Per BX801 .C36995

Spring 2011 Volume 50:1 $15.00

50 years

chicago studies

In the Public Square: Catholics and Muslims on Religious Freedom and the Nature of the Human Person

Inside

Catholic Perspectives on the Nature and Dignity of the Human Person – Implications for the Public Square

The Nature and the Dignity of the Human Person from an Islamic Foundational Philosophical and Theological Issues, Catholic Social Thought, and the Dignity of the Family

The Logic of Why: What the Declaration on Religious Freedom Contributes to the Idea of Religion in the Public Square

The American Legal Structure as it Relates to Integration and Religious Accommodation, with a Comparison to

chicago studies

Editor
Lawrence R. Hennessey

Managing Editor
Martin Zielinski

Associate Editors
John Lodge
Dianne Bergant, CSA
Leo Lefebure

Editorial Advisers

Peter Damian Akpunonu
Thomas Baima
Martin Barnum
Robert E. Barron
August J. Belauskas
Jacque B. Beltran
Patrick J. Boyle, SJ
Sara Butler, MSBT
Louis Cameli
Linda Cerabona
Christopher Ciomek
Agnes Cunningham, SSCM
Emery A. DeGaál
Kevin J. Feeney
Michael J. K. Fuller
Scott Hebdan
Ronald Hicks
Paul Hilliard
Ronald Kunkel
Dennis J. Lyle
Douglas Martis
James P. McIlhone
Charles R. Meyer
Kathleen Mulchay
Elizabeth Nagel
Edward Oakes
Lorraine Olley
Patrick J. O'Malley
James Presta
Robert Schoenstene
Linda Sevcik, SM
Daniel S. Siwek
John S. Szmyd
Raymond J. Webb
Kathleen Wiskus
Richard J. Wojcik

Founding Editor
George Dyer

CHICAGO STUDIES is edited by priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago and members of the faculty of the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary for the continuing theological development of priests, deacons, and lay ecclesial ministers. The editors welcome articles and letters likely to be of interest to our readers. Please send manuscripts to CHICAGO STUDIES, c/o Lawrence R. Hennessey, 1000 E. Maple Ave., Mundelein, IL 60060. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Views expressed in the articles are those of the respective authors and not necessarily those of the editors, editorial board, or publisher. All communications regarding articles and editorial policy should be addressed to the editors. Indexed in *The Catholic Periodical & Literature Index* and *New Testament Abstracts*. Microfilms of current and backfile volumes of CHICAGO STUDIES are available from University Microfilms, Inc., 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

FAITH Catholic

Patrick M. O'Brien
President, CEO

Elizabeth Solsburg
Director of Custom Publishing

Frank Iacovella
Graphic Design

Carlos Briceño
Proofreader

CHICAGO STUDIES is published three times a year by FAITH Catholic. Subscriptions should be sent to CHICAGO STUDIES, FAITH Catholic, 1500 E. Saginaw St., Lansing, MI 48906. The annual subscription rate is $40. The international annual subscription rate is $45 payable in U.S. funds or International Money Order. For subscription or advertising information, call toll-free 1-877-413-1927.

On the cover: Photo ©istockphoto.com

Copyright © 2011 Civitas Dei Foundation.

MEMBER cpa

[13] Miguel, Carlos Ruiz. "Human Dignity: History of an Idea," in *Jarbuch des öffentlichen Rechts der Gegenwarrt, Neve Folge*. 2002, ed. J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck, Tübingen), 284.

[14] Miguel, "Human Dignity,": 285.

[15] Ibid.

[16] For example, as it appears in the *Supplementum, III, Quest. 90. Art. 3. Obj. 4.*

[17] Guerra, 298.

[18] Hittinger, Russell, "Human Nature and and States of Nature in John Paul II's Theological Anthropology," in *Human Nature and Its Wholeness: A Roman Catholic Perspective*, Daniel Robinson, Gladys Sweeney and Richard Gill, editors. Catholic University of America Press, (Washington, DC, 2006): 9.

