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Editorial

Globalization of Chaos and Chaos of Globalization

Today, the world is advancing with little visibility, in contorted turns, ups and downs, eyes straining to identify the right direction and destination throughout them and discern the straight from the meandering, to avoid the confusion and deviations that drive Man to perdition. In international politics, and at this decisive historical juncture, certainty is sorely lacking. The sense of security is absent and in many of the trends shaping global thought, multiple and diverse as they are, there is a clear failing in wisdom and an absence of the vision needed to infer the truth from all matters and delve into their depths. The balance of all things is disrupted, meanings are buried deep down and the value of knowledge that lights the way towards the greater good of humanity has depreciated. In business and economics, greed and covetousness have prevailed and the frenzy to lay hands on other people's wealth has grown fiercer using fraud and deceit as its means to undermine interests. The pursuit of profit has acquired singular importance and myriad forms, licit and illicit, creating stark disparities in wealth distribution and widening the gap between the rich and the poor. In such a state of disarray, the world is drowning in mounting waves of crises, strife, troubles and problems that are so complex as to resist resolution and settlement. Turmoil is undermining peace and security in many regions of the world and jeopardizing the stability of human societies East and West.

This endless maze into which our world had descended for various reasons and from different directions and that has taken multiple manifestations is the greatest dilemma facing humanity at this critical stage. Overwhelming uncertainty is intensifying and paralyzing the human mind in its search for a way out of the rampant civilizational crisis. This crisis is generating immense confusion and chaos, clouding thought and preventing human action from saving lofty values, principles and constants from collapsing and disintegrating, and from restoring balance, harmony and warmth to human relations. It is

also failing to foster self-confidence and hope in redressing the imbalance that is jeopardizing the loftiest values advocated by divine messages. These values had served as a basis in the emergence of successive civilizations, a foundation in the formulation of international laws and the strongest motivation for keeping world peace and preventing the outbreak of wars that destroy lives and civilization and are causing the downfall of civilization.

This civilizational crisis has morphed into a threat to world peace at a time when the United Nations Charter has been bypassed and disregarded through repeated violations of its provisions. The outcome is that the UN Security Council was incapacitated by two of its permanent members. The international law system was circumvented, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international conventions and charters, the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and ending with the legal opinions of the international Court of Justice. All of this is occurring at a time when human awareness is rising about the rule of law and the legitimacy of intervention to resolve armed conflicts and protect people against aggression and the violation of their right to self-determination and to decide of their future. This reflects the highest degree of contradiction between reality and ideals, a clash between progress and prosperity at their utmost and as experienced by the materialist dimension of contemporary civilization, and the total absence of commitment to the spirit of law and disregard for human values in their moral aspects.

The alarming conditions prevailing over the international scene as a result of international law violations and the exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis which has reached its worst levels since the outbreak of World War II, should not be underestimated nor should their risks downplayed. Instead, they must be approached with an enlightened vision, profound understanding and wisdom. This would enable the strategists, the makers of international public opinion and the wise of the world to chart a course out of this situation with minimal losses, in the midst of today's total anarchy which is one of the key reasons behind the unprecedented instability jeopardizing peace and security. Regional crises are being transformed into a global crises that have been intensifying day after day, till they begun to crosscut all threats and all levels.

This meticulous dedication to creating a chaos that spawns crises and armed conflicts to exploit them in hegemonic practices and expansionist ploys and

control other peoples' destinies, reflects a clear lack of vision, a shallowness of thought, corruption of opinion, and bad management in the short and long terms. Although most policymakers in the West rely on the productions of strategic think tanks for their ideas, analyses, projections, assessments, conceptualizations, reports, case studies, polls and surveys, political thought in the advanced countries that influence international policymaking is in general and in core flawed. The sources of this failing, as seen by objective researchers who are not driven by political passions and bias for the most powerful, are the intellectual agendas, historical impurities and prejudices, as well as the recourse to unreliable sources for the truth and the reality of matters in conflict hot spots. Add to this the basing of political calculations on improvised information, erroneous explanations, dysfunctional analysis, and ill-intentioned interpretations that are not founded on proper knowledge and understanding and whose proponents lack intellectual integrity, reliable reporting and objective editing. What they submit to decision-makers is non-objective, disconnected from reality and always biased in favor of the most powerful party of a violent conflict.

Such is the fragile basis on which policies relating to the Islamic world in the present and the future are built and planned by the mighty powers holding the reins of international politics. This only exacerbates the tension, turmoil and instability, creating a conducive climate for extremism under all its forms, instruments and justifications and leading to security and peace disruption and the spread of terrorism in all its manifestations, be it perpetrated by individuals and extremist groups, or the terrorism practiced by states that have no respect for human rights or for the right of peoples to self-determination. Thus, the globalization of chaos becomes the number one factor in the escalation of the threats which have become, more than any time in the past, a dominant feature on the ground in several parts of the world, especially in parts of the Islamic world.

Is the overwhelming mayhem prevailing in large parts of the world today a transient state, or is its continuity premeditated being linked to globalization and a permanent feature of it? If yes, and that seems to be the answer of the knowledgeable about the reality of things, the globalization of chaos is a long-standing policy and the by-product of globalization. It is not conceivable to separate these two phenomena which may seem irreconcilable and

contradictory but turn out not to be so once we take a closer look and probe deeper. The wild chaos that is destroying today's world and obliterating specificity and identity is the breeding ground for neo-colonial policies that are conniving to dominate developing and emerging countries, control peoples and isolate them, disrupt value systems in order to open the way before hybrid patterns of Western life. These patterns totally clash with the behavior, ethics and living orders of countries with firmly established religious beliefs, an age-old civilization and cultural authenticity, and precedence in fashioning a glorious human civilization down the ages.

Fuelled by the galloping expansion of globalization across the world and in politics, economy, the media, technology and culture, chaos is uncontrollably spreading its wings, becoming itself globalized and creating the notion of globalized chaos. It is synonymous with the economic anarchy that is sweeping across the public domain of unbridled capitalism, roaming, unchecked, all fields and invading all markets, destroying minds and causing endless crises, undermining all endeavors to instate harmony among humans and consolidate the bases of stability that is conducive to peace, the antithesis of war. War is in all cases a product of chaos.

That is the aberrant equation put forth and adopted by international powers who believe they are serving their own interests at the expense of peoples lacking power, wealth, development and progress. But in fact, they only harm their own interests, undermine the people they represent and wreak havoc around the world. They upset the balance of international relations and seek, deliberately or unwittingly, to destabilize human societies and jeopardize world peace. This equation thus carries much harm and a great deal of risk that constitutes a prime source of threats. These are worsening in line with the growing impact of failed policies that lack sound bases in mapping the future in the troubled hot spots that can be found, in their entirety, in the Islamic world. It is amply clear now that the Islamic world is targeted in its security, sovereignty, independence, resources, faith, culture and national languages, Arabic topping the list as the language of the Quran and of Hadith.

Globalized chaos, with its interconnectedness, crosscutting spheres and rapidly growing speed, its dangers are escalating and its reach is expanding, making it a growing direct threat to international peace and security. It is also a deliberate violation of international laws. The instigators of this chaos – since

it is a premeditated action undertaken for itself – aim to tear the Islamic world apart, break its might, weaken its power, deplete its resources, and kindle the fires of strife among its religious and ethnic components, even when it is clear that these objectives are evolving in the opposite direction of what is intended for the Islamic world under the guise of peace-building actions, promoting dialogue of cultures and alliance of civilizations, and disseminating the values of harmony and tolerance between nations and peoples. This, in truth, is no more than a strategic ploy to conceal the real intents and project an image that is the opposite of reality.

