
Islamic Perspective on Marlowe's Doctor Faustus
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Historically Doctor Faustus was a disreputable astrologer and necromancer known chiefly in German inns. Possibly he was the Johannes Faustus who was granted B.A degree in divinity at Heidelberg in 1509. But this is uncertain for in the Faust book there accumulated a host of legends concerning Faustus. Most of these legends are unified by the idea that pride will have a fall. (Marlowe: 1969: P, IV). This paper investigates Marlowe's play within an Islamic perspective. It tries to find the parallels that the play shows to the Quranic verse, Hadith and the Islamic teachings.

The play starts with Faustus as a man of knowledge who has gained a great fame for curing thousands of people and saving many cities from plague.

*Are not thy bills hung up as monument
Whereby whole cities have escap'd plague
And thousand desperate maladies been eas'd*
(Scene 1: L: 20-22)*

Faustus surveys different kinds of knowledges and concludes that magic offers the most reward. He is not satisfied with all what he has for he looks for a great power that makes him govern between the poles:

A sound magician is a mighty god
(Scene 1: L: 60)

This over-ambition is portrayed as dangerous because man must have his limits and his power is limited. The Holy Quran proves this fact that man is a weak creature and his powers are not limitless:

"يريد الله أن يخفف عنكم وخلق الإنسان ضعيفا"

(النساء الآية 28)

* Christopher Marlowe. Doctor Faustus. Harold Osborne, ed. London: University Tutorial Press Ltd. 1967. All subsequent quotations are taken from this edition.

*"Allah doth wish to lighten your (burdens): for
man was created weak (in resolution)*
(Women: 28)*