

Science and Muslim Societies

Nasim Butt

Grey Seal London

First published 1991 by *Grey Seal Books*
28 Burgoyne Road, London N4 1AD, England

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication

Butt, Nasim

Science and Muslim societies.- (Contemporary Islam)

I. Title II. Series

297.1975

ISBN 1-85640-023-9

The author Nasim Butt is Head of Science at King Fahad Academy, London, and Educational Consultant for Science to the Iqra Trust. After earning the BSc in food science and technology, Butt moved to the history and philosophy of science for his MSc at University College, London. He then obtained the PGCE so that he could teach in British schools, before beginning a part-time PhD course at the University of London's Institute of Education. He has combined the teaching of chemistry and general science to secondary school students through A-level with religious studies (Islam), and during the past few years has concentrated in his research and writing on the impact of the British science national curriculum for Muslim students and teachers.

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Preface

The central aim of this book is to popularize the concept of Islamic science and impart a general awareness of its ethical parameters and conceptual matrix. Along the way, some of the glorious aspects of the history of Islamic science are highlighted, and science education is discussed in the context of the British National Curriculum.

Much of the ideas developed in the last chapter on science education will also be applicable to the colleges and universities of the Muslim world. The educational system there has bifurcated into the religious and the secular, a division encouraged by the government of those countries. Secular education, of course, has the greater influence on students because it is practised most of the time. In essence, Islam has been marginalized from science education, rather than being the central plank on which science rests and from which it draws its continuous inspiration.

A final word of thanks to Ziauddin Sardar who encouraged me, and to my wife and daughter who allowed me to write this book. Any errors which remain, of course, factual or otherwise, are solely mine. May Allah grant me the strength and perseverance to continue to produce work for His sake only.

This book shows how the introduction of the Islamic holistic ethic into science can benefit both Muslim and non-Muslim alike. The author traces the roots of modern science; examines the scientific methods of, among others, Bacon, Popper, Kuhn, Polanyi, Marx and Ravetz; looks at the differences between Western and Islamic science; and discusses the social and political dimensions of science. He identifies new developments, such as those in medicine and biotechnology, where value-judgements must be made and where for Muslims an Islamic scientific input is essential. He considers the educational issues that constantly crop up in modern science education and shows how they may be dealt with Islamically. He demonstrates how science in the classroom may be humanized and how religion may be integrated into the science curriculum.

For teachers, educators and all those concerned about the ethics of science in modern life.

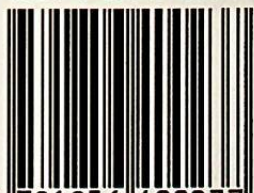
Nasim Butt is Head of Science, King Fahad Academy, London.

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