Understanding the nature of far from innocent schemes that engender an uncertainty that will continue to worsen till it reaches chaotic proportions and becomes a by-product of invasive globalization that seeks to impose government regimes and lifestyles on countries that are struggling to preserve their presence on the international scene, could help stop this sweeping invasion that is almost prevailing over the entire world, though its repercussions are more dangerous and terrifying for the Islamic world than for the rest.

This is the globalization of chaos that inevitably leads to the chaos of globalization where all chances of peace on earth are lost. That is the true cultural crisis faced by humanity at this stage in its history, a stage that is transitory, for the will of the Almighty Allah shall always prevail.

Islam Today

Strategic Awareness in Building Unity and Strengthening Relations between the Ummah's Components

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri*

The monotheism-upholding Ummah can only be a nation of unity in its lofty meanings, profound and diverse connotations and myriad nuances. The Islamic Ummah is one nation even when it is assailed by troubles and disasters, ravaged by political upheavals that weaken the greater Islamic edifice and wreak havoc with the Muslims' might, tearing their bonds apart and weakening their historical roles. Allah (SWT) says: [***And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood***] (*Al-Muminum*, verse 52), and the same verse occurs again in the chapter of *Al-Anbiaa* (92).

Sheikh Mohamed Abu Zahra believes that Islamic unity is an immutable truth by virtue of Quranic texts and hadiths. Islam admits no discrimination based on color, race, language or culture. This unity took shape during the Prophet's era (peace be upon him), and that of the Rightly-guided Caliphs and subsequent Umayyad and Abbasid reigns, although regionalist or clannish loyalties which had begun to rear their head during the Umayyad era had started to permeate Islamic groups. This clannish loyalty was indeed behind the Arab Assabyya (spirit of Arab kinship), and both were pre-Islamic in their sense, negating the essence of Islam and the commandments of Prophet Mohamed.[1]

From the second half of the 19th century when Islamic states began to collapse one after another under the onslaught of Western colonialism, the outlines of a great conspiracy were emerging, paving the way for the

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(1) Sheikh Mohamed Abu Zahra: ***Al-Wahda Al-Islamiyya***, p. 9. Dar Al-Fikr Al-'Arabi, Cairo, 2nd edition, 1977.

collapse of the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Despite its many flaws, this empire represented a homogenous union of Muslim peoples in the Balkans, the Arab region and Central Asia, regardless of the disparities in the standards of that unity from one region to another. Islamic thought focused on strengthening ranks, reinforcing ties, fending off threats, overcoming problems, and countering the effects of the Western interventions fuelled by crusading movements, colonial ambitions and the Zionist machinations which were at their budding stages and only starting to emerge on the global political scene. The notion of an '**Islamic unity**' emerged in its optimal form as the **Islamic League** in the political sense known in those early days of the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909). This sultan paid a dear price for the policy he followed and which was highly disapproved of by European countries, especially England, France, Tsarist Russia and the Vatican.

The term '**Islamic League**' first appeared in the second half of the 19th century and expanded later to include several other concepts. A number of reformists saw in it an invitation to reinstate religion to its former status as during the ancestors' time, while others interpreted it as a call to modernize and develop Islamic concepts, and interpret them in ways that match the evolution of modern life and keeps pace with the concepts produced by the urbanized West and its culture. Others yet saw in it an invitation to revive the Arab Quraishi caliphate but without this caliphate holding a religious authority, becoming instead a mere religious symbol of the unity of Muslims.[2]

Sultan Abdul Hamid II believed that Islamic unity was a means, a cure and a protection for the full expanse of the Ottoman Empire and was thus reluctant to give Jews any concessions in Islamic territories. He championed the notion of an Islamic league that rested on two concepts. The first was reforming the Muslims' conditions and introducing them to modern civilization within the framework of an Islamic caliphate, and the second one was to free the Muslim Orient from the clutches of Western colonial domination.[3]

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(2) Ahmed Fahd Barakat Al-Shawabkeh: *Islamic League Movement*, pp. 5-6. Maktabat Al-Manar, Az-Zarkaa, 1984.

(3) Sayyar Jmeil: *Arabs and Turks: Awakening and Modernity from Ottomanization to Secularization*. Centre for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 1997.

The Islamic league was the reform movement whose advocates wished to unite all Muslims within the same union that could be either Arab or Ottoman, i.e. the unification of all peoples who uphold Islam as their religion within a league or a federation motivated by religious following.[4]

One of the outcomes of the Zionist and Crusading intrigues that encircled the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II was the ruining of his reputation, the defamation of his character, the falsification of his history and the conspiracies weaved against him, ultimately resulting in his going down in modern history as the **Tyrant Sultan** or the **Red Sultan**. His dominion, which stretched over vast expanses across three continents (Europe, Asia and Africa), became known as the **Ailing Man**. This prompted Western countries, which had appointed themselves as the physicians entrusted with the wellbeing of this ailing man, to expedite his demise instead, liquidating his assets and dismembering them, giving birth to the new national Turkish entity, which was confined within the narrow constraints in Asia Minor, cut off from its roots. A new era had begun with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, not only in the Islamic world, but in a general and global way.

While objective researchers acknowledge that the Ottoman Empire served as a protective and unifying umbrella for more than forty different peoples from the Islamic world for over six centuries, they also recognize, out of fairness and in recognition of the facts of history, that that superpower was not the best model of the Islamic approach and rational management of the affairs of Muslims, nor the best way to confront enemies who were growing in numbers and pouncing from east and west, while remaining faithful to the principles of equity and equality in the treatment of the wide spectrum of peoples, races, creeds and denominations that evolved under the banner of this empire.[5]

First published in Paris in 1884 by Jamal Eddine Al-Afghani, the magazine '**Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa**' introduced and strongly championed the notion of an Islamic

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(4) Mona Ahmed Abu Zeid in her preface to the book **Khaterat Jamal Eddine Al-Afghani Al-Husseini**, p. 52, authored by Mohamed Basha Al-Makhzoumi. Dar Al-Kitab Al-Masri, Cairo, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Lubnani, Beirut, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2012.