[19] These categories are available from a number of sources. This typology is taken from the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/projects/socialteaching/excerpt.shtml. Last accessed on 16 October 2009.

[20] Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, par. 40.

[21] John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Academy for Life, *L'Osservatore Romano, English Edition*, (13 March 2002): 4.

[22] "Cardinal Bernadin's Call for a Consistent Ethic of Life," Origins, (13:29): 493.

[23] USCCB, *Themes of Catholic Social Teaching*.

[24] Source: Pew Forum, "How the Faithful Voted," published November 10, 2008. Available at: http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=367. Accessed 17 October 2009.

[25] "Cardinal McCarrick Brings Catholic Bishops' Perspective to Senate Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform," *Catholic News Service*, News Release 09-199, October 8, 2009.

[26] USCCB Administrative Committtee, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007), 9.

[27] Ibid., 11.

Dr. Zeki Saritoprak

The Nature and the Dignity of the Human Person from an Islamic Theological Perspective

While God has given human beings a special status in the realm of creation and subjugated all other creatures to him, not all human beings are grateful enough for this divine gift. Some people are known as believers, because they develop the angelic qualities, and others are known as disbelievers, because they develop the satanic qualities.

QUR'ANIC WORDS FOR HUMAN BEINGS

In this article, I will elaborate on the dignity and the nature of the human person as presented in the *Qur'an* and in the sayings of the Prophet. Before elaborating on the details of the subject, I will focus on the terms that the *Qur'an* employs for the human person. This article has no claim of being an exhaustive search of the entire understanding of this topic; therefore, the terms that are mentioned here are some examples. The *Qur'an* refers to humans as "ins" to transpose the concept of familiarity as opposed to distance or wildness. A parallel term to this is "jinn," which is used for similar creatures, but invisible. The term mentioned is in the *Qur'an* 20

times. There is a *Qur'an*ic verse that refers to both "ins" and "jinn" that states: "I have not created jinns and ins but to worship Me" (Q 51:56).

Another term that the *Qur'an* uses is "al-nas" which has the same root, with a connotation of "the people" or humanity; it is mentioned approximately 250 times in the *Qur'an*. In most cases, the *Qur'an*ic address to humankind is through this term. For example, the verse says: "You people (nas) have fear of your Lord. The catastrophe of the final hour shall be terrible indeed" (Q 22:1). Another term that is used in the *Qur'an* is related to the human ancestor; "banu Adam," which means "the children of Adam." This phrase also is mentioned more than 20 times in the *Qur'an*. The most well known word for the human person is "al-insan," which is mentioned over 65 times in the *Qur'an*. This is the term that is used by all mystics as a reference of the dignity of the human person. The highest form of this, as we will see later, "al-insan al-kamil" is the perfected human being. All of these terms are coming from the same root, "i-n-s." A chapter of the *Qur'an* is named after this term, "al-insan," in which it speaks of the creation of the human being and the purpose of life. Another word that the *Qur'an* uses is "basher." Again, meaning "human" as opposed to deity. The Prophet Muhammad says, "I am only a bashar." That is to say, I am not a deity; I am a human being. The word "bashar" is mentioned in the *Qur'an* 40 times.

Since the most well-known term for humanity or the human person is "al-insan," it is appropriate to focus on this term from an etymatological and Qur'anic perspective. Many philosophers, including Islamic philosophers describe the human being as a "thinking animal." The upper level of this, which is the perfected human person, or "al-insan al-???" described by a Muslim theologian as follows:

> It is encompassing all realms of the divine and the universe. It is an encompassing book to all divine and universal books. From the perspective of the spirit, the human persona is names as the mother of all books. From the perspective of his heart he is the book of 'Protected Tablet.' The encompassing spirit or soul is the heart of the great universe.[1]

