because human ideals, motives, and actions have been considered insignificant. According to American scholars, their French colleagues in Annaliste fell under strong influence of the structuralist school—another French school in historiography— which maintains that there is a continuity in change in time and space in human history. According to the structuralists, the change—whether social or economic —is mainly an adjustment aimed at preserving an eternal system of structures; it is not a step in a development towards progress. Therefore, despite their claim to have a totalistic approach to history, Annaliste historians were essentially structuralist. In my opinion, it is only in Islamic paradigm for the study of civilization that one can find a holistic (*tawḥīdī*) approach to history. It is a pity that none of the leading historians interviewed by Gallagher in this study showed any appreciation of Islamic epistemology. It is interesting to observe how leading Western scholars of Islam and Muslim world were openly confessing that they had been following the Annales school's approach to history. This school, as indicated above, was not deemed suitable even for the study of Western civilization.

Nevertheless, in view of its unique methodology, the book is, in many ways, an important contribution to the Middle Eastern historiography. However, the editor can not be credited with creating this oral approach to history. Before the publication of this work, there were already several similar works in the field. The most notable study in this regard is *Paths to the Middle East: Ten Scholars Look Back* edited by Thomas Naff.

The book is useful for students, as the leading scholars of the Middle East have offered a lot of invaluable advice to students of the Middle Eastern history. In addition, the book sheds some light on Orientalism and on the lives of the leading orientalists of the post-World War II era. The study is useful for students of history, historiography, orientalism, and sociology.

Accountability in Islam

Accountability: A Comparative Study of Human Responsibility Between Islam and Man-made Doctrines, by Sheikh Osman AbdulKader al-Safi, translated by Muhammad Badawi. Selangor, Malaysia: WEB Printer, 1992. Pp. 103. ISBN 983-9668-18-8.

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The question of "accountability" has for long been one of the major issues in politics and administration. In the Western literature, two groups of theorists—the Marxists and the Liberals—have given basically contradictory opinions on this issue. However, both groups of theorists have serious weaknesses which have led many others to think of alternative approaches to this concept. Sheikh Osman AbdulKader Al-Safi's *Accountability: A Comparative Study of Human Responsibility Between Islam and Man-made Doctrines* is one such attempt. As he points out, "Man-made doctrines are driving mankind rapidly towards its doom. This dire dilemma prompts thinking to find a solution...At this point of our discussion comes Islam to offer the really ideal solution..." (p.61).

The book, originally written in Arabic and translated into English by Muhammad Badawi, consists of nine chapters and is divided into two parts. In the first part, the author examines major Western ideologies, including Marxism, Liberalism, and Determinism. Sheikh Osman points out that while the Marxists "see man's behaviour as part and parcel of the movement of society," (p.1) the liberals "give sanctity to the individual rather than to society" (p.2). According to the Marxists, individual freedom is limited by socio-economic and political conditions of a state, and "life is essentially of a dialectic nature, and it follows from this that man's responsibility is part of this paradox and of the dialectics of society"(p.14). To the liberals, on the other hand, individuals have full freedom: "Individuals can behave the way they like and make their arrangements on conditions that their actions or arrangements do not contradict laws or regulations in force" (p.47). After stating the main points of the Marxists, Liberals, and Determinists, Sheikh Osman proceeds to examine their views. He points out that the Western approaches are man-made doctrines and have serious shortcomings. First, accountability in these approaches applies exclusively to the social and public aspects of man's life, and does not concern itself with the individual's private life. Secondly, these approaches are concerned only with man's present earthly life and do not take into consideration life after death. Thirdly, accountability in these approaches is based on constitutional and general laws. Finally, in the Western models, methods have to be developed for implementing these laws.

In the second part of the book, Sheikh Osman explains the Islamic point of view on accountability. In Islam, *taklīf* (accountability) includes "commands, forbidden things as well as matters left to

choice." Accountability in Islam comprises two main categories of ordinances: doctrinal and statutory. While the former is detailed in the Holy Qur'ān, the latter is discussed in the domain of *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence). It follows from this that individuals are liable to both doctrinal and practical duties. "A Muslim," the authors says, "should obey all commandments and keep away from all he is forbidden to do and to worship God alone with no partners." Man has no choice in evading these duties. Thus, while in the "man-made doctrines," philosophers and speculators "have to toil to prove their ideas and convince others of them," in Islam, this is not the case with God's message where the concept of responsibility is delineated by the Creator Himself. The justification for responsibility, thus "comes from inside the message of Islam and not from outside as in the case with man-made doctrines."(p.84) In examining the concept of accountability, the author explains in detail also the concepts of *al-hudā* the (right path) and *al-ḍalāl* (wrong path).

In the last chapter, Sheikh Osman makes several comments, the most important of which is that in Islam every individual is directly accountable to Almighty Allah. Every individual is responsible for himself. In this world, accountability is both collective and private, "on the day of judgement responsibility is strictly individual" (p.95). Thus, individual accountability goes beyond this life and extends to the hereafter. Finally, the author concludes that while "the nature of responsibility in man-made systems aims at organising the relationship between human beings within the framework of material appearances [Islam] probes the depths of the human soul and takes into consideration its origin, formation and its end, and looks after its needs in the light of its existence in the present life as well as in the hereafter."(p.99)

Undoubtedly, this book is a product of Sheikh Osman's painstaking efforts. However, it suffers from some limitations. First, in examining both the Marxist and Liberal approaches to the concept of accountability it would have been better if the author had given the views of specific philosophers rather than talking in general terms. Secondly, while discussing the concepts of *al-hudā* and *al-ḍalāl,* the author could have brought other relevant concepts like *ijmāᶜ* (consensus) and *iḥsān* (motivation for perfection) which have direct bearing on making an individual accountable for his duties. Thirdly, the book is full of repetitions. Certain ideas have been repeated so many times that the reader might lose interest in the book. Finally, there are

a number of printing mistakes which could be corrected in the second edition.

Nonetheless, Sheikh Osman has made a valuable contribution to the understanding of Islam on accountability. This book is designed for general readers and, I believe, it serves the purpose very well. The book deserves a place in all libraries and is very useful for students and scholars in the fields of politics, administration, and related areas.