(5) Article 18 of the Ottoman Constitution (**Al-Mashruteyya**, 1876) stipulated that all Ottomans were equal before the law, as well as equal in governing rights and obligations, except in religious and doctrinal matters.

league. Sheikh Mohamed Rachid Rida says in this regard: 'This magazine was the mouthpiece of a secret society by the same name founded by Jamal Eddine from various elements amongst Muslims from Egypt, India, North Africa and Syria. The goal of this society was to bring about an Islamic unity, awaken Muslims from their deep slumber and alert them to the dangers besieging them, and then accompany them as they set out to banish those dangers.'[6]

Jamal Eddine Al-Afghani expressed his strong belief in the idea of Islamic unity in these words: 'If the Ottoman Empire was able to protect the provinces under its rule from Western hegemony, this would prompt other states to solicit the protection of the Sultan and thus join this Islamic alliance and fend off the West's onslaught on Islamic countries, rise as one man and shed the shackles of the colonizer, so that the Orient can once again belong to the people of the East.'[7]

Be it as it may, the concept of **Islamic unity** in its modern sense was embodied in the Ottoman Empire in a clearly defined way. Conscious of this, one of the main objectives of European colonization was to break the bonds of that unity from its roots and tear up its fabric, and this was ultimately fulfilled once it toppled the caliphate and sowed the seeds of doubt and mistrust, fuelling enmity and hatred among the members that made up that State, especially between Arabs and Turks. They kindled nationalist tendencies such as Touranian, Arab, Armenian, Arnaut … till waves of hatred towards the Turks rippled through the Arab world. From the other side, estrangement from Arabs prevailed to such extents that it became a de facto policy of the Turkish state which came into existence by virtue of the Treaty of Sevres (France, 1920)[8]. This treaty was concluded between the Western powers that were victorious in World War I, and the new leadership in Turkey which

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(6) Mohamed Rachid Rida: *Al-Manar* magazine, vol. 3, p. 455. 13 issues of '*Al-'Urwa Al-Wuthqa*' were published, the first one on 13 March 1884, and the second one in October 1884.

(7) Mohamed Bacha Al-Makhzoumi: *Khaterat Jamal Eddine Al-Afghani Al-Husseini*, p. 72.

(8) The allies forced the pro-Sultan government of Istanbul (other than Ankara's government) to ratify the Treaty of Sevres on 10 August 1920, dividing Turkey into three states. The first one was Armenian and included Kars, Ardahan and Erzurum. The second was Kurdish and covered all regions located east of the Euphrates and south of the Armenian state, while Cilice and the entire southern province were handed over to the French. Italy was given all regions located southwest of Anatolia; and Greece was given the city of Izmir and its surrounding regions as well as Adana and Gallipolis. The capital Istanbul and the coast

paved the way for them to overthrow the Sultan's rule in 1923, and from there for pouncing on the Ottoman Empire and toppling it (1924).

The most eloquent description of the singular situation that prevailed during those troubled times was made by Chakib Arslane who wrote: 'The only league that brought together Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Arnauts and Circassians was the religious one. Without this bond, the sultanate would have crumbled centuries earlier, but bad governance on the inside on the one hand, and the machinations of foreigners from the outside, on the other, pushed many Arabs and Arnauts in particular to seek secession from the State despite this religious bond. The Arnaut preceded the Arabs in this and the Sultan set out to discipline the rebels, mobilizing large armies to this end. Violent battles ensued, only exacerbating the revolt of the Arnauts. The Arabs, on the other hand, nurtured a certain jealousy towards the Turks because they were more numerous than them yet did not enjoy the same privileges as the Turks. The latter claimed that the Arabs were failing in their duties towards the Sultanate to aspire to equality with the Turks. The British managed, before World War I, to lure many young Arabs, attracting some with material benefits while others joined out of conviction having been persuaded that the British wished to recreate an Arab state such as the Abbasid or the Umayyad and would help the Arabs regain their bygone glories.[9]

Against the backdrop of this colonialist plot against Islamic unity, seeking to tear apart the Islamic Ummah and create political climate conducive to the implementation of the Jewish-Zionist political designs, the government of Ankara, which had been moving against the desires of the Ottomans and had triumphed in the liberation war, signed the Lausanne Treaty in 1923[10]. The

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of Marmara were declared a demilitarized zone. The Bosporus and Dardanelles straights were placed under international control to decide of their fate in times of war and peace. (Mostapha Zein: *The Wolf of Anatolia: Mustapha Kamal*, p. 153, Ryad Al-Rayyess lil Kitab wa Al-Nashr, London).

(9) Chakib Arsalane: *History of the Ottoman State*, pp. 332-333. Compiled, authenticated and annotated by Hassan Samahi Sweidan, Dar Ibn Kuthayyir, Beirut, 1st edition, 2011.

(10) The Arnauts, sometimes referred to the Treaty of Lausanne II (signed on 24 July 1923 in Lausanne, Switzerland) set out the status of Anatolia and Eastern Thrace (European part of Turkey today) by abrogating the Treaty of Sevres. The Lausanne Treaty redefined the borders of several countries such as Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey and the Levant States. This colonial treaty was the final blow to Islamic unity in the form it had taken under the Ottoman Empire before World War I.

treaty officially abrogated all rights to foreign concessions, and delineated the international borders of the Turkish State against the will of its people. Thus was turned the page of the Ottoman Empire which had existed for six centuries and had come to symbolize Islamic unity. The Islamic world embarked on a new era where it was assailed by colonial powers and systematically torn apart. These powers destroyed values, violated the Islamic identity, and negatively impacted on the actions of individuals and groups as governments deviated from the logic of good governance. Hearts were thus filled with a sense of urgency to join efforts in order to edify an Islamic unity.

With the end of World War I and the profound changes it generated on life, in thought, and in government regimes and life styles, the concept of **Islamic unity** acquired new connotations distinct by their interconnectedness in content and contradictions in outputs, as diverse as the ebb and flow in their moderation or extremism, matching the political and intellectual climate that prevailed then. Connotations and implications were multiple and diverse, and new political concepts emerged that either clashed, collided or converged with each other, resulting in great confusion in the objectives behind the quest for Islamic unity which went beyond the traditional scope in which it had been evolving from the late 19th century to after World War II. The development witnessed in the concept of Islamic unity reflected an unhealthy evolution of political thought and the emergence of political currents whose advocates managed to impose their theses on intellectual and cultural elites and decision-makers in the countries of the Islamic world. Unity became a political slogan exploited by some for personal ends. The advocacy of unity became a means of political jugglery, which was more dangerous than the material deception punishable by law. Many crimes were perpetrated against Arabs in the name of unity, and many crises ravaged some Arab countries, tore them apart, weakened them and drowned them in chaos under the same motto. Many of the setbacks experienced by the Islamic Ummah in general were the result of an unscrupulous exploitation of unity and a distortion of what it stands for.

The state of intellectual regression and division and the manipulation of the destiny of Muslim peoples were behind the ambiguity and confusion that affected the concept of Islamic unity in its general connotations. We came

face to face with four theories of unity, with starkly differing objectives, clashing contents and divergent dimensions:

- The **visionary unity** which brings Muslim peoples together under a unified political system, or what is referred to in Islamic political literature as the revival and renewal of the Islamic caliphate.

- The **utopian unity** in which all Arab peoples come together within one Arab political entity, referred to as the **nationalist state**.

- The **realistic unity** that unifies one people through the harmony of its members and their unity under a fully sovereign state in accordance with the provisions of international law, i.e. the **Nation State**.

- The **impossible unity** according to which all the peoples of the world coalesce within the same melting pot, a leftist Marxist theory that launched the slogan 'Workers of the World Unite!' and that prevailed in some Arab countries, especially during the first half of the twentieth century, in following and emulation of the Soviet Union which was then at the height of its tyranny, human rights violation and corruption on earth.

