

PRESENTING ISLAM IN THE CONFUCIAN CONTEXT: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF A CHINESE MUSLIM TRACT

*Ayesha Qurrat Ul Ain**

Abstract

This piece of research is meant to investigate the interrelationship of Islam and Confucianism in the history of Chinese Muslims concentrating upon the textual analysis of a Chinese Muslim tract written during Ming dynasty. We suggest that the Muslims enacted the Islamic principle of 'picking up the appropriate and shunning the improper'; thus they adopted and inculcated the Confucian ethical teachings and social values compatible to Islamic tradition into their intellectual framework and stayed isolated from the rituals contrary to the Islamic practices. By adopting this strategy they intelligently propagated the word of Islam among the Confucian audience emphasizing the ethical aspect of their tradition thus enacting the Quranic principle of doing Dawah by calling towards a common word. The analysis of the Chinese Muslim tract known as Qingzhen Jiao Shu will reveal the patterns of Chinese Muslim thought and divulge the tactics the Chinese Muslim authors adopted while presenting Islam to a Confucian majority culture.

Keywords: *Islam in China; Islam and Confucianism; Islamic and Confucian Ethics; Harmony; Reconciliation*

Introduction

Islam had been introduced to China since 8th century A.D, to accept the historically authentic claims and it was followed by the emergence of Muslim communities in various regions of China particularly in Southern and Northern parts (Chang, 1987). Each Muslim community evolved in different circumstances and exhibited unique behaviors towards their host culture and society (Dillon, 2013; Gladney, 2003; Mi, 2004). When Islam

* Presently serves as Assistant Professor, Department of Comparative Religion, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

stepped into the Chinese lands, there were three traditions constituting the religious framework of Chinese society i.e. Confucianism¹, Daoism² and Buddhism. Confucianism and Daoism together smeared the panorama of Chinese religious life since ancient times as Confucianism provided the doctrinal grounds and intellectual foundations to the religious activities of imperial China and Daoism served as institutionalized religion by conducting ceremonies and performing rituals. These rituals were justified by Confucian ideology indeed. For example, the idea of emperor being the son of heaven was a Confucian endowment to Chinese cosmology whereas all the rituals performed at the temple of Heaven were conducted by Daoist priests. Similarly, filial piety was a primal Confucian virtue but all the death rites and ancestral worshipping rituals, complimentary to filial piety, were the expertise of Daoist priests.³ So, although seemingly contradictory both of these were crucial to the Chinese common people and elite. Many historians state that during the Medieval period of Chinese history, the elite were Confucian in the day and Daoist at night. Smith very rightly postulated, "Traditionally, every Chinese was Confucian in ethics and public life, Taoist in private life and hygiene, and Buddhist at time of death, with a healthy dash of shamanistic folk religion thrown in along the way. (189)" It is significant to understand for a western reader that Chinese religious traditions are not exclusive at all rather they not only coexist but also complement each other. Interestingly there is no word in Chinese language both traditional and modern to convey the nuance of the term 'religion' at all so for them such a defined entity or system is non-existent at all. They employ the word "Jiao" i.e. teaching for legacy of an intellectual or a saint. And in this way they are and have been syncretic and eclectic in their daily lives choosing between the teachings of saints and sages on the basis of whatever they needed or liked. To be succinct, Daoism and Confucianism are opposite yet complementary to each other in Chinese society exactly the way Yin and Yang act in Chinese cosmology(Reid, 1917).

As far as Islam and Daoism are concerned, they have never been engaged in an intellectual barter in the history of China. Neither Islam had to interact much with Daoist philosophy under the historical strain in China unlike the way it had to do with Confucian ideology, the essential constituent of Chinese imperial mindset, nor did Daoism find any affinity for Islam. So, we find

¹ Although Confucianism does not fall into the category of Western archetype of religion and the term itself is not native rather coined by Christian missionaries yet since the modern scholarship is habitually dependent upon its frequent usage, it is retained here as it is.