Despite such a high possible human being, it also has some negative characteristics. One verse says: "And God has created the human as weak" (4:28). Another describes the enemy of "al-insan": "Surely Satan is an open enemy for al-insan" (12:5; 17:53; 36:77). Another verse describes "al-insan" as one who denies the truth and is an excessive wrongdoer (14:34). One verse draws attention to the beginning of the creation of human beings and how, despite the wickedness that man has, Satan continues to be an ardent opponent. The verse says, "God has created the human from a little germ and now he is an open opponent" (16:4). "And human being was impatient" (17:11); this describes the psychological weakness of the human being. Another verse describes a human being's capacity for being disputant: "And human was abundant in his disputing" (18:54). The *Qur'an* also speaks of humanity's relationship with the divine: "Surely we have created the human and we know what his inner thoughts are" (50:16). A type of human being is described as irresponsible because they think that there is no accountability challenging the approach, the *Qur'an* says: "Do human beings assume they will be left alone?" (75:36).

HUMAN DIGNITY

Human dignity comes from many theological bases. Two of these bases are related to the human person as a creation of God and the human being as vicegerent (an agent of God) on earth. The first related to the human person's nature, while the latter relates to the human person's duty. The following two verses are probably the most quoted Qur'anic verses on the dignity and importance of human beings. The first verse is:

> Surely We have honored the human being and carried him in land and sea, and We have given him good things as sustenance. And We have made him superior over many other creatures that We created" (17:70).

In the interpretation of this verse, scholars of Islam and Qur'an commentators have elaborated on reasons for such superiority and dignity. Accordingly, some commentators refer to the human capacity of reasoning as an element of superiority. Others refer to the capacity of speech. Others refer to the beauty of the human face. Some commentators would give the reason for human superiority as making Muhammad one of the human beings, instead of an angelic messenger. One of the earliest commentators of the *Qur'an*, Ibn Abbas, who was also one of the companions of the Prophet, comments on the above verse by saying, "Eating with their hands, while other creatures with their mouths, made human beings superior over other creatures." Another commentator, al-Tabari, would say, "Supervision over other creatures is what made human beings superior."[2]

One of the most quoted verses of the *Qur'an* in regards to human dignity is the following: "Surely we have created the human being in the most beautiful form" (95:4). The verse indicates both human physical and spiritual dignity. It also indicates that such a creature of the divine deserves to be the vice-regent of God on earth. As God's most sophisticated creature the human person is given this status. Scholars of Islam, based on this Qur'anic verse, have developed a vast literature on the importance and dignity of the human person. In the pyramid of creation, human beings are higher than animals, but lower than angels. However, because of this non-static status, he can be lower than animals or higher than angels.

In order fully to understand this non static situation of humans, Iblis or Satan needs to be explained. Angels felt jealous when God created human beings because God consulted with them first, and they suggested that God should not create human beings because the humans would shed blood. As the *Qur'an* narrates, God did not listen to them and created human beings by telling the angels that God knows what they do not know. This first human being was known as Adam. God asked about "the names of the things," and because he was told by God, Adam answered all questions to the surprise of the angels. God said to the angels, "Didn't I tell you that I know what you do not know?" The angels asked for forgiveness,

and accepted God's decision. This story in the *Qur'an* contains also the first fall of humans, and a constant struggle between humans and Satan which is symbolized in the personalities of Adam and Iblis. But also, the story emphasizes the superiority of humans over angels. In one of the hadith, the Prophet says, "On the day of judgment, nothing is more honored in the sight of God than the children of Adam." And the Prophet was asked, "Even the closest angels of God were not as honored as human beings?" And the Prophet responded, "Yes, even angels. Angels are compelled (do not have free will), similar to the sun and the moon."[3]

