We hope that this volume will stimulate further contributions to this fascinating field.

As the editors of this volume, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all collaborators for their contributions – not only to the abovementioned symposium but also to this volume. We would also like to acknowledge the generous financial support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), and (especially with regard to the symposium itself) by the Dr. German Schweiger Foundation of the University of Erlangen. Without this support the symposium could not have taken place and this volume could not have been published.

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The Editors
February 2017
CHAPTER ONE

DYNAMICS OF THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN ISLAMIC CONTEXTS: AN INTRODUCTION

RÜDIGER BRAUN

The ambivalence of human nature and theological anthropology

“If nobody asks me about it, I know it, but if I should tell it to someone who asks me, I do not know.”1

Saint Augustine’s famous ‘confession’ on the nature of time may also be valid for the question of the essence of human nature. It is a question in which the basic philosophic questions of metaphysics, ethics and politics, or, as Kant said, of what we should know, do and hope, seem to culminate.2 Aristotle was less reserved than Augustine and described a

2 “Metaphysics answers the first question; morality the second, religion the third and anthropology the fourth. Basically, however, all this could be reckoned with as anthropology, since the first three questions refer to the last”, Immanuel Kant,