² Daoism is the Chinese tradition attributed to its legendary founder Lao Tzu from 5th century B.C.E. Daoism in China is understood in two distinct ways i.e. religious Daoism and philosophical Daoism. Here our allusion is towards religious Daoism.

³ This statement does not mean that ancestral worship emerged as a result of Confucian notion of filial piety as these rites were part of Chinese folk religion even before Confucius, it is just meant to show the way Confucianism and Daoism supported each other and intermingled in the lives of Chinese folks.

nothing noteworthy in this context in the history of Muslims or in the writings of contemporary scholars who are engaged with the studies of Islam and Chinese religions today. Leslie (1998) clearly postulates that he finds it hard for Islam to accommodate with Daoism unlike Confucianism. Being a monotheistic religion, it was hard for Islam to reconcile with Daoism particularly when there was no social constraint upon the Muslims to do so. On the other hand, Confucianism with its foundations upon ethics and morality was logically akin to Islamic ethics therefore this research is devoted to explore the nature of interaction between Confucianism and Islam. In order to understand the kind and extent of contact between Confucianism and Islam, it is necessary to be aware of the integral role the former played in Chinese society. Unlike Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Confucianism was not a religion initiated at the hands of Confucius rather he only served to compile the 'way of ancient' for the Chinese generations to come. So, 'Confucianism' can be better understood as 'more a tradition generally rooted in Chinese culture and nurtured by Confucius and Confucians rather than a new religion created, or a new value system initiated, by Confucius himself alone.' (Yao, 2000) When one talks of Confucianism, one implicitly refers to the Chinese way of thinking, their cultural values and their social principles. This is the reason that Confucian ideology has been the essential tool as well as a standard for the integration and sinicization of the non-Chinese minorities in China (Weiliang, 1989). Chinese society based upon the concepts of filial piety and loyalty to the son of heaven was primarily Confucian and these ideas were further reinforced through the teaching of Confucian Classics in order to pass the imperial examination. Williams (1916) has rightly observed that, "Confucianism profoundly influences the life of every individual in China. As a child the Chinese is taught to bow reverently to the tablet of the sage when he enters and leaves the schoolroom. The sacred scriptures edited by Confucius are the text-books given him to study, and these he learns by heart. (273)" So, Confucianism since birth used to become the integral part of life in Chinese civilization. It has never been an institutionalized religion and its influence was not limited to a particular segment or sphere of Chinese world order rather it wrapped and colored all the walks of social life. And whosoever desired to sustain in Chinese social order, had to adapt to the Confucian thinking and values necessarily. This is what happened to Muslims as well upon their settlement in China; they could not escape the overwhelming influence of Confucianism and absorbed many of its characteristics and values thus unconsciously transforming their self from a foreign Muslim to Hui in China.

The relationship between Islam and Confucianism has been studied by various scholars belonging to different orientations. Leslie (1986) declared Islam and Confucianism to be reconciliatory and corresponding to each other. He seems to have the social and moral aspects of Islam in mind which emphasize the same moral values and ethical principles as Confucianism

