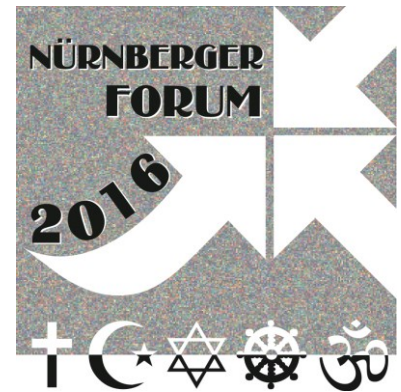


Mouhanad Khorchide

Islamic Contributions to the Common Good of Public Education



ABSTRACT

The arrival of Muslims in Germany following the job migration in the 60s and 70s of the past century has changed the face of Germany. In fact, Germany turned soon into more than one way increasingly pluralistic society.

Taking the ever-changing face of the migrant population into account, Islamic religious education in public schools could offer a constructive contribution to a pluralistic society in particular and the global concept of pluralism in general. However, this model could only allow full development, when 'Islam' is able to construct the image of a dialogical religion, which is by its very means capable of tolerance and pluralism, a religion, which is in constant dialogue with the life-realities, current in society, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

Especially for Muslims of the second and third generation of migrants the role of 'Islam' becomes increasingly apparent for the process of self-construction. This process, however, is influenced if not impaired by the feeling of appreciation and acknowledgement by the surrounding 'majority society' and/or the lack thereof. The more Muslim youngsters are able to develop a feeling of integration and belonging to the receiving society, the more their expectation grow. This becomes visible not only in their claims for equal treatment and equal opportunities in all formal and informal societal institutions (education, job, and housing markets), but in expectations allowing full acknowledgement and acceptance of their respective identity – often Islam provides a central point in the construction of the self-identity.

If society fails to negotiate hopes, claims and expectations, those young adults seek for a more secure and exclusive 'us-identity', which they ultimately find in their respective religious traditions. This form of – what must be called – reactive recourse to religion, often coping with yet uncertain identity constructions, often coming to terms with the religious traditions of their families, triggers frequently their recruitment into exclusivist milieus preventing pluralism. In light of the fact that the majority society is not able and/or not willing to provide an Islamic religious education in public schools, the task of Islamic religious education and its current and future challenges becomes once more visible. A mature concept of Islamic religious education must, therefore, assume a theology in the first place, which focusses on the individual in all aspects of his/her identity and constantly negotiates the coordinates of dialogical relationship between God and men.