The Arab world tried the ideal unity theory, albeit only at the intellectual and aspirational level, and was preoccupied with this theory for a certain length of time. Reverberating in the Arab world at some point was also the echo of the utopian unity theory. For many years, unitary ideas that were totally disconnected from reality spread, and experiences were engaged in but soon proved their failings and were discarded. Political parties came into existence raising nationalist banners and failed in their project, harming in the process the concept, project and theory of unity. But the one experience that endured and benefited to people was the realist unity theory which reached maturity and took shape in the rise of the nation state that enjoys full sovereignty over its territory in accordance with international laws. The nation state was the starting point in the establishment of the rules of a regional grouping that saw light in 1945 under the name of the **League of Arab States** and which began with seven Arab countries that gradually increased in number to reach twenty-two today. The nation state was a solid foundation for the establishment of a broader alliance at the level of the Islamic world under the name of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation**. The OIC started out with

twenty-five countries and expanded its membership to comprise fifty-seven today.

In his profound and candid analysis of the civilizational structure underlying the concept of political unity, the thinker Malek Bennabi says: 'What happened to the Islamic world is that it came to the realization that unity was a key issue, and that no civilizational formation can be created out of the hodge-podge of elements and policies available on the ground today. It is indeed difficult to use the term 'politics' in reference to these chaotic attempts resorted to by various leaders. It is more apt to speak of 'politica' when describing all manners of confusion, illusions and myths and all forms of deliberate deceit. The difference between the two terms is as immense as the difference between fortuity or emotion, and leadership inspired from human experiences throughout history. This cunning 'politica' engaged in by leaders is nothing short of muddling the possible with the impossible, and abandoning goals that can be directly achieved for what cannot be reached no matter how desperately we cling to utopian means.'[11]

If Western colonialism has succeeded -particularly with the racist Touranian nationalism - to overthrow the Islamic caliphate in March 1924, causing the implosion of the unity fabric in most countries of the far-flung Islamic world, the great jurist Dr Abdul Razzaq Al-Sanhoury wrote in the following month (April 1924) about Islam's ability and suitability to serve as a federating element for oriental nations, indicating that two of Islam's principles make it an all-inclusive enclosure for a league of nations that would not succumb to weaknesses. These principles are the equality of all peoples and individuals, no Arab being better than a non-Arab except by the degree of his piety, and proclaiming that Islam is open to all human beings, and that it is the religion of the entire humanity. Edifying the Islamic league over new bases to become an assembly of oriental nations opens the way for non-racist nations and ethnicities and at the same brings together the peoples, nations and nation

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(11) Malek Bennabi: **Mushkilat Hadariyya: Wijhat Al-Aalam Al-Islami**, p. 119, translated by Abdul Saboor Shaheen with a preface by Ammar Talbi, Islamic Renaissance Thought series, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Masri, Cairo, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Lubnani, Beirut, 2012. The term used by the author is perhaps what is known today as politicized politics in description of bogus politics.

states of the Orient around the rallying factor of Islam. This was the dream and most important preoccupation of Al-Sanhoury.

For Al-Sanhoury, this 'Islamic Orient' was the '**league of oriental nations**' brought together through the association of Islam. It is a religious renaissance, a federation of nations and a decentralized league. This is the original theory of Islamic unity as described by Al-Sanhoury in his book '**The Jurisprudence of Caliphate and its Evolution into a League of Oriental Nations**'. The book was translated from French into Arabic by his daughter Dr Nadia Abdul Razzaq Al-Sanhoury, with a review and preface by he husband Dr Tawfiq Chaoui (Cairo edition, 1989).[12]

The political unity of oriental nations and peoples was imagined by Al-Sanhoury as the outcome of these peoples' adoption of one and the same Islamic civilizational model and a unified Islamic law and culture. It applies also to the creation of a union in trade, economy and customs, and the adoption of Arabic as a unified official language for government, culture, science, literature and conferences. After all these measures and unification achievements comes political unity[13], following a logical and sequential order, and not as a single leap that bows neither to reason nor to careful planning that takes due consideration of the reality on the ground.

This is a realistic perception that largely differs from the illusions upheld by some intellectuals, cultural elites and political leaders whose connection to reality is flimsy and are unconcerned with the institutional edification of unity among Muslim peoples. They wander about in the meanders of imagination, and once they come face to face with the true nature of things and with harsh realities, they veer towards deceit to mislead minds, preserve the status they hold and safeguard their material gains, unable to muster enough courage to admit that they are advancing aimlessly and acting blindly.

It is worth of note that Dr Al-Sanhoury used the term '**Islamic Orient**' or the '**league of oriental nations**' instead of the **Islamic World** or **Muslim peoples**

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(12) Dr Mohamed Emara: **Islamiyyat As-Sanhoury Basha: Islamiyat Ad-Dawla, Al-Madaniya wa Al-Umran**, vol. 1, p. 96, Dar Al-Wafaa, 1st edition, Cairo, 2006.
(13) Ibid, p. 105.

since these last two terms were not common in Arabic literature at the time he wrote his PhD dissertation on the jurisprudence of caliphate in French (1925) under the supervision of a French professor. But the man remains undeniably one of the pioneers of juristic renewal, ijtihad in fiqh and social reform. He was the first to develop a practical theory of association and unity on the basis of modern laws and under the aegis of Islam, making him without the slightest doubt the founder of the theory of Islamic Conference which came into force with creation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. This organization was founded in 1972 under the name the Organization of Islamic Conference, in relation to the 1st Islamic Summit held in Rabat in 1969. These are the deeply rooted foundations of true Islamic unity which is in all aspects the opposite of idealist and utopian unity theses that are utterly removed from reality.

The unity that should be the object of all endeavors is one that takes into account the present circumstances and challenges, means available and the impactful factors. Consideration of this unity does not evolve independently from the changes occurring on the international scene. One of the premises of this unity is the consecration of relations between the unified Islamic Ummah's components and the followers of various religions, doctrines and ethnicities and diverse cultures, all of which constitute the backbone of religious and ethnic groups, each in its own way. This is what is known as plurality within unity or diversity-based unity. And it is on this solid foundation that unity is built, not on flimsy bases. This way, it acquires immunity against the dangers threatening it and becomes a strong and steadfast unity in the face of adversity. This aspect was not taken into account in past experiences of unity which were ill served by improvisation, impulsiveness and the lack of proper appreciation of the consequences. The result was utter failure, so much so that the mere thought of unity became controversial in a most unconstructive way and even seen by some as an exercise in futility.

The pillars of unity, the rules of solidarity and the principles of cooperation take body in premises such as the premise that all people are equal in rights and obligations, that their religion is one of peace and equity and this religion guarantees global peace and social *takaful*. From this equality ensue many requirements, most important of which is cooperation in different fields for various purposes and using multiple means, on all internal and external

matters, and in ways that serve the vital interests of peoples. This unity is edified on foundations of cooperation, coordination and complementarity and on the basis of a dynamic and impactful Islamic solidarity.