Indicating the dignity and the importance of human beings in the realm of creation, God asked the angels to bow down to Adam, out of respect for God's creation. All of the angels bowed down except for Iblis. Iblis claimed that he was better than Adam because he was created out of fire while Adam was created out of soil. Because of this disobedience, Iblis and his satanic associates have become agents of deception and dishonesty. Iblis challenged that he would deceive Adam and his offspring. God said that he, Iblis, would have no power over the righteous. Although no human being will be immune from Satan's temptation, yet rejecting Satan's temptation is within the capacity of human beings. God has given a free will by which human beings are able to resist all kinds of satanic temptations. But even if human beings do not follow the path of righteousness, according to many Qur'anic commentators, including al-Alusi, the verse on the dignity of human beings includes both the good and bad of human beings; they are honored, and they have so many beauties that one's tongue cannot speak of all of them.[4]

This was a divine plan to create human beings, His most sophisticated creature, for them to make the planet their home and to be a stage for human trials. In this plan, the duty of Satan is to deceive and to discourage human beings from the way of righteousness. The duty of human beings is to overcome all obstacles that prevent one from worshipping God, which is the main goal of life in Islam. This process allows human beings to develop and increase their spiritual level to the highest of the high. But this also contains a risk of descending to the lowest of the low when Satan is followed.

Satan kept his promise and attempted to deceive Adam in the most beautiful garden, paradise. Adam and his spouse both fell to the deceit of Satan, which is considered the beginning of sin, according to the Islamic tradition. Then Adam and his spouse both asked for forgiveness, and both were forgiven, and God made Adam the first prophet on earth. Adam and his spouse are prototypes of the entire realm of humanity. That is to say, human beings are capable of committing sin; they will commit sin; and they will be forgiven if they repent. With this in mind, we come to the problem of human nature: are human beings innately good?

ARE HUMAN BEINGS INNATELY GOOD?

According to the Islamic tradition, based upon the above mentioned verse, human beings are pure by nature. There is no transmission of the sin of Adam and his spouse to human beings. It is strongly emphasized in Islam that no one is to bear another's burdens (6:164; 17:15; 35:18; 39:7; 53:38). That is to say, children are not responsible for the crimes of their fathers. Everyone is responsible for his or her actions. Despite this natural goodness of human being, he is capable of committing evil. Therefore in Islam, all children until the age of puberty are considered natural believers, Muslims, because they are innately good, and their nature is pure; and since they have not reached the age of puberty, they are not responsible for their own actions. The day when a human reaches puberty, he or she becomes responsible and accountable. Therefore they will be accountable for their *own* positive and negative actions.

Here we come to the dualistic nature of humans: angelic and satanic. One Islamic scholar speaks of the importance of human beings, referring to the *Qur'an*ic verse which says, "It is God who formed you and made your faces beautiful" (40:64). Another verse says, "Exalted is God; He is the most beautiful of creators" (23:14). In the commentary on this verse, al-Razi says "If you want, contemplate only one organ among the organs of the human being, and that is the eye. He created the black pupil of the eyes, and then circled it with the whiteness of the eyes. He then covered it with the blackness of the eyelashes. God then framed that blackness of the eyelashes with the whiteness of the eyelids, then created the blackness of eyebrows. He then created above that the whiteness of the forehead. God then created the blackness of hair. Let this be as an example of the divine creation in human bodies."[5]

In the commentary of the same verse, al-Razi goes further and compares this world to an urbanized village. Al-Razi says, "This world is similar to an urbanized village, or a well-prepared guest house. All of its benefits are directed to human beings. The human in this world is similar to a president who is served, or to a king who is obeyed, all other animals compared to him are like slaves. All this shows that human, in the sight of God, through his dignity, has a very special place."[6] Indicating the importance of human status in the universe, Umar, the second caliph, warned his governors by saying, "How can you enslave people while they are born from their mothers as free?" This indicates the free nature of every human being and the Islamic rejection of slavery.

