ous attributes. Yet these insights are not integrated into an overall theory of the ways in which ritual efficacy and social relations are produced around the mountain. This would require gendering the "underlying logics" (10) of the ritual/body/mind/space/action nexus Huber analyzes. And it would require a more nuanced exploration of regional identities that would get at the relationships between the gendered social order of the pilgrimage process and the gendered social order of native place—home, household, and local economy. Overall though, this work is a groundbreaking and important study that should be required reading for all students of Tibet, Asian studies, pilgrimage, and religion and ritual in general.

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The Environmental Dimensions of Islam. By Mawil Izzi Dien. Lutterworth, 2000. 191 pages. $43.85.

The present global environmental crisis has become a focus of increasing importance over the past decade or so within all the world's major religious traditions. For one who is both an Islamicist and an environmentalist, it is sad but probably not inaccurate to concede that Muslims have not been among the more active participants in the burgeoning worldwide field of religion and ecology. Contemporary Iranian philosopher Hossein Nasr, long based in the United States, is by far the most notable and visible exception to this rule, having been lecturing and writing on the spiritual aspects of humanity's estrangement from nature for over thirty years. The author of the work under review, Mawil Izzi Dien, though far less well known than Nasr, can also claim to be one of the Muslim world's pioneers into this area. Unfortunately, such voices are still rare and clearly do not reflect mainstream Muslim views anywhere in the world.

In 1983 Izzi Dien and five other Islamic scholars were commissioned by the World Conservation Union and Saudi Arabia's Meteorology and Environmental Protection Administration to draw up a short treatise on Islamic principles of environmental protection, which was published in English, French, and Arabic (*Environmental Protection in Islam,* 2d ed., Island Press, 1995 [1983]). Izzi Dien acknowledges his disappointment that to date no government has applied the principles outlined in this original short paper to the passing of environmental legislation (5), though he is apparently unaware that in some cases, such as Iran and Pakistan, Islamic principles have in fact been employed as a basis for such legislation (see Richard Foltz, "Is There an Islamic Environmentalism?" *Environmental Ethics* 22/1 [2000]: 63–72, especially 68–70). Izzi Dien does correctly note that at present his is the first full-length book to appear, at least in English, specifically devoted to the potential for deriving an environmental ethic from Islamic sources. Essays included in a prior volume edited by Fazlun Khalid and Joanne O'Brien, though titled *Islam and Ecology* (Cassell, 1992), largely treat the environment as an issue secondary to those of social justice, Islamic economics, and so forth, as do the majority of essays in a forthcoming conference

volume by the same title edited by Azizan Baharuddin et al. (Harvard University Press).

Izzi Dien's new book is, therefore, a major, most welcome, and so far unique addition to the massive recent literature on religion and ecology. In his previous published articles, expanded here in a book-length discussion, Izzi Dien has done an admirable job of outlining a wide range of principles derived from the Qur'an, hadith traditions, and classical Sunni law that have demonstrable environmental relevance. These sources enjoin Muslims to treat all of Allah's creation, including nonliving elements (especially water), with respect. The Qur'an states that all creation praises God, even if this praise is not expressed in human language (17:44). The Qur'an further states that "there is not an animal in the earth, nor a flying creature on two wings, but they are peoples like unto you" (6:38). There is a marked emphasis in the Qur'an on balance in all things (13:8, 15:21, 25:2).

Generally speaking, Islam's cosmology has been seen as unapologetically anthropocentric. However, unlike some other contemporary Muslim environmentalists who take as their starting point the Qur'anic concept of humankind's *khilafa,* or stewardship (literally, "vice-regency"; Qur'an 2:30, 6:165) over creation, Izzi Dien's anthropocentrism is implicit rather than explicit. Though he does not mention *khilafa* as such until page 74, he puts his own view quite strongly: "Human responsibility . . . is the only way to produce balance on earth, the resting place of all creatures" (38). On the other hand, Izzi Dien offers the qualification (following Ibn Taymiyya) that, "while it is true that the Qur'an describes creatures as being created to serve humans [6:5, 10; 14:32–34], it was never defined as the sole reason for their creation" (99).

Disappointingly, the environmental detriments of meat eating (especially factory farming), as well as the issue of uncontrolled human population growth and its costs to the rest of creation, are nowhere acknowledged in this book, apart from a brief and somewhat cavalier dismissal of vegetarianism (146) and a red herring reduction of meat-eating ethics to the only marginally relevant issue of conserving endangered species (147; for the most part, species become endangered because we destroy their habitats, not because we eat them). Izzi Dien admits that "the issue of ecosystems, habitats and the natural world is a new area of Islamic legal study" and calls for the development of "a new strand of Islamic law under the heading of 'environmental *fiqh*'" (148). It is hoped that recognized Islamic legal scholars will take up this challenge.

One is inclined to agree with Izzi Dien when he asserts that "when a Muslim government makes plans for the environment, it is imperative that it takes into consideration the public committment to the Islamic faith" (12). The governments of Muslim-majority countries as diverse as Egypt, Turkey, and Indonesia have passed environmental legislation, but the motives of these same governments are often questioned as suspect and subject to western or elite interests, and their policies are often condemned wholesale by Islamist opposition groups. On the other hand, the issue is more complex than Izzi Dien's warning indicates. For example, the Islamic rhetoric backing some environmental policies in Iran (including the Muslim world's most comprehensive birth control strategy) could

backfire because many Iranians are as suspicious of their Islamist government as Muslims elsewhere are of their secular ones.