This realistic and pragmatic version of unity was clearly concretized through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The preamble to this Organization's Charter draws the outline of the notion of political unity of Islamic countries, in a way that asserts the immutable truths from which unity draws its elements: "*to preserve and promote the lofty Islamic values of peace, compassion, tolerance, equality, justice and human dignity; to endeavor to work for revitalizing Islam's pioneering role in the world while ensuring sustainable development, progress and prosperity for the peoples of Member States; to enhance and strengthen the bond of unity and solidarity among the Muslim peoples and Member States; to respect, safeguard and defend the national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all Member States; to contribute to international peace and security, understanding and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions and promote and encourage friendly relations and good neighborliness, mutual respect and cooperation; to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance, rule of law, democracy and accountability in Member States in accordance with their constitutional and legal systems; to promote confidence and encourage friendly relations, mutual respect and cooperation between Member States and other States.*"

All the objectives and principles of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation amply reflect the true and not virtual version of the unity of the Islamic Ummah's components. Article 1 of CHAPTER I of the Charter enumerates those objectives as: "*(1) To enhance and consolidate the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among the Member States; (2) To safeguard and protect the common interests and support the legitimate causes of the Member States and coordinate and unify the efforts of the Member States in view of the challenges faced by the Islamic world in particular and the international community in general; (3) To respect the right of self-determination and non-interference in the domestic affairs and to respect sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each Member State; (4) To support the restoration of complete sovereignty and territorial integrity of any Member State under occupation, as a result of aggression, on the basis of international law and cooperation with the relevant international and regional organizations;*

(5) To ensure active participation of the Member States in the global political, economic and social decision-making processes to secure their common interests; (6) To promote inter-state relations based on justice, mutual respect and good neighborliness to ensure global peace, security and harmony; (7) To reaffirm its support for the rights of peoples as stipulated in the UN Charter and international law; (8) To support and empower the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and establish their sovereign State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, while safeguarding its historic and Islamic character as well as the Holy places therein; (9) To strengthen intra-Islamic economic and trade cooperation; in order to achieve economic integration leading to the establishment of an Islamic Common Market."

Unity, congregation, solidarity and cooperation are some of the most important associative and collective traits of the human personality. The sound development of the different components of the human personality- whether individual or collective ones - is essential to the integrity and balance of the personality, and consequently of the integrity and stability of society. These are the components of Islamic unity and the conditions necessary for the cohesion of the Muslim community and its steadfastness in the face of the advocates of division who stir the fires of sectarian strife and racial discrimination. There is no doubt that all components and positive contributions to the history of Muslims support their unity and invite to it because they find their inspiration in Islam and its values. It was originally Islam that unified tribes and peoples, guaranteed their equality, created bonds of brotherhood between them and turned the negatives of tribalism and ethnic loyalty into positives that promote equality, brotherhood and solidarity. Mankind was born out of one soul and their differences as distinct peoples and tribes are cause for mutual acquaintance and symbiosis. The differences in tongues and colors are a manifestation of the miracle of God's creation and the perfection of Allah's fashioning of Man in perfect image, and none of this should be used as reason or a tool for arrogance, rivalry and belligerence.[14]

This soaring and sturdy edifice of Islamic unity and alliance on the basis of the religious and cultural sense of affiliation that unifies all components of

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(14) Dr Abdulaziz Othmane Altwaijri: ***Al-Fikr fi Massar Al-Tajdeed***, p. 34, Dar As-Salam li
      Al-Teba'a wa Al-Nashr wal Al-Tawzi' wal Tarjama, Cairo, 2015.

the Islamic Ummah is the embodiment of the Islamic civilizational project, representing a profoundly significant and broad renewal. The unity project thus acquires its constitutional and legal legitimacy and is no longer a mere intellectual theorization, a politicized conception or a slogan whisked out whenever the need arises.

Therefore, one of the most effective and impactful means for strengthening the body of the Islamic Ummah and unifying its ranks is working towards the rapprochement of its religious and ethnic components by rallying all opinions into one voice on all issues of interest to the Ummah's present and future, developing sound political bases for joint Islamic action, and outlining the paths leading to this rapprochement and from there to reaching common goals and the means conducive to their fulfillment. This form of broad political and intellectual rapprochement is not a compulsory or artificial process, nor is it a political move aimed at covering up some weakness or deficiency, but is instead a genuine process imposed by a number of reality-anchored facts.[15]

Consolidating kinship ties - in their broad and deep sense - between the components of the Islamic Ummah, and strengthening the bonds of brotherliness, concord and convergence around one word, can only be achieved by strengthening joint Islamic action based on cooperation, partnership, coordination, and complementarity within mutual respect. These are the alternatives for a union that harnesses sovereignty differences between states and transcends nationalist specificities. These are also the means available and likely to preserve the higher interests of the Islamic world, to overcome the difficulties hindering its drive to instate stability, prosperity and progress, establish security, social peace and harmony, and to meet the challenges surrounding Islamic states and hampering global sustainable development efforts.

Based on this pragmatic concept of unity, the formula of joint Islamic action within the framework of the OIC and the organizations operating under its aegis, such as the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the Islamic Development Bank, is an Islamic unity project that

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(15) Idem

aims to close ranks and bring Muslim peoples closer together in various fields
and at different levels in order to achieve the global sustainable development
that has become one of the challenges facing the Islamic Ummah today. Real
unity that can stand fast and is not affected by transient political changes is
a unity that is seated on a solid foundation of cooperation and partnership,
geared to achieve further development in the first place, and fend off any
threats to security and peace. The architects and advocates of this unity
endeavor to concretize it and bolster its foundations by bringing about the
conditions of a better human life and an improved social climate, developing
economic conditions and identifying the means and ways of building a society
of prosperity and wellbeing over phases that have been carefully pondered.
This type of political action, driving towards building unity, is what achieves
the goals behind any serious and successful unity experience.

Unity comes in degrees which do not necessarily clash with each other.
Gone is the era when unity experiments were based on emotion, fervor and
improvisation. Today, the Islamic world is at a juncture that could be best
described as a 'stage of unity-focused vigilance'. It is shedding, albeit slowly
and painstakingly, the remnants of utopian ideas and policies that have
accumulated over time and resulted in many missed opportunities to develop
the Islamic world and relieve it of the negative pressures that have weighed in
on its present and future. In this respect, we would do well to remember the
unity trends that prevailed in the aftermath of World War I when certain voices
called for the reinstatement of the caliphate, voices that soon waned before
almost entirely lapsing into silence. In this critical juncture, radical Islamist
groups have emerged, calling for the re-establishment of the caliphate
as a symbol of Islamic unity. Yet they are committing such crimes against
humanity as to bring great prejudice to Muslims wherever they may be. Their
despicable terrorist operations are projecting a distorted and repulsive image
of the Islam they claim to be defending through jihad.

No different from this distorted model is the sectarian radical project that is
pervading the Islamic world today, particularly in certain Arab countries. This
project is presented as an Islamic unity endeavor by its proponents who hold
annual conferences around this theme to serve their expansionist goals which
are to destroy Islamic unity instead of building it and divide instead of unite.

To lay down the rules of Islamic unity, it is necessary to tackle the impediments of this unity. These include doctrinal and nationalist fanaticism, radicalism and takfir (excommunication), pushing conflict to the point of belief vs. disbelief instead of correctness vs. error, berating the other for his words when he denies such words, narrow-minded dialogue, the denigration of sanctities, the forceful imposition of a specific doctrine on others, and engaging in provocative actions that breed chaos and discord and similar other detrimental deeds. Add to these impediments the inability of educational programs and curricula to instill a culture of respect, coexistence and friendship among Muslims, the distortion of historical facts and the explanation of historical events from a sectarian or doctrinal angle, the lack of respect towards the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) and his wives, considered the mothers of Muslims (may Allah be pleased with them), denigrating them with great insolence despite the Quranic Surahs revealed in their praise and that confirmed their status as blessed and absolved by Allah. Such disrespect was never witnessed in the early days of Islam nor did it affect any of the imams of Al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them). Other impediments include keeping quiet before the manifestations of fanaticism and extremism out of complacence for the adherents of a particular doctrine and to ensure that they remain indoctrinated and exploited for malicious purposes, the weakness of Arabic language teaching and mastery to extents where most people are unable to read the masterpieces of Islamic history or understand the sources of their culture to gain firsthand knowledge of the fundaments of religion and the facts of history. Add to this allowing the influence of policies imposed by foreign powers that have a vested interest in breaking the ranks of Islamic unity, favoring sectarian or ethnic interests or fleeting political interests over the greater good of Islam, the inability of certain scholars from different backgrounds to accomplish their duty of bringing about true rapprochement and reconciliation that are based on respect and sincerity, on highlighting the true face of this noble religion, exposing fallacies and refuting accusations.[16]

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(16) Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, *Fi Al-Bina'e Al-Hadari Li Al-Aalam Al-Islami*, Vol. X, p. 303, ISESCO, Rabat, 2008.