While God has given human beings such a special status in the realm of creation and subjugated all other creatures to him, not all human beings are grateful enough for this divine gift. Some people are known as believers, because they develop the angelic qualities, and others are known as disbelievers, because they develop the satanic qualities. The entirety of humanity is roughly divided into those two groups. The term "roughly" is used because the decision about someone's belief is a subtle issue, and not easy to determine. Even if someone is determined as a disbeliever, it does not mean that he is not created in the best form that God has created. The divine creation encompasses all because the Qur'anic verse does not say that We have dignified believers, it says We have dignified the children of Adam. Believers' spiritual and physical elements are always praising the creator. If a non-believer denies the creator, the atoms of his or her body are still working and are still praising God. This is why human beings deserve respect and dignity. On one occasion, there was a funeral and the corpse was carried on the shoulder of a group of people passing by the Prophet. The Prophet of Islam stood up, for the corpse, and his companions who knew about the funeral said, "O messenger of God, this is not the funeral of a Muslim, but the funeral of a Jew." They said this assuming that the prophet would not stand up before a non-Muslim funeral. The Prophet responded, "It is a human being." By this he indicated his

respect for the dignity of human beings, regardless of religion and ethnicity.

Regarding the human body, while dignified in all cases, the Islamic principle of war requires that even on the battlefield in time of war, Muslims are not allowed to mutilate the bodies of the dead enemy. This is because the human body is dignified in Islam. Because of the significance of the human body, Islamic law prohibits cremation. The human body is dignified and is not to be put on fire and cremated. Again because of the dignity of the human body, there is a consensus among Islamic theologians that the resurrection of the human being will not only be spiritual, but also physical. Hundreds of the verses in the *Qur'an* speak of life after death, and the connotation is that there will be physical rewards for the actions that individuals have done in their worldly life. Since in the worldly life, important actions such as prayer, charity, pilgrimage, and fasting, all involve the body, this body, as well as the spirit, will be rewarded in the afterlife. Therefore, the reward is not only spiritual, but also physical. This is another way to indicate the significance of human nature or the human body. Again the Prophet prohibits striking the face of another human being, no matter what the reason. The face of a human being is dignified because it is the most encompassing reflection of the divine names. Therefore, as a part of a child's education, Muslims would teach their children not to slap the face of another human being, even if they are angry. All of this emphasis on the dignity of the human body, particularly the face, comes from the following Qur'anic verse: "Surely, We have created human beings in the best of forms" (95:4).

HUMAN BEING, IMAGO DEI

The reflection of the divine names on human beings is stated in the famous saying of the Prophet: "God created human beings on the image of al-rahman." Scholars of Islamic theology have developed this saying of the prophet to indicate that human beings among all creatures of God are the most important mirrors of the divine names, especially al-rahman, the most compassionate. Our outer senses, such as sight, touch, hearing, speech, are mirrors of the divine names. Some of these divine names are: al-Basir (the one

who sees everything), al-Sami' (the one who hears everything), al-Khabir (the one who is aware of everything), al-Mutakallim (the one who speaks and has the power of all languages). As an interpretation of the above-mentioned quote of the Prophet, a Muslim theologian says, "Human beings are an encompassing mirror of the most beautiful names of God." Because of this encompassing aspect of human beings, the *Qur'an* says "Whoever kills a human being, it is like he has killed the entire humanity; and whoever saved a human being, it is as if he has saved humanity."

Similarly, our inner senses, of which there are thousands, are also indications of the divine names. For example, our sense of compassion reflects the divine name al-Rahman (the most compassionate). Our sense of mercy indicates the divine name al-Rahim (the most merciful). Our sense of love mirrors the divine name al-Wadud (the one who loves and is beloved). Our inner ability of patience indicates the divine name al-Sabur (the one who is the most patient). Our sense of peace and tranquility indicates the divine name al-Salam (the one who is peace). Scholars of Islam have spoken on these human capacities and how they are reflections of the divine names in detail. Some would say that human beings have thousands of inner and outer senses of capacity, each of which reflects either one or more divine names. Because of the vast inner capacities of the human being, one can say that each human being has an entire universe folded into him or her. In other words, if our universe shrinks to the size of a human being, it will become a human being. If a human being is enlarged, it will become a universe. Indicating the importance of the human being, Imam Ali' says, "O human being, do not think you are a small creature. A great world is folded in you."