does so both may happily coexist. Israeli (1977), on the contrary found both of these systems to be totally incompatible and contradictory as his primary concern was the social hierarchy and political system generated by the Confucian elite. This hierarchy and social order combining the elements from Chinese folk religion and Daoism spared no accommodation for a monotheistic and exclusive religion like Islam as far as Israeli could grasp. Zvi Ben-DorBenite (2005) reconciled the Chinese and Muslim cultures studying the unique instance of religious literature produced by Chinese Muslim authors and declaring that this authorship serves to locate Muslims 'at the overlapping center of a sort of Venn diagram one that shows two imagined spaces, "Islam" and "China", and their point of intersection'. Gladney (2003) concludes that the accommodation of Islam in Confucian society is a matter of great diversity and thus restrains one from a definite statement rendering the process as sinification or assimilation rather it is a continuous dialectic process taking different shapes in different communities of Chinese Muslims. Lipman (1997) proposes that Muslims as ethnic minority in China have challenged the transforming power of Chinese civilization and have stubbornly retained their essential cultural traits. His assumption tells half the truth as it is evident in their history that Muslims did retain their essential Islamic traits but they could not totally resist the transforming power of Chinese culture. Counterbalancing his point of view, Petersen (2006) very rightly holds that the interaction of Islam and Confucianism has been a historical interrelationship instead of a syncretism. He abrogates the stereotype that Muslim integration into Confucian society is a logical consequence of their abandoning of Islamic way of life. We hereby have adopted a novel approach of studying the Chinese Muslim literature instead of historiography as the Chinese Muslim authors themselves admit that such a literature has played a pivotal role in conservation of Islamic culture in Confucian China (Jianchu Xu, 2005). Ma Tianbo and Ma Jianfo (2006) postulated that the Muslims in China started recognizing the need of educational and cultural integration in China during late Yuan and this cultural consciousness resulted into the emergence of such pieces of writing which referred to the dual identity of Chinese Muslims. The analysis of Chinese Muslim tract known as *Qingzhen Jiao Shu* will reveal the patterns of Chinese Muslim thought and divulge the sources of inspiration the Chinese Muslim authors hailed from while writing in a Confucian majority culture.

Analysis of *Qing Zhen Jiao Shu* (the Muslim Tract)⁴

This treatise has been chosen as a specimen of Chinese Muslim literature which is in circulation within the Chinese Muslim community. Not

⁴ The whole text can be seen from *Islam in China* (Broomhall, 1910)

the whole tract is being given here but some of the excerpts are quoted with the purpose to analyze the affinity developed by Chinese Muslim authors towards Confucian values and ethics and consequently how they managed to present Islam in a Confucian context. Before venturing into the textual analysis of the tract, it would be better to shed light on the significance of such tracts as they were written by eminent Hui scholars in various parts of China during the Ming age. The lexicon of the discourse indicates that the piece had been written during the late Ming dynasty slightly before the compilation of *Han Kitab* literature (Shiqian). Had such efforts not been made by the Muslim scholars in early Ming, *Han Kitab* literature would have not been produced (Zhuang, 2002). So, such pieces are extremely significant to understand the pursuit of integration of Muslims in the Chinese society. It is noteworthy that such representation of Islamic teachings in Confucian disguise is not limited to the piece under discussion only rather it was a widespread practice (Tong, 1983) (Zenglie, 2003).

The words *Tien fang* for Arabia and *Qing zhenjiao* for Islam are frequently used which appeared during the early Ming only. A major part of the passage is devoted to the *raison d'être* behind the name Qing Zhen Jiao with which Islam is identified in China and the author has illustrated the matter with respect to the key constituents of religious ontology i.e. God, man and the link between the two through revelation. The author has talked about the purity of God the creator, the man and the religion God has revealed to the human beings i.e. Islam. The interpretive categories and their order employed in the tract correspond to the thematic approach of the Chinese minds as well as Chan (1986) stated about the thematic composition of Confucian classics, “The Six Classics, with their varied contents, also exemplified an outlook on Heaven and man, on society, and on religion (357)”. Furthermore, The Chinese cosmological idea of taking nature as a holistic and coherent entity is very well integrated with Islamic concept of sacred and profane.