The main problem with this otherwise excellent and thought-provoking book is its underlying and pervasive claim to be dealing with a single, "true" Islamic perspective, which happens to be environmentalist. The writer speaks vaguely of an unspecified "indigenous Islamic culture" (5) and refers to "the Islamic viewpoint" (7, 8, 134): "Islam claims to be an environmentally aware religion" (18). Where? One feels that even the definite article in the book's title would have best been deleted.

Though Izzi Dien's environmentalist Islam may strike readers familiar with traditional interpretations as somewhat novel, the evidence he musters is sound on its own terms as well as extremely timely, for there is no doubt that an environmentalist reading is urgently needed by Muslims today as never before in history. Yet Izzi Dien's pervasive essentializing begs far too many questions and suggests that he may be more interested in offering an apologetic to non-Muslims than in awakening Muslim readers to the ecological potential of their faith. In a particularly troubling example he claims that "since the birth of Islam the environment has been considered as an integral part of the faith" (12). Considered by whom? If by Muslims, it might be helpful to have named some of them. One suspects, however, that this is really just the backward projection of a modern-day Muslim environmentalist. It is one thing to argue that a tradition carries the *potential* for environmental interpretation (as most of the world's contemporary ecotheologians are attempting to do) but quite another to claim that such has in fact *been* the interpretation from the very beginning. Though environmental degradation is nothing new in human history, its global scale is a recent phenomenon, and Izzi Dien at least fails to provide convincing evidence that premodern Muslims were "eco-friendly" in any distinctive sense. Garden imagery, though present in the Qur'an, is no more a dominant theme than are pastoral scenes in the Bible. The rich animal rights rhetoric in the tenth-century treatise by the Pure Brethren of Basra, *The Case of the Animals versus Man before the King of the Jinn,* holds great potential for the development of a contemporary Islamic animal rights movement; the Pure Brethren was a marginal group in its own time, however, and its views were hardly representative of medieval Islamic orthodoxy any more than St. Francis's were of the medieval Catholic Church. Like St. Francis, the Pure Brethren has perhaps more to teach us now in the twenty-first century than it had for the people of its own time.

In any case, Izzi Dien does not mention the Pure Brethren, or Rumi, Ibn 'Arabi, or many other historical voices from whom Muslims today could learn environmental lessons (although he does make his own uses of al-Jahiz, al-Jawziyya, Ibn Kathir, and Sayyid Qutb). For the most part, Izzi Dien equates Islam in its narrowest possible sense with the scriptural tradition and thus falls into the facile assumption that some kind of pristine, static Islam has always been present (if not correctly perceived and practiced by Muslims) and that it has been environmentalist.

The problems associated with a static understanding of Islamic guidelines, especially in terms of environmental concerns, should be obvious. To give one

example, Izzi Dien cites the directive in classical Islamic law that if an animal or impurity falls into a well, then the water must not be used for three days if the animal has putrefied or one day otherwise (37). Though medieval laws that recognize the dangers of water pollution seem enlightened in comparison with some of our lax contemporary laws, they nevertheless appear woefully inadequate in light of present-day knowledge regarding persistent toxic elements found in public water supplies. Likewise the Islamic concept of *mawat,* literally, "dead land," reflects an unsophisticated understanding of ecology. Ironically, Izzi Dien sees *mawat* as a category generally suitable for preserve status, or *hima* (39, 42–46). His observation that "if land is occupied by living creatures then it ought not to be considered dead, merely because of the lack of human presence," though insightful, seems less to reflect "the spirit of Islamic law" as he claims than it does a markedly contemporary sort of biocentric ethic. Al-Jawziyya, whom Izzi Dien cites in this regard, appears rather to have felt that the proper domain of nonhuman creatures was desert wastes unfit for human habitation, a kind of medieval Middle Eastern interspecies apartheid. In light of these uncritical discussions, Izzi Dien's later remark that "any traditional experiences remain historically distant from contemporary application without careful analysis of the concepts which they provide" (49) is merely confusing. In the same paragraph he contradicts his earlier complaint that no Muslim country is currently applying Islamic principles to environmental legislation (5, cited above) by saying that "many countries are already taking steps in this direction," though, frustratingly, he does not elaborate.

Izzi Dien lives and teaches in Wales; Nasr, in the United States. Both write mainly in English and for western audiences. One very much *hopes* that their works will be widely read by Muslims and that they will be instrumental in raising Muslim consciousness worldwide on environmental issues, though this hope seems regrettably faint. A lesser value, but a value nevertheless and perhaps more likely, is that Izzi Dien's new book can provide sympathetic anglophone non-Muslims with *one* thoughtful, sincere Islamic interpretation of humanity's responsibility toward nature, an interpretation grounded in the scriptural sources of the tradition and not dependent on imported philosophy and experience (Nasr's scope is broader, encompassing all the world's major religions). Readers should be cautioned, though, that Izzi Dien's claim to providing *the* Islamic position on the environment would probably strike most Muslims as overly bold.

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The Tao Encounters the West: Explorations in Comparative Philosophy. By Chenyang Li. State University of New York Press, 1999. 234 pages. $19.95.

The enterprise of comparative philosophy is burgeoning with the growing recognition that a failure to articulate itself in a public inclusive of the world's great traditions renders a philosophy embarrassingly parochial and naive. For, until comparative philosophy works out the lineaments of public connections