This brief review of the general conditions prevailing in the countries of the Islamic world and which are undermining the endeavors to unify ranks, banish differences and counter the effects of division and discord, is the best gateway out of this impasse. These obstacles -which are in fact the impediments to unity-, are the result of a political situation that negates rational governance, opposes Islamic brotherliness and contradicts the principles of cohesion, takaful and solidarity among peoples. In such a context, marred by differences and conflicts that abound in the Islamic world, it is impossible to reach the minimum level desired of a solid unity that is capable of weathering these storms.

As Sheikh Mohammed Abu Zahra said, Islamic brotherhood is founded on three principles that are all related to morals and virtue, where no one is repressed or victimized because of fanaticism. The first one is the sense of brotherliness experienced among Muslims, true to Allah's verse: [***The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy.***] (*Al-Hujurat*, verse 10). Secondly, a cultural, linguistic and social brotherhood that unites all in the fight against detrimental dogmas to curb their spread among believers in particular, and among the general public and thus prevent corruption on earth. Thirdly, that no war should be waged by a Muslim region against another, regardless of the methods of this war and whether it is waged through the economy or through an alliance against other Muslims.[17] Islamic brotherliness is the binding cement of unity and its beating heart. And for this reason, resolving the political differences that undermine the supreme interests of the Islamic world and working towards strengthening fraternal ties between the components of the Islamic Ummah must be the first step taken to consolidate the ties of brotherliness among these components. It is no secret that the brotherhood can be one of religion, just as it can be one of homeland and of humanity, regardless of differences in creeds.

Based on these deeply-rooted principles, and on a well-defined conception of Islam, strategic awareness in building Islamic unity rises to the fore in this

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(17) Sheikh Mohamed Abu Zahra, ibid. pp. 143-144.

current phase which is replete with challenges for the Islamic world, where the crises facing this world have multiplied and the pace of changes is accelerating at all levels. As said earlier, unity comes in degrees and it also occurs in stages, following specific considerations that cannot be ignored. For this reason, cooperation, partnership and solidarity among Muslim peoples is the realistic formula best suited for Islamic unity, being consistent with modern time changes and meeting the requirements of the development to which we aspire as we seek to advance the Ummah, protect its vital interests, preserve its identity and specificities and guarantee that it remains at pace with the spinning wheel of human progress.

The **Makkah Declaration**, issued in January 1981 by the 3rd Islamic Summit held near the Al-Haram Mosque, expressed this modern conception of Islamic unity consistent with the spirit of modern times. This historic declaration reads: "*We meet today in this August assembly and in this Serene City on this momentous juncture in the annals of Islam, determined to reinforce our solidarity and set in motion the process of our renaissance. To this end, we make the following solemn declaration:*

1. *All Muslims, differing though they may be, in their language, color, domicile or other conditions, form but one nation, bound together by their common faith, moving in a single direction, drawing on one common faith, cultural heritage, assuming one mission throughout the world. Thus, they stand as a nation of moderation, rejecting alignment to any and all blocs and ideologies, steadfastly refusing to surrender to divisive influences or to conflicts of interests. We are, therefore, determined to move forward to reinforce our solidarity, to overcome rifts and divisions and to settle in a peaceful manner all disputes that may arise amongst us on the basis of covenants and the principles of brotherhood, unity and inter-dependence and on our belief in the justice and compassion derived from the Holy Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, which constitute for us the eternal source of justice. In fulfillment of the aspirations of our peoples, we shall intensify consultations, amongst ourselves and complement and coordinate our endeavors in the international field in order to better defend our common causes and thus to enhance our prestige and position in the world.*"

The Declaration goes on to say:

"*2. Conscious that Muslims today are victims of innumerable injustices and are faced with multiple dangers due to the reign of force and aggression and the politics of violence in international behavior; and conscious also of the fact that Islam enjoins justice and equity both for its followers and others and it also enjoins tolerance and magnanimity towards those who do not combat us, do not force us to leave our homes, do not violate our sacred values and who never take the side of wrong doing, injustice or oppression. We are saddened to note that despite alt its material scientific and technological achievements, mankind today suffers from poverty of the spirit, from moral and ethical decay, and societies are marred by inequities, economies are crippled by severe crises, and international political order is in constant danger of destabilization. We consider that the innate qualities of the Muslim Ummah point the way to unity and solidarity, to progress and advancement, to prosperity and power. It possesses the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon Him), in them can be found a complete way of life leading us, guiding us along the path of goodness, righteousness, and salvation. This is our cultural heritage. It enables us to break the shackles of subservience and mobilize in us the spiritual strength to utilize to the fullest extent our inherent capabilities. It is our sheet anchor for a righteous life. It is our conviction that the Ummah of 1000 million people[18], composed of various races, spread over vast areas of the globe and possessing enormous resources, fortified by its spiritual power and utilizing to the full its human and material potential, can achieve an outstanding position in the world and ensure for itself the means of prosperity in order to bring about a better equilibrium for the benefit of all mankind.*"

Fairness and integrity dictate that we recognize that the fundamental principles underscored in the Mecca Declaration were not largely espoused as a basis for joint Islamic action. Crises and disputes erupted between several OIC Member States, further destroying the fabric of intra-Islamic relations. One observation that must be made here is that the technical formulation of this

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(18) The number of Muslims in the world today is around two billion.

important declaration did not aptly and objectively reflect the spirit of the OIC Charter, nor was it drafted in the style usually used with political declarations. The document was riddled with rhetoric which, although it did not affect the content, is not consistent with the requirements of these times.

The notion of Islamic unity, an Islamic federation or a caliphate evolved in our times into the type of regional formation that was created on the basis of the UN Charter and consequently, of international law. Indeed, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) represents today the largest international formation after the United Nations. But while its achievements have not fully met the Muslim peoples' expectations, having failed to resolve conflicts opposing Muslims in some parts of the Islamic world and to entrench, consolidate and develop Islamic-Islamic relations, this certainly is no reason to deny or belittle the great role it plays at both the Islamic and international levels as a high-level model of Islamic unity that protects the supreme interests of the Islamic world and defends the rights of its peoples. It is necessary to join efforts in order to further develop this Organization and guarantee a higher level of efficiency. Its mechanisms must be modernized, its political approach as well as its means must be renewed, and its future prospects must be broadened along with the missions entrusted to it. That is how the OIC can rise to a level that enables it to revive the Islamic collective will to unite ranks, further cooperation, broaden the scope of partnership and strengthen Islamic solidarity which is the fortress protecting Islamic unity, on the basis of a fully integrated strategic awareness.