The worth of the ideas expounded and the rituals accentuated in the text gets illustrious if consigned a Chinese intellectual context. The author seemed to write this passage responding to many questions about Islam which probably arose during Ming when Muslims started integrating in the Chinese society at a larger scale and interacting with Han majority recurrently. Chinese society idealized and fantasized the way of ancestors and its imitation was the prime goal of their lives. So, here he way of ancestors has been taken exemplary and the dynasties of Yao and Shun are considered to be the golden period of humanity irrespective of any particular religion or nation which seems a deliberate attempt to tint Confucian ideals with universality. But one must not neglect that the authors were Muslims with a Chinese social background of many centuries so they might have unconsciously heightened Confucius legendary sages as common socially constructed ideals. Islam was considered to be a relatively new religion as

compared to Chinese traditions of Confucianism and Daoism as well as Buddhism in the Chinese society. Therefore, the author was confronted with the task of proving Islam to be an authentic religion and authenticity in Chinese patterns of thinking is derived only from the way of ancestors. This is why we see that the discourse begins with the creation of universe and the first human being. The tract posits, “The pure and true religion (Islam) dates from the creation, and the sages handed it down one to another, up to the present day (303)”. (Broomhall, 1910) Like all other Chinese Muslim writings, the Islamic archetype ‘prophet’ is replaced with its Chinese counterpart ‘sage’. The author elucidated that Islam traces its origin back to the creation of first prophet Adam (A.S) and claims that true religion began with the first man and with the passage of time when people grew, the opinions differed and the desires came over and resulted into the withering of true teachings. And then a lot of prophets were sent to each area and each nation to revive the true teachings at different intervals of human history. The basic creed did not differ but the laws and legislations varied in accordance with the need of time and finally the last prophet (P.B.U.H) came with the final version of Islam which is named *Qing Zhen jiao* in China. Chapter 7 of the Holy Quran narrates the stories of prophets in detail who recurrently came to warn the people every time when they deviated from the divine message throughout the history. “Those were the towns whose story We relate unto you. And there came indeed to them their Messengers with clear proofs.”(7:101)

According to the tract, The Exalted One God created the heavens and earth with primal essence and then He created the first man and sage Adam who descended to earth to live in the heavenly kingdom(Arabia) located at the center of heaven and earth’s four points. Here it is noteworthy that Chinese Muslims violated the Chinese principle of thinking which takes Chinese land as Zhongguo (middle kingdom). By taking Arabia as the center of the universe, both heaven and earth, they determined the place of their prime affiliation and ultimate association. Arabia being the land of Ka’aba (House of Allah) is the focal center of Muslim aspiration and affiliation all over the world and Chinese Muslims are no exception. After the inhabitation of first sage on earth, God sent a heavenly spirit with divine commandments. The commandments were received and promulgated by Adam very respectfully and dutifully. This revealed religion, as the tract asserts, had two core aspects i.e. ‘doctrine’ and ‘morality’. The doctrine dealt with the intellectual and cognitive part of divine message whereas the principles of morality served to regulate the practical and mandatory part of human life in the light of divine orders.

Here we see pure Islamic intellect at work, as Chinese traditions do not bear any formal creed or doctrinal formulations whereas Islam, like other revealed religions, lays its foundations on the faith and then constructs the building of actions and ethics on this foundation. Without faith, good deeds

bring no reward in Islam which is quite contrary to Confucian understanding where performing proper rituals and being morally upright⁵ is the main goal. The notion of religion in Islam does not confine itself to morality at all when it comes to its application in daily lives rather it encompasses rituals, divine laws to govern family, civil, economical and penal issues and finally ethical instructions. But in this tract, the author tries to sum up all other aspects of religion in the concept of morality abiding by the Chinese patterns of thinking. The concept of morality is told to encompass all the obligations incumbent upon human beings from their creator God. So, it naturally encapsulates all the rites and laws Islam professes as obligatory upon its adherents. Since the Holy Quran commanded Muslims to present Islam to others beginning with the commonalities between their tradition and Islam we see Chinese Muslim authorship emphasizing the moral facet of Islam more than any other. Even the rituals like prayer and fasting etc are presented in terms of their moral gains at individual and social levels. So, here the author substituted the quintessential category for Islamic code of life i.e. *Shariah* with Confucian archetype of morality.

The tract explicitly states that in the ancient times, the great Doctrine was practiced in its true form and no corruption occurred as “genii and Buddhas and all kinds of heterodoxy were yet unheard of. Yet when man filled the Eastern earth (China), religion declined somewhat. But heresy had not yet arisen. Therefore in the times of Yao and Shun all its various names had not been heard, but from the Qin and Han dynasties onward, men all followed their own private (opinions) and those who set up heterodox views were forthwith many. Wherefore the three sects (Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism) spread over the nine divisions, and the hundred families, and all the philosophers came forth promiscuously so as to delude this people, and the statement concerning the (our) origin was rendered vague and could not be known. (304)” (Broomhall, 1910) And then the author goes on to say that although Chinese land had lost the clue of the pure religion yet it was present in the other parts of the world and finally was brought to China through the teachings of the last sage Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The author’s stance here is identical to the Quranic concept of Islam as the Holy Quran states, “He has legislated for you of the religion what He has instructed for Noah and what We inspired to you and what we instructed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: You shall establish the religion and be not divided therein.”(42:13)

This statement is full of implications. The Pure and True religion (Islam) is proclaimed to be the religion of the first man on the earth and not only has divine origins but also has been the way of the ancient. So, it is in fact pure Dao, the Way of Lord (Heaven) and then Way of sages. So, Islam thus becomes not only the part of the Chinese quest of Dao but also its ultimately

⁵ Li and Ren form two main categories in the theoretical system of Confucius. Li is the proper performance of rituals and Ren is humanity or self-cultivation of all the virtues.

perfect embodiment and not an essential part of Chinese ideal Way rather its highest apex. All other traditions of China are said to be relatively later, ensuing from the heresy of people of China and non-existent in the golden period of Yao and Shun. Thus all other traditions are none but based on human desires and deviation from the right path. And these deviated traditions prevailed in China to the extent that they obscured the True teachings. (This is again a very Islamic concept.) The True religion, revived by Muhammad's teachings, is 'very Pure and very True, and only holds what is correct, not vainly taking the name, while lacking the ability to prove its truth' (Broomhall, 1910). Here again, we see a Confucian thought implied which stresses on the rectification of names. The object bearing a name must be worthy of its name and if not, it must strive to be the appropriate reflection of its name. So the author intends to express that the Pure and True religion is worthy of its name in its characteristics. It is definitely an appeal to the minds of Confucian literati which upholds the principle of rectification of names (*zhengming*). Rectification of name means that the referent should abide by and prove itself worthy of all the attributes its name implies e.g. son should be obedient and filial and father must be benevolent as their names demand these qualities. The Analects (2003) explained the rectification as follows, "Let the lord be a true lord, the ministers true ministers, the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons." (12.11)

Then the author proceeds to elaborate the purity and truth associated to the Lord. The portrait of Lord presented here is very much in line with the Islamic notion of Allah. The language used for the divine attributes is Quranic in content but simultaneously the author has denied the Chinese concepts of yin and Yang etc to distinguish between vague ideas of nature and the Islamic concept of God, the sole Creator. The Lord is without beginning, not confined to space, does not belong to any sex, transcendent and self-existent and omniscient. The attributes of 'emptiness' associated with Dao and 'nothingness' of Buddhist Nirvana are negated from the Pure Lord. The Lord is not like nature as He is eternal, immutable exalted and omnipotent. Nobody is like Him. He is the only responsible for life and death of all the men and spirits, good and bad. And this is the Truth of Lord. The idea of change is cast away from the True lord. It probably could be the negation of the theory of creation of a Confucius scholar from 17th century; Huang Zongxi who said that nature creates everything in the universe through change and transformation. The creative material force circulates everywhere and transforms into various things (Rainey, 2010). Daoism also shared the same belief of creation through changing forms but with the supremacy of Dao which is beyond any change or mutation (Reid, 1917).