The *Qur'an*, with hundreds of verses, encourages human beings to be aware of their potential and capacities. That is why the *Qur'an* complains that human beings have reckless behavior. "O man! What has made you reject your God, the Bountiful, who created you, then fashioned and proportioned you into whatsoever for He made you" (82:6-8), that is to say, the God that has created you in the most beautiful form and made you a supervisor to the realm of creation wants you to be aware of your potential and to be thankful and worship Him.

Some Islamic scholars, considering these capacities of the human being, use the parable of the seeds. If you put some seeds into the ground and give them enough water, light, warmth, and fertilizer if necessary, they will grow and be a fruitful tree. One seed will result in thousands of seeds. But if you neglect them and put the seeds onto the ground and leave them there without nourishment, these seeds with their full capacities will be rotten and fruitless. Similarly, every human being with their inner and outer capacities are likened to such a seed. If they are given appropriate water, heat, and light, these human beings will develop and become a tree with thousands of fruits in the realm of eternity. If they neglect to develop these capacities, it will be similar to a rotten seed, with no result and no fruit. In other words, if human beings follow the way of their egoistic desires, rather than spiritual developments, they will lose their entire capacity, and their life will be only this short, temporary life. But if they follow their angelic qualities, and consider the body given to them as a house of God for their spirit, and use their skills and senses in a way that will further their "mirrorness" of the divine names, such a human being will be the most important tree that will result in thousands of seeds and fruits and will enjoy the realm of eternity. While being a seed at the beginning, at the end, he will be a fruit, a blessed, shining fruit of the universe. This is the human that is described in the *Qur'an* as "and I breathed into him of My spirit" (15:29).

Muslim mystics, considering this capacity of human beings have developed a concept to idealize such a state of humanity called "the perfect human." Through spiritual training, and a strong relationship with the divine, human beings are encouraged to reach the state of perfection. Muslim theologians have developed codes of behaviors to keep men on the right path in the way of perfection. The spiritual development is not something to be achieved and finished. It is a constant struggle until the end of life for an individual, and until the end of time for humanity in general. Because God has not put limitations on human capacities, vast fields of spiritual development as well as tests are open before human beings.

Human dignity in the *Qur'an* *"O ye who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they (are), not let women (deride) women who may be better than they are; neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. Bad is the name of lewdness after faith. And whoso turneth not in repentance, such are evil-doers (11). O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion; for lo! some suspicion is a crime. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Ye abhor that (so abhor the other)! And keep your duty (to Allah). Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful (12). O mankind! Lo! We have created you from male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware (13)" (Chapter 49).*

"İnsan, acz ve fakrını anlamakla tam Müslüman ve abd (kul) olur." (Sözler)
"İnsan bir yolcudur. Sabavetten (çocukluktan) gençliğe, gençlikten ihtiyarlığa, ihtiyarlıktan kabre, kabirden haşre, haşirden ebede kadar yolculuğu devam eder." (Mesnevi-i Nuriye)
"Ey insan kendini oku."[6]

---

[1] See Aljurgany "Al-Ta'rifat" Ed. Abraham al-Abyari (Cairo, Maktaba al-Misryya 1982), 56.

[2] For the various commentaries, see al-Andalusi's *al-Bahr*, retrieved from altafsir.com on 10/23/2009.

[3] See al-Suyuti *Durr al-Manthur*, retrieved from altafsir.com on 10/23/2009.

[4] See al-Alusi *Ruh al-Maani*, retrieved from altafsir.com on 10/23/2009.

[5] See al-Razi *Mafatih al-Ghayd*, retrieved from altafsir.com on 10/23/2009.

[6] Ibid.