Since it is impossible today to establish one Islamic state that brings together all the peoples of the Islamic world, as was the case in older times, it is essential to work towards strengthening this organization which federates the states of the Islamic world, provide it with the material and human resources necessary for its success and create the necessary conditions for it to succeed in its civilizational mission. It is equally important to respect the decisions flowing from its various conferences and implement them in a spirit of solidarity and symbiosis that gives precedence to general interests and great causes over marginal issues. Thus, this strategic awareness becomes a strategic project that edifies unity, strengthens relations between the components of the Islamic Ummah and frees it from the civilizational impasse hindering its march and stirring the covetousness of some powers.

Islamophobia: Historical Roots and Expected Outcomes

Dr Mohamed Emara*

Islamophobia refers to fear, hatred or demonization of Islam by distorting its essential truths and true image. Islamophobia is a foreign phenomenon that emerged and expanded within the context of Western civilization and no other human civilization. It is a reflection of the position of Western civilization vis-à-vis the Muslim East during the West's campaign to engulf and dominate the Orient, plunder its riches and subordinate it to the Western civilizational hub.

Since this phenomenon rose and evolved as an expression of the West's hostility vis-à-vis Eastern civilization, its historical roots preceded the rise of Islam. The hostility of the colonial West towards the former East preceded the birth of Islam and its pre-Islamic drive to lay claim to the East reflected its antagonism towards Eastern culture and Christianity. These represented a civilizational identity that stood as an obstacle on the path to Western hegemony (Greek/Roman/Byzantine) over the East, its repression and the dissolution of its identity in the melting pot of the West's civilizational model.

The spirit that has always permeated Western civilization throughout its history, from its Hellenic times to date, is one of power and conflict. As a result, the record of its interactions with other civilizations, especially the Eastern one, is replete with waves of conquest, domination and annexation.

- Ten centuries is the age of the Byzantine Greco-Roman conquest initiated by Alexander the Great (356-323BC) in the fourth century BC, and which was protracted until the rule of Heracles in the 7th century (610-641AD).

- Two centuries of Crusades (489-690AH/1096-1291AD) spearheaded by the Catholic Church, during which European feudal knights and

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revenue from Europe's trading posts were mobilized from Venice, Genoa and Pisa.

- Five centuries is the age of the modern imperial crusading conquest that began after the fall of Granada in Andalusia in 897AH/1492AD. The Crusader campaigns toured the Islamic world brandishing the motto (Spices and Christ) i.e. diverting international trade between Asia and Europe away from Egypt and the Arab world, plundering the riches of the Islamic Orient, and proselytizing Muslims. The 500th anniversary of this invasion was celebrated by the imperialist West in 1992 with the organization of the Olympic Games in Lisbon, Portugal, the city from where this invasion set out under the command of Vasco de Gama (1469-1524AD). At that same time, the West launched the Bosnian war to uproot Islam from Central Europe, 500 years after it was uprooted from Western Europe. The then Serbian Minister of Information eloquently expressed this western awareness of Islamo-phobia when he said: "*We are the vanguard of the new crusades.*"

This twenty-five centuries-long history witnessed seventeen centuries of Western onslaughts on the East and the recourse to pervasive intellectual invasion against the culture and religions of the East as a prelude to domination, assimilation and subordination.

If we wish to point out, if just briefly, the historical roots of this phenomenon -the West's drive to distort the culture and religions of the East to fulfil its political and military domination and economic plunder-, we must indicate that during the ten centuries-long battle that preceded the advent of Islam, the West imposed its Hellenistic culture in lieu of the eastern one and transcribed eastern languages in Greek alphabet. It engaged in all forms of hostility, distortion, falsification and corruption against Eastern Christianity which it perceived as an identity that constituted a formidable obstacle to the concretisation of its hegemonic ambitions. The West engaged in all this during its pagan times back when it waged the fiercest of wars against Eastern Christianity, but also during its own Christianisation when it tried to impose its Melkite dogma on the religious doctrines of Eastern Christianity.

Roman paganism saw in Eastern Christianity the greatest threat to its colonization of the East. During the reign of Emperor Severus Alexander (193-210), the Romans developed suspicions about the secret meetings

of Eastern Christians and were alarmed by their refusal to idolize emperors, worship Roman gods and present sacrifices to them. For the pagan Roman state, Christian monotheism was a threat to the emperor because it equated him with slaves and the populace and deprived him of a sacredness that was a most important element of his political might.

Roman persecution of Eastern Christianity reached its peak during the reign of Emperor Diocletian (245-313AD) who swore that the blood of Egyptian Christians would rise to his horse's knees.

For many years, the country became a slaughtering ground with torture, beheadings, immolation and drowning, to a point where swords had become blunt from the immense number of beheadings. Even the executors were suffering from fatigue and their strength was waning from the continuous slaughter of Christians.

- This sanguinary violence worsened as this faith became further entrenched in the hearts of Eastern Christians. Christianity became the way to spiritual and material salvation from the tyranny and oppression of the Romans, and the last bastion defending the Oriental identity before the intellectual invasion of Roman paganism which had despoiled people of their worldly belongings and turned their lands into a private estate of Caesar. Every Egyptian was forced to pay thirty levies to the Romans, one of which was a tax on breathing air if a person's dwelling was erected at a greater height.

- When the Roman Empire left paganism for Christianity during the reign of Emperor Constantine (274-337AD), the hostility towards Eastern Christianity continued. In fact, Paul's Christianity, adopted by the Roman State, was not the unified Christianity that Jesus -peace be upon him- had preached. And while monotheism continued to be upheld in Eastern Christianity as represented by Arianism[1], the Roman State continued with its antagonism and enmity towards eastern Christianity through a mystical Gnosticism[2] that replaced

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(1) Aryanism is an extinct Christian doctrine that was named after Arius (circa 250-338AD), a priest from Alexandria.

(2) Gnosticism: a modern term that refers to ancient religions of which the followers withdrew from the material world and devoted themselves to the spiritual one. The term carries many connotations such as knowledge, enlightenment, salvation or freedom.

monotheism with visitation and reincarnation, and through imperial political interference to divert religion from divine revelation to imperial choice. The Christ's gospel was cast aside and the State chose four Bibles out of nearly one hundred gospels, all of which had been written hundreds of years after the life of Jesus.

Faced by doctrinal conflicts that erupted in the fundamentals and not in the branches and were centred on the entity of God, His image and His essence, conflicts that carried a great risk for the Empire's unity in the face of these dangers, the State escalated its endeavours to manufacture religious beliefs. It tried to fashion a specific dogma and rally followers of all different faiths around it. When Eastern Christian doctrines refused to yield to the Romans' plan, the Melkite doctrine engaged in the persecution and oppression of Eastern Christians, dispossessing them of their churches and monasteries and banning this creed and the practice of its rites, in the very same way they had suffered under Roman paganism.

This Roman practice of distortion, falsification and hostility towards Eastern Churches was further crystallized when Christianity was altered from a religion of mystic serenity and peaceful asceticism into a marginal component of the materialism of Western civilization. The Muslim philosopher and chief magistrate Abdul Jabbar Ibn Ahmed al-Hamadhani (415AH-1024AD) struck the right chord when he said that when Christianity reached Rome the city did not become Christian, it was Christianity that became Romanised.

