

## 13<sup>th</sup> MUSLIM INTERNATIONAL FORUM

‘Quranic Humanism  
and Global Problems of Modernity:  
Strategies and Solutions’

Helsinki, December 10–12, 2017



## XIII KANSAINVÄLINEN ISLAMILAINEN FOORUMI

“Koraanin humanismi ja  
nykypäivän globaalit ongelmat:  
strategioita ja ratkaisuja”

Helsinki, 10–12 joulukuuta, 2017

### XIII МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ МУСУЛЬМАНСКИЙ ФОРУМ

«Коранический гуманизм и глобальные проблемы современности: стратегии и решения»

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### INFORMATIONAL LETTER

The organizers of the Forum are the Secretariat of the Muslim International Forum, the Religious Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation, the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey, the International Union of Muslim Scholars, the World Assembly on the approximation of the Islamic schools of thought, the Union of Islamic Organizations of Finland with the participation of the Grand Mosque of Helsinki.

The forum is to be attended by the heads and representatives of international religious organizations, leading scholars of scientific organizations and educational institutions, representatives of the authorities and public organizations from Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Southeast Asia and North America.

Muslim International Forum brings together all progressive forces of the Islamic world on the basis of the integrated concept of Quranic humanism, which allows to find the way to the transformation of Islam in the modern world within the framework of a creative compromise between tradition and modernity. Quranic humanism gets back to the original meaning of the word ‘humanism’, namely, it thinks over the being of man through man’s vicegerency on Earth (2:30). The classic humanism of the Enlightenment, which had been conceived as a project to open up man’s intellectual forces, entailed contradictory outcomes that we can unequivocally observe today: on the one hand, the success of science, technology and universal emancipation is obvious; on the other hand, all these achievements turn out into a crisis of the devaluation of traditional values. Moreover, among the costs of the Enlightenment project we see moral degradation, absolutization of subjectivity,

identity crisis, (post)-colonialism, environmental problems and other manifestations of what philosophy calls 'European nihilism'.

The Quranic concept of humanism offers an alternative to the exhausted Enlightenment project. This concept involves the preservation of the best of what has been achieved by the above-mentioned project. However, this success is to be put on a right conceptual footing. This framework enables us not only to preserve the achievements, but also to enrich them with new content based on the consolidation of the fundamental Quranic guidelines relating to the foundations of human existence.

Firstly, it is the belief in the initial orthodoxy of human nature, *fitrah*, according to which every person is born orthodox and this nature of his always remains unchanging at the deepest level regardless of the destructive impact of society.

Secondly, Quranic humanism rests upon the idea of the vicegeral mission of man on earth: man is given the knowledge of the names of all things. And he is above even angels, who bowed to him (2:34).

Thirdly, this concept acknowledges the key position, according to which God created man in His own image. One of the hadith says: *God created Adam in His image* (Muslim 4731). And there is another hadith: *do not mutilate faces [of people], for the son of Adam is in the form of the Gracious* (Al-Shaibani).

Fourth, Quranic humanism teaches us to trust reason and apply general instruction to specific socio-cultural conditions. The Lord constantly calls upon us in the Quran: '*think*', '*watch*', '*understand*', etc. Moreover, the signs, ayahs, are not only presented in the Book, but also in the world, and in man himself: *We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their ownselves* (41:53). The credibility of intelligence is a necessary condition for the development of Islamic thought, philosophy and science. Rationalism, the desire to rely on rational arguments, is a prerequisite for an integrated, comprehensive understanding of the Word of the Lord.

Today the building of a new foundation for the Enlightenment project that will have a genuine metaphysical and spiritual meaning is more necessary than ever. Quranic humanism *is* such a foundation, it teaches brotherhood and diversity of humanity, sublime understanding of human nature and the credibility of the mind abiding in faith. These and other ideas are justified not in a speculative way, but through the Word of God. At the same time, the ideas of Quranic humanism are universal, they can be applied in a variety of contexts. This creativity has a particular relevance today, when intellectual activity should keep up with the rapidly changing world and maintain its focus on the timeless.

## **The messages of the 13<sup>th</sup> Muslim International Forum**

- 1) Islam and modernity: the problems of mutual influence and adaptation.
- 2) Islam and the challenges of globalization (multy-religiousness, multi-culturalism, etc.).
- 3) The future of Islam: between Quranic humanism and radicalism.
- 4) Reformatory movement and renewal in Islam.
- 5) Deconstruction of tradition, 'Critique of Islamic Reason'.
- 6) Critical analysis of the phenomenon of hadith-centrism and religion.
- 7) Fiqh in modern and postmodern philosophy.
- 8) The fundamentals of Fiqh and Western legal theories: the search for convergence.
- 9) Islam and scientific rationality: correlation problem.
- 10) Islamic philosophy: past, present and future.
- 11) Islamic philosophy in the context of the major global philosophic trends.
- 12) Islamic philosophy of religion.
- 13) Islam and interfaith dialogue.
- 14) The concept of inclusiveness of the divine mercy, its relevance in the modern world.
- 15) Political dimension of Islam: the problem of the Islamic state (caliphate) and disunity of Ummah.
- 16) The problem of sex and gender identity.
- 17) Legitimization of art in legal and theological perspective of Islam: the problem of iconicity, mimesis and creative imagination.
- 18) Radicalization as a reaction to colonialism and Eurocentrism: overcoming the challenge and understanding its consequences.
- 19) The forms of Islam in the modern West: integral traditionalism, Euro-Islam, Salafism.
- 20) The role of academic Islamic studies in shaping the discourse of Islam.

## **Panel discussions of the 13<sup>th</sup> International Islamic Forum:**

1. Quranic humanism and global problems.
2. The crisis of traditional values and ways to overcome it.
3. Quranic humanism as an integrated program of Islamic renewal.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Muslim International Forum is believed to be constitutive and action-oriented. The result of its work would be the creation of the foundation for the regular functioning of its prospective units (such as the Awards Committee, Expert Think-Tank Center, Human Rights Center, Center for Translation and Research, and others). They are believed to become an intellectual and practical center of Islamic renewal.

The Forum will be held in several formats. In addition to the constituent meetings, a series of reports will be presented followed by a Q&A session with the speakers. The presentation of printed and media materials of the participants is planned within the scope of the Forum.

**Working languages: Arabic, English, Finnish, Russian.**

Following the Forum, the outcome materials will be published in the official multilingual editions of the Muslim International Forum: Forum's website, the quarterly international Muslim journal *The Minaret of Islam* and the almanac of the Forum.

### **Conditions for participation**

To participate in the Forum and present a paper, one should fill in the registration form on the official website of the Muslim International Forum and send the theses of the paper until December, 7 to the e-mail **muslimforum@outlook.com** as a MS Word file.

*The Organizing Committee of the 13<sup>th</sup> Muslim International Forum*