

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

3



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The Qur'an and the Sunnah: The Time-Space Factor

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE of ISLAMIC THOUGHT

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The *Occasional Papers* Series

The publication program of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) has already addressed important issues in the field of Islamic thought and the Islamization of knowledge. In this respect a number of books have already appeared in several languages under eleven main series: *Dissertations*; *Human Development*; *Islamic Methodology*; *Islamization of Culture*; *Islamization of Knowledge*; *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*; *Lectures*; *Occasional Papers*; *Perspectives on Islamic Thought*; *Research Monographs*; and *Studies in the Islamization of Knowledge*.

The *Occasional Papers* series, published by the Institute's London Office, covers a number of research papers, articles, and lectures from the Institute's world-wide program as well as from Muslim scholars willing to make contributions. These are presented individually in the form of booklets that can be easily read or referred to. It is hoped that the booklets will reach students, scholars, and specialists as well as major sections of the world's Muslims alike in order to generate a fruitful debate on the vital issue of Islamization, to create an awareness of the intellectual crisis in its various shapes and forms, and to encourage an active role in the proposed course of action and solution. This series is also translated into other languages.

The third work in this series, *The Qur'an and the Sunnah: The Time-Space Factor* includes three papers originally written in Arabic—"The Qur'an: The Primary Source of Knowledge"; "Toward a Proper Reading of the Sunnah", which is an adaptation of Dr al 'Alwāni's introduction to Dr Yūsūf al Qaraḍāwi's *Kayfa Nata'āmal Ma'a al Sunnah al Nabawiyyah* (Methods of Understanding the Sunnah) and "The Qur'an and Modern Science: Observations on Methodology". A different English edition of the latter appeared in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 1991. The English editions of the three papers were prepared by the Department of Translation/IIIT. We also acknowledge the contribution of Huda Khatab and Yusuf Budd.

The use of Islamic terminology in transliteration is a policy of the IIIT. Some of the terms used are untranslatable, while others are so

important that the Institute felt that familiarity with them is necessary for a better understanding of Islamic issues. These terms have been endnoted once or sometimes explained briefly between brackets. All those which have not yet been accepted in English dictionaries are in italic. As many of these occur more than once, the readers are advised to refer to the endnotes whenever necessary. Moreover word emphasis in bold is the initiative of the editors.

The translation of the Qur'an used in this series is that of Yusuf Ali (Amana Corporation, revised, 1989). However we made changes to it whenever we deemed it necessary for the sake of elucidation and precision of meaning.

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ON THIS BOOK

For too long now, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, great sources of strength, purity, knowledge and inspiration for the Ummah, have not been adequately tapped. Skirting their peripheries or overdwelling on one or two of their multifarious facets and tributaries has done a disservice to the immense potential of the fountain-head, while denying the Ummah—indeed the whole world—innumerable benefits from them.

Now that the Ummah is increasingly becoming aware of its own problems as well as latent powers, and yearns to revive its leading role in the forging of history and civilization, the issue of drawing on the well-spring becomes more relevant and urgent. Revisiting these two sources is no longer a scholastic, academic, nostalgic, or escapist indulgence, but a great journey of discovery that promises untold rewards.

Paradoxically, the journey through the resplendent pages of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to a time and place in the past should yield a more mature awareness of the dynamics of social and historical change and of man's role on earth, honing and sharpening the Muslims' capacity to deal with the demands of the present moment and the challenges of the future.

Suggestions for a new reading of the Qur'an and the Sunnah have been put forward from Islamic and other angles in the recent years. In this book Dr al 'Alwani and Dr Khalil, two well-known Muslim thinkers, contribute their views for a proper approach to these sources **from within** the Islamic framework.