This gnostic transformation of Jesus' Christianity occurred when the Roman Church read in a superficial and literal way the symbolic and allegorical images drawn in the Bible, such as the Father and the Son, materializing the symbolism and literalizing the metaphor. Then its ecclesiastic councils transformed this corrupt interpretation into law and canon.

Once this Roman interpretation prevailed over Christian faith in the Roman West, the Church and its councils spread it to the East which was under Byzantine dominion and Hellenistic intellectual influence, i.e. under the power of the Greek vision of the universe and life, of the components of the mind, value systems, norms of conduct and human relations. This meant that the essence of true Christianity was adulterated and falsified to create a raison d'être for war against it and its removal from the path of Western domination over the East.

The Italian theologian Gaetani (1869-1926) attests to the results of this mutation of Christianity when he said that it led to the supremacy of the sectarian sophistry brought by Hellenism to Christian theology in Eastern Churches. The Hellenistic culture was a scourge brought onto the East from a religious standpoint since it affiliated the simple but lofty teachings of Christ to a creed fraught with thorny doctrines that abounded in doubts and uncertainties. This instilled a sense of despair and even shook the foundations of religious faith itself. When, at long last, news of the new revelation -Muhammad's revelation- hailed all of a sudden from the desert, Eastern Christianity, which had been adulterated with distortions and torn asunder by internal strife that shook its fundaments and caused despair and despondence among its followers, this faith was no longer able to resist the temptation of the new religion which, with a single strike, swept away all these trivial uncertainties and presented new benefits along with its clear, simple and indisputable principles. At that time, Eastern Christianity left the Christian East and wholeheartedly embraced the Arabs.[3]

Hellenism had transformed Christian monotheism which had been defended by Arianism. The latter had been persecuted until the day the Messenger (PBUH) came to the rescue of its followers in the message he addressed to the Roman Emperor in the year 7 AH. This message read: "*If you become a Muslim you will be safe - and God will double your reward, but if you reject this invitation of Islam you will bear the sin of having misguided your subjects (the Arians).*" The Greeks had transformed monotheism into something close to paganism, as described by the American philosopher Taylor (1753-1824) when he stated that the Emperor and his court had become in the Byzantine ecclesiastical system a representation of divine glory. The emperor was no longer the supreme ruling emperor on earth, but he was also the supreme priest.

This is how the distortion, falsification and hostility towards Eastern Christianity and its ecclesiastical institutions under the Roman State took shape. When Islam arrived -described by the French philosopher Montier

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(3) Tomas Walker Arnold: **The Preaching of Islam**, pp. 89-90, translated into Arabic by Dr Hassan Ibrahim Hassan, Dr. Abdelmajid Abdine and Ismail al-Nahrawi. Cairo, 1970.

(1856-1927) as a religion with a rational essence in the broadest sense of the word[4], the East shifted its focus from the heart of the Christian world to that of the Islamic world while the epicentre of the Christian world shifted to Europe which set out to practice its Islamophobia, Islam having replaced Eastern Christianity, but in the same drive to remove Islam after tarnishing its image as an obstacle to the colonial ploys that targeted the East, plunder its wealth and dissolve the Islamic identity into the materialist dimension of Western civilization, and engulf and annex it to the Western civilizational hub. Islamophobia was the second phase in the West's inimical attitude towards the East's distinguished civilizational identity which stands as the guardian of its independence through history.

Gnosticism was the West's weapon in the onslaught against Eastern Christianity and it was also the weapon of choice in its war against Islam. Italian orientalist Picard (1876-1939) upholds this view when he describes Christianity's struggle for its independence and self-assertion vis-à-vis the Hellenic essence as embodied by Gnosticism and as experienced by Islam in its first centuries, although under different names. Islam was as hostile towards the Hellenic spirit as early Christianity was.

A key feature of the Qur'an was its adverse effect on the Hellenic thought in an era when Hellenism had the upper hand. Once Islam stepped outside the boundaries of its cradle, it set onto a course of collision and conflict. Manichaeism[5] and Zoroastrianism[6] were for Islam as serious adversaries as Christianity was. The Gnostics of Manichaeism creeds were a direct threat to Islam. That is why the first school of scholastic theology –and by that we mean the Mu'tazilites- benefitted in their principles and quest from their fight against Manichaeism. Within these types of struggle a unique front came into being. The state and the formal religious dogma were marching side by side and closing ranks. Yet, in their struggle against Gnosticism which

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(4) Ibid, pp. 89-92.

(5) Manichaeism: from the Persian Mani (3rd century AD), a doctrine that attempted to combine Christianity with Zoroastrianism. Its key principles are light and darkness.

(6) Religion of Zoroaster, prophet of ancient Persians (circa 583 BC).

recognizes no one's power, they were calling upon the Greek spirit (Hellenistic philosophy) for help. Gnosticism was fighting Islam religiously and politically, and in this fight Islam resorted to Greek philosophy and pursued a whole world of religious rational sciences. It was as if Islam had struck an alliance with Greek thought and philosophy against Gnosticism which was a mix of theoretical and rational doctrines and on salvation dogmas. This explains the keen interest taken by the Caliph al-Ma'moun (170-218AH / 786-833AD) in the translation into Arabic of the largest number possible of Greek philosophy books.[7]

As the French orientalist Masingnon (1883-1962) explained, the roots of Gnosticism when it launched its onslaught against early Christianity –till it marred its principle of monotheism- were Sumero-Greek. This meant that ancient Israelite and Greek inspirations represented the roots of Gnosticism in its Christian phase. But when it set out to corrupt the tenets of Islam and strip its civilization of its Islamic particularities, its roots were –besides the Greek extraneous element-Manichaeism, i.e. Aramaic and Iranian.[8]

The Gnosticism that had corrupted Christianity and deprived it of its monotheist element was Hellenic. For Islam, it was a case of an alliance between Western-Hellenic-Eastern Gnosticism and Aramaic-Iranian Manichaeism.

While Christianity was defeated by Gnosticism and consequently lost its monotheism, Islam managed, thanks to its Qur'anic rationality and by calling on Greek rationalism –Greek rationalism versus Greek Gnosticism-, to defeat Gnosticism –Islamophobia- at this stage in the conflict.

The phenomenon of Islamophobia has been in an ebb and flow process, flaring up at times and dwindling at others, reflecting either the intensity or the lightness of the western ideological, political and military onslaught on the Islamic world. The protagonists of this phenomenon include:

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(7) Christophe Picard: A study published in the book **Greek Heritage in the Islamic Civilization**, pp. 79, translated into Arabic by Abderrahman al-Badawi, Cairo edition, 1965.

(8) Massignon: *Salman Pak et les premices spirituelles de l'Islam iranien*, a study published in the book **Shakhssiyat Qaliqa Fi Al-Islam**, page 11, by Dr Abderrahmane Badawi, Cairo Edition, 1964.

- Popes, cardinals and bishops during and after the Crusades.

- Politicians and clergy during the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Europe.

- Intellectuals and orientalists -Jews and Christians-, who tried to read the Qur'an through Jewish and Christian eyes.

- Writers and poets whose poetry and folk epics targeted both populace and knights to mobilize them in the West's conflict against the Islamic world and civilization.

- Western politicians who spearheaded the colonial forays against the countries, nation and civilization of the Islamic world contributed largely to this phenomