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Contemporary Literature on Islamic Economics: A Select Classified Bibliography of Works in English, Arabic and Urdu up to 1975 By Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi

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BOOK
REVIEW



**Contemporary Literature on Islamic Economics:
A Select Classified Bibliography of Works in
English, Arabic and Urdu up to 1975**

By Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi,
Jeddah: International Center for Research on Islamic
Economics, King Abdulaziz University, and Leicester:
The Islamic Foundation, 1978, 69pp.

The author's main purpose is to compile a bibliography of Islamic Economics literature, both books and articles, published up to 1975 in three languages: English, Arabic and Urdu. The book contains references to 700 works of over 400 authors on the subject. It is a prudent resource book for Islamic and Economics scholars and students who are engaged in active research in the field. The author has accomplished this enormous task because his own work experience of being a Professor of Islamic Studies and Reader in Economics at Aligarh Muslim University, India makes a perfect fit between the subject and his area of expertise.

The bibliography covers five main areas of Islamic Economics literature. The first chapter provides references on the philosophy of Islamic Economics. The section on Economic System of Islam provides literature references on the foundational principles of Islamic Economics whereas the third section covers critique on the contemporary economic theories of capitalism and Marxian-based Socialism. The main works on the instruments of Islamic economics and history of economic thought development are compiled in the next two chapters.

This work has five outstanding features. First of all it is one of a kind. Its enormity and importance increases manifolds when the context in which it was compiled is considered. One can well imagine how precious, useful and handy the collection would have been for researchers in those times without computer search engines and e-libraries. Secondly, the referencing scheme of the author is amazingly consistent and accurate. All entries are arranged alphabetically according to authors' surname. All book references mention the total number of pages and give an instant idea to the reader about how voluminous the work is. Thirdly, the bibliographic entries cover English (37%), Arabic (41%) and Urdu (22%) works. The tri-lingual resources of the book on this specific subject enhance its effectiveness for the range of scholars using it. Fourthly, the book is high on clarity and user-friendliness not only because of the consistency of referencing methodology but also because of the Transliteration Scheme which greatly facilitates the recognition of English, Arabic and Urdu alphabets. Last but not the least, both topics and authors are easily locatable because the book presents them separately in the opening list of contents and the closing index, respectively. The system of interlocking the page numbers with entry numbers increases the ease with which topics and authors can be tracked and accessed.



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Certain earliest known Islamic economic writers such as al-Shaybani (d. 804) and Abu'l Fadl Ja'far's Kitab al-Ishara ila mahasin al-tijara (Indications of the merits of commerce) written in the 11th or the 12th century are, however, missing from the list. Western writers consider Abu'l Fadl Ja'far's work a far more practical discussion on economics as compared to Plato's *Politics* or Aristotle's doctrine of the golden mean. Another area which might have been included as a separate section is the specific Quranic verses and Hadith the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) on the desired economic behavior of individuals and society. No doubt that Divine and Prophetic ordinations and injunctions are covered indirectly through various works of the bibliography. One still feels the need that these basic injunctions would have been compiled under a separate heading or chapter for the benefit of those who want to formulate their original and direct analysis based on the first-hand sources. It is probably because of this omission that Quranic Ordinations regarding debt and mortgage, state expenditures, food and drinks, begging and spending, bribery and deceit, breach of trust, using orphan's property, weights and measures and, prostitution do not come up directly for a researcher to access.

The book is however a unique and condensed source of knowledge and is highly recommended for all those working in the field of Islamic Economics. The volume of work in the field has swelled to a great extent as compared to its emergent status in the 1970s. A bibliographic compilation of works in the field from 1975 onwards seems a real need of contemporary times.

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