

Hamid Kasiri

God's Co-Workers

Book to Go!



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Hamid Kasiri



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Books to Go!

“Book to Go!” as a new book series deals with some relevant issues from the perspective of the Shia Islam. Everything presented here is **“Shiite Discourses”** and was published in my previous works, but some readers were interested to have them in a new compact form so that they can take them with on travel, on the subway and ...!

These multi-volume study booklets are a kind of **“Book to Go!”** and try to remind us in a different way of actions and lead us to harmony between faith and praxis and in life with others: *“Behave toward people the way, you want them to behave toward you.”* And this is my way, so follow it and do not follow the other paths.

This book series is published in the hope of contributing to a better understanding of **“Shiite Discourses”** in the 21st century. **“Book to Go!”** aims to motivate people to think. It thus doesn't mean, “cash and carry” or “cash and go”, but rather **“cash and read”!** This is because reading leads to the revival of the soul and refresh the mind!

Hamid Kasiri
(Amin-ul-Islam Mazandarani)
Vienna, at 03.03.2021!



Sustainable Co-Working

Co-Working on the “*Right Path*”

The aim of this study is to make it clear that the heritage of Shiite thought and the importance of its representatives become all the more apparent the more one devotes oneself to the social thinkers in Islam and uncovers the contours of their most important thoughts.

In our time, the topics related to the theology of the community are diverse and require several research projects. With all the innovations contained in what has been said before, I do not wish to withhold from the reader the fact that the broad topic of the theology of the *Ummah* naturally requires further research work, which above all takes greater account of the plural, highly diverse contexts of today’s congregations in Western World and especially in Europe.

In this study I have presented some important aspects of the Islamic community and community theology that can be found in the Hl. Quran and in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (s) and his descendants (s). I hope that through this approach we could be able to get the state of the “**Co-Workers of God**” and to turn our identity to live as friends of God.

The preservation of the identity of the Islamic world community (*Ummah*) in today's world is of great relevance, and it can only continue to exist if Muslims can remain in close contact with their history - and especially with their history of faith. This also leads to a dialogue based on the perception and understanding of the other and to cooperate for the better and safer future.

Therefore, in this book as well as in other volumes, this study has followed the teachings of Shia Islam with respect to members of other religious communities. By simultaneously proclaiming the authenticity of Shia Islam, presenting its schools of thought and explaining the reasons for its appearance, it deals **nonviolently** with other religious communities in an **argumentative** way.

It tries to show that Shia Islam is a completely original aspect of Islam - with no

intention of creating discord or division between Shiites and Sunnis, or any disdain for Christians. On the contrary, defending the authenticity of Shia Islam will facilitate dialogue both between the main denominations of Islam and between Islam and Christianity. This is a real rapprochement while preserving one's identity on both a dialogical and an ecumenical level. Because it paves the way for ***sustainable Co-Working under Umbrella of God's sight***.

It is important for Western societies to get to know this dimension of Shiite thinking. In the European context up to now the talk was rather about the "buildings". So far, only the facades of the content have been revealed; and the essence of Shiite thought and belief has been less discussed. In particular, there was a lack of *first-hand education*. This study aims to present an up-to-date picture of Shiite social thinking in order to preserve it for our contemporary and future generations.

In the coming years, efforts to secure Shiite junior staff, - which have been ignored or neglected up to now, - will increase. We advocate institutional diversity and structural requirements - such as the targeted training and continuing education of teachers, the

promotion of young academics, the cultivation of relations with neighboring disciplines as well as interdisciplinary, dialogical cooperation.

The aim is not to engage in anti-Sunni propaganda or to paint a distorted picture of other religious communities and cultures. Since Shiite thinking has from the very beginning been very much pervaded by Quranic and prophetic beliefs and has been developed in the light of the *spiritual-rational* teaching of infallible Imams (s), it invites to open dialogue. For this reason, Shia Islam doesn't see the modern age as a threat to the Islamic belief and the *Ummah* (Islamic World Community), but as a call, indeed as an essential opportunity to deepen faith and thinking and to live peacefully with other communities. This is important in itself, since "hardly any other Islamic denomination has been so much in the focus of world public interest in the last two decades as the Shiite one.