Next is the purity and truth of man. The purity of mind (heart)⁶ is to be free from the pollution of material and non-material delusions ranging from

⁶ Mind is taken to be the center of virtues and learning in Chinese philosophy whereas in Islamic intellectual thought, heart is the focal place of all virtues and vices. Here the author

‘depraved Buddhas’ to the lust for riches and honor. Confucius (2003) also urges to keep heart free and pure from bad intentions, “Merely set your heart sincerely upon Goodness and you will be free of bad intentions. (30)” He also said, “The gentleman cherishes virtue whereas the petty person cherishes physical possessions. (33)” If the mind remains pure and clean, the body, despite living in the dirty world, returns to Lord ‘without defilement’. The heart must remain the servant of Lord and follow His doctrine only as it is contrary to the purity of heart to possess ‘conflicting opinions’. Here is an inherent critique of the Chinese laity who practices all three traditions simultaneously not distinguishing between the true doctrine and the false one.

The truth of man is illustrated as follows, “Filial piety⁷, and brotherly submission, loyalty and faith, are matters which have their root in the Lord’s command, and should be respectfully practiced with attention. The principles of courtesy and rectitude,⁸ modesty⁹ and moderation, came forth from the Canon and Commentary¹⁰, and should be increasingly respected.” All the virtues, which are urged to be adopted so emphatically, are Confucian in form but they are embedded in The Holy Quran. Although the jargon is entirely Confucian, the referent virtues are equally important in Islam undoubtedly. Confucius (2003) declares, “One who is able to practice following of the five virtues wherever he may be is a man of goodness... namely respectfulness, magnanimity, faithfulness, diligence and kindness. (202)” He also said, “A young person should be filial when at home and respectful of his elders when in public. Conscientious and trustworthy, he should display a general care for the masses but feel a particular affection for those who are good. (3)”

Finally the author deals with the Truth and Purity of religion. Purity of religion is based on the principle of justice. The notions of self-established and self-subsistent nature are severely criticized and Lord is said to be the creator of the whole universe. And it is the Lord who gave doctrine to man and bestowed Him with the choice to accept the Truth or reject it. Since ‘delusion and enlightenment differ’, the people will be judged and distinguished by God after death on the basis of the choice they made in their lives. And thus they will get the ‘heights and depths’ in their life after death. This is the purity of religion. As far as Truth of religion is concerned,

prefers to use Chinese term ‘mind’ instead of heart.

⁷ Filial piety, being the prime Confucian virtue is placed first in the order of good deeds.

⁸ The book of changes emphasizes on rectitude as an essential quality of a gentleman. (Chan, 1986) p.280

⁹ Confucius said, “The gentleman takes rightness as his substance, puts it into practice by means of ritual, gives it expression through modesty, and perfects it by being trustworthy.” Analects p. 181

¹⁰ It is interesting to see that while mentioning the sacred literature of Muslims, the author did not suffice to talk about the text of Holy Quran rather included the commentary as well. It bears a strong resemblance to Confucian canon which comprises of the texts of the classics and some of the selected commentaries.

it comprises of the infallible transmission of the true teachings of God from the chain of sages down to the ordinary people. No personal opinions have polluted the True religion at all. In this passage, an allusion to the Islamic notion of retribution is made but no detail of eschatological events is given at all. It seems a bit surprising as the idea of heaven and hell is part and parcel of Muslim eschatology and these two are inevitably mentioned whenever the judgment in life after death is cited in Islamic literature elsewhere. Probably the author avoided an account of heaven and hell here because these notions are incomprehensible for a typical Chinese mind, being absent in their own philosophies although we observe the idea of heaven's wrath and heaven's punishment in the Analects. Confucius swore an oath which is quoted in Analects (2003), "If I have done anything wrong, May Heaven punish me! (62)" Chinese minds have always focused more upon this world than hereafter. When Zi Lu, a disciple of Confucius asked him about death, he responded, "Not yet Understanding life, how can you understand death?(115)" (Slingerland, 2003) So, the author found it unnecessary to embark on mentioning the details of the life hereafter and confined himself referring to the inevitable connection between the actions executed in this world with retribution in hereafter.

Having justified the name 'Pure and True religion', the author further moved to reveal the reason the prevalent name of Muslims in China i.e. Huihui. The logic is identical to the one given by the first Arab ambassador to the Tang Emperor, so it is futile to reproduce it here. Then he shifts his attention to the Holy Quran and tells his Chinese audience that the Holy Quran includes the answers to all the queries they are looking an answer for. Moreover, the Holy Quran enjoys the advantage of being true and explicit. The themes of the Holy Quran are mentioned to include the 'mysterious plan of creation' which in turn elaborates the mystery of human relations. Here one can observe an amalgam of Taoist and Confucian philosophies as cosmological issues are a favorite subject of Daoism whereas the prime concern of Confucianism is to rectify the Five Relationships in human life. But the order and link between the two as established in the passage is a definite influence of Islamic understanding which ties all the liabilities and duties of human beings to the creation of first man. Since Lord is the creator and sustainer, He only reserves the right to determine the rights and duties of his creatures in the universe. So, in establishing all the relationships and fulfilling their obligations all of the human beings are accountable before God in an ideal Islamic society. This is why the author stresses upon the recognition of Lord the creator as a primal duty of a disciple of Quran. Again one cannot help bewilder that the word 'believer', quite familiar in Muslim discourse and a frequent Quranic expression, is substituted with a Confucian term 'disciple'.¹¹

¹¹ A person who wishes to have a thorough knowledge of the principles in the world without first seeking for them [in the classics and histories] is one who wishes to go forward but

After the recognition of Lord there comes His worship. The rules of worship “unite seven days’ rites as the usages of one week. The purpose of worship is said to ‘seek the forgiveness of one’s bodily sins, to secretly implore the peace of the sovereign, to ponder one’s parents’ grace, and to be grateful for one’s teacher’s instruction’. To think of friends and friendliness so as to comprehend all men. No mention of typical Islamic rituals and their affiliated juristic details is found at all rather the famous Five relationships of Confucian social setup are established here as the purpose of worship. By the end of passage, the author again criticizes the two extreme approaches i.e. Confucian overindulgence in the matters of the material world¹² and body and on the other hand Buddhist/Daoist emphasis upon abstraction and non-action. Perhaps we can read between the lines here that the author is championing the Doctrine of Mean, an ancient Chinese virtue which necessitates the balanced approach in all the matters. It would be inevitable to see at the same time that Islam also lays stress upon the balanced path and avoiding the extremes. There are many verses and sayings of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) appreciating this quality. He states that his sole purpose behind writing this tract is to invite people to accept and understand the Truth which originated with the first human sage Adam and to get rid of all the heresies which corrupted the true message in the course of history. Hence one can proclaim that the author of the tract has very tactfully applied the Quranic principle of common word in the Chinese context and fulfilled the responsibilities of imparting *Dawah* to the Confucian audience intelligently.

Conclusion

We can deduce following things from the above analysis,

- 1) Chinese Muslim authors, like their counterparts elsewhere in the Muslim world dealt with the basic Islamic theological themes of *tawhīd*, *nubuwwah* and *ma`ād* with the only difference that the order of ideas was manipulated to seek proximity to the mindset of their Confucian audience. All the questions related to epistemology, theology, ontology, metaphysics and cosmology are answered in the light of the aforementioned basic three Islamic principles.
- 2) The above discussion reflects that both Confucianism and Islam share an anthropo-cosmic vision of being i.e. they see the human beings and the cosmos as two parallel worlds yet reflecting the same Ultimate Reality or the Supreme Way. For Confucians, the Supreme Way is manifested in the way of Nature and personified in the Sages and for

ends up standing right in front of a wall. This is why we say "a thorough study of principles must of necessity consist in book learning."(Chan, 1986) p.233

¹² Confucius responded to his disciple Ji Lu when he asked about the duties towards spirits, “When still unable to do your duty to men, how can you do your duty to the spirits?” Analects p.115.

Islam, the Ultimate Reality or Allah's existence is reflected in the worlds of 'anfus' and 'āfāq'. So, this shared vision of the reality and origin of universe helped the Muslims establish grounds for further intellectual discussion.

The writings of Muslim authors are self-explanatory evidence of philosophical coherence of Islam and Confucianism. Muslim authors concentrated, while looking for the common grounds between Confucianism and Islam, only on ethical and intellectual aspects of both the traditions evading the ritualistic and sacramental facets as the latter could highlight the divergence instead of harmony.

References

- Benite, Z. B. D. (2005). *The dao of Muhammad: a cultural history of Muslims in late imperial China*: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center.
- Berlie, J. A. (2004). *Islam in China: Hui and Uyghurs between modernization and sinicization*: White Lotus Press.
- Broomhall, M. (1910). *Islam in China : a neglected problem*. London; Philadelphia [etc.]: Morgan & Scott, ltd. ; China inland mission.
- Chan, W.-t. (1986). Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism.
- Chang, H. Y. (1987). The Hui (Muslim) minority in China: an historical overview. *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 8(1), 62-78.
- Dillon, M. (2013). *China's Muslim Hui community: migration, settlement and sects*: Routledge.
- Ge, Zhuang. (2002). Islam and Muslim in the society of Ming Dynasty. *Studies in World Religions*, 1, 12-23
- Gladney, D. C. (2003). Islam in China: accommodation or separatism? *The China Quarterly*, 174, 451-467.
- Israeli, R. (1977). Muslims in China: The Incompatibility between Islam and the Chinese Order. *T'oung Pao*, 296-323.
- Leslie, D. (1986). *Islam in traditional China: a short history to 1800*: Canberra College of Advanced Education.
- Leslie, D. D. (1998). *The Integration of Religious Minorities in China: The Case of Chinese Muslims* (Vol. 59): Australian National University.
- Lipman, J. (1997). *Familiar Strangers: A Muslim History in China*: Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Mi, S. Y. J. (2004). *Islam in China*. Beijing: China Intercontinental Press.
- Petersen, K. (2006). Reconstructing Islam: Muslim Education and Literature in Ming-Qing China. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 23(3), 24-53.
- Rainey, L. D. (2010). *Confucius and Confucianism: the essentials*: John Wiley & Sons.

- Reid, G. (1917). Taoism, an Appreciation. *The Biblical World*, 78-88.
- Shiqian, Pang. "Zhongguo Huijiao Siyuanjiaoyu Yanghe Ji Keben" (History of Chinese Islamic Mosque Education and Texts Used)."
- Slingerland, E. (2003). Confucius analects. *Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing*.
- Tian-bo, Ma, and Ma Jian-fu. (2006). "The Cultural Consciousness Change of the East Migrating Huihui During Yuan Dynasty [J]." *NW Ethno-National Studies* 3, 8-20.
- Tong, Ma. (1983). "*zhongguo yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan zhidu shilue (A brief history of Chinese Islamic denominations and sects)*." Ningxia Peoples Press
- Williams, E. T. (1916). Confucianism and the New China. *The Harvard Theological Review*, 9(3), 258-285.
- Weiliang, Ma. (1989). "Huizushi Lunji (Symposium of the History of the Hui People)." Kunming: Yunnan Minorities Publishing House.
- Xu, Jianchu, Erzi T Ma, Duojie Tashi, Yongshou Fu, Zhi Lu, and David Melick.(2005). "Integrating Sacred Knowledge for Conservation: Cultures and Landscapes in Southwest China." *Ecology and Society* 10, 7-20.
- Yao, X. (2000). *An introduction to Confucianism*: Cambridge University Press.
- Zenglie, F. (2003). "Xiujian Hu Taishizu Jiacheng Ji' Beixu (Tablet Inscriptions of the Notes on the Construction of Grand Master Hu's Grave)." *China Muslim* 4.