As old as Islam itself, Shia Islam has undergone a historical development in which it has always been a minority, sometimes tolerated, sometimes intransigent, seeking to practice Islamic precepts and rules in all

aspects of human life.”¹ To illustrate this fact, the theme “**God’s Co-Workers**” is dealt within this volume: Because after the events of our time and the influence they have on human life, there can be no doubt that this issue is topical. That is always topical because it concerns the depth of human understanding of social thinking (politics, economics) and its nonviolent realization,² which leads to a just and peaceful life.

This Volume deals with the Islamic doctrine of the community and the situation of the Islamic *Ummah* in today’s world, as well as its close connection to Islamic history and to our ongoing generations.

In particular, its vivid memories of the great Islamic role models are specifically addressed:

- The *Ummah*,
- its characteristics,
- its purposes and
- its relationship with other communities

¹ Tabatabai, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn (Allama): *Die Schia im Islam*. Islamic Centre Hamburg, Hamburg 1996, p. XI.

² Therefore, this study has not been remained isolated in the German-speaking world. Its introducing is very important, and the results of this **theorizing** have been transferred into many languages.

are examined here. In this context, reference was made to the important factor that motivates people to resist violence and injustice and to deal with others without violence.

I hope that Muslims, the Islamic communities and all people who cooperate with them - as **“God’s Co-Workers”** will find the strength and courage to accept the challenges and to pose the current questions to Islam in a scientifically sound manner and to answer them transparently in public. This is the **“right path”** as mentioned in the Holy Quran!³

³ *Holy Quran* 1:6-7. During this series, the footnotes referred to the Quran as follows: *Hl. Quran* 1:6-7.

God's Co-Workers

Renewed Joy in Our *Fast-Moving Age*

Shia Islam strives for a just world order beyond supply and demand. It poses fundamental questions of life:

- What serves man, life and creation?
- What is the goal of action and the economy?

It is not satisfied with mere questions, but offers orientation. Orientation from the point of view of faith requires a confrontation with the prevailing states of consciousness, one-dimensional ways of thinking, different mentalities and the dialogue with those who think differently. Essential criteria in this context are respect for human dignity and responsibility for creation. This means keeping an eye on long-term developments and holistic goals.

Confronted with the many forms of injustice in our world and aware of our own responsibility in this world, we come to the conclusion that the peaceful coexistence of different religious communities will only be possible if the religions and the political powers make an “option for the suffering victims of this suffering earth” (*Crinkle*).

Indeed, we are convinced that all those who work for justice and “*just peace*” are **God’s co-workers**, and that on this basis a new political culture of cooperation between Islamic and other culture, especially Christian faith traditions should develop.⁴ And it is clear that only through action in solidarity peace for the world can be saved.⁵ Especially in this age, the non-violent aspects of a just world economic order are of fundamental importance.

Thus, no one can contain the growing non-violent influence of Islam by means of

⁴ Cf: Abraham, K.C.: *Socio-political pluralism and global solidarity. From the perspective of liberation*. In: Bsteh, Andreas (ed.): *Peace for humanity. Foundations, problems and future perspectives from an Islamic and Christian perspective* (Contributions to the Theology of Religion; 8), Mödling 1994, pp. 251-272, here pp. 252 and 269.

⁵ Cf: Zakzouk, Mahmoud: *Peace in the Islamic perspective*. Concept and necessity of world peace. In: Bsteh, Andreas (ed.): *Ibid.* pp. 69-92, here pp. 85 f.

defamation, injustice or even violence. Such behavior is not a solution and is not under the blessing of God. They also destroy human coexistence in our society. Working together in our ***fast-moving times*** helps us - by looking closely at the current situation - to be realistic and be able to contribute to *building peace*.

We are part of a religious community, and therefore we are also obliged to participate in the building of a just order ourselves and to work for the promotion of the holistic development of the human being.⁶ The only limitation in this area is that the fight against violence itself must never become a goal, but must always remain a means of achieving human progress and perfecting non-violent vision.

The greater the spiritual heritage in our society, the more influence Islam will have. A renewed commitment to non-violence and to the Word of God in societies is necessary so that we can live according to our faith and

⁶ Cf: Arinze, Francis Cardinal, in his message of welcome to the International Christian-Islamic Conference organized by the Institute for Theology of Religion of the St. Gabriel Theological College in Vienna from 30 March to 2 April 1993. See Bsteh, Andreas (ed.): Ibid. pp. 41-45, here p. 43.

witness non-violence with ***renewed joy and power***.

For this it is necessary to follow non-violent views on peaceful coexistence much more faithfully and to commit ourselves to good, humane coexistence.

Islam is not only religion in the traditional sense, but it is a comprehensive religious and social system for all areas of human life. This is the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad (s), who “proclaims such a high ethics as Jesus presented in the Sermon on the Mount, and he did not say: ‘My kingdom is not of this world’, but has become the founder of a mighty secular state.”⁷

He wants to encourage people to contribute responsibly and effectively to the prevention of violence. But it is not enough just to talk about non-violent views. This is where our responsibility begins. If we are insightful in this respect, we must no longer let this topic pass us by as spectators. The new attitude towards non-violence, the belief in its vital commitment and the corresponding action, must be so strong in us and become

⁷ Glasenapp, Helmuth (von): *The five world religions: Brahmanism, Buddhism, Chinese Univer-*sism, Christianity, Islam. Heyne, Munich, 1997, p. 300; cf. also p. 310.

so much the content of our lives that we can be recognized by it.

At this point it would be of further interest to consider other important issues in the area of pastoral understanding of the congregation, such as:

- the mere effect of a lively Islamic community.
- the invaluable importance of an open Islamic community.
- the determination of these communities.
- the connection of their faith with culture and art.
- the publicity of faith, etc.

But within the limited scope of this study, it is not possible for me to cover all topics.

I hope that in further volumes of this series I will have the chance to deal with the above-mentioned topics in detail. It is God's mission for the Islamic world community to ensure the conditions for peace, justice and freedom under which the community can obey God and proclaim the non-violent message of the Hl. Quran without interference.

Therefore, we pray for those in positions of responsibility in the nations and appeal to them to guarantee freedom of thought and conscience and to guarantee the freedom to

practice and spread religion in accordance with God's will. At the same time, we express our deep concern for all those who are innocent victims of violence and unlawfully imprisoned, especially for our brothers who suffer for their activities for justice and non-violence. We pray and work for their success and freedom.

The belief in non-violence should be the essence of our personality, the characteristic by which we can be recognized as Muslims and as ***“Co-Workers of God”***: Building on this hope, we will finish this volume and deal with other topics in next volumes.

May the guidance in God's way be given to all of us and may we too be among those faithful servants who grasp the core of prophetic guidance, imitate the pure Imams and become true:

“Co-Workers of God”!

Book to Go!

“Book to Go!” as a multi-volume study booklet is a kind of **“cash and read”** and tries to remind the readers different ways of thinking and actions. Its compact content leads to harmony between faith and praxis and in living with others.

God’s Co-Workers

This volume deals with topics related to the **“theology of community”**. We as the Islamic World Community (*Ummah*) believe, who work for **“just peace”** and nonviolence are **God’s Co-Workers**. So, we try to pave the way for **sustainable Co-Working in God’s presence**. On this basis we build a new socio-political culture of cooperation between Islamic and other cultures. The belief in non-violence should be the essence of our personality, the characteristic by which we can be recognized as Muslims and as **“Co-Workers of God”**. Building on this hope, we could be able to get the state of the **“Co-Workers of God”** and to turn our identity to live as friends of God.

Prof. Dr. Hamid Kasiri

Author of several book series on nonviolent, Dialogue, **“Just peace”** and Shia Studies. His monographs on Shia Islam at universities are now considered as classics. He is the founder and owner of **“ILogos International Publications”**, Vienna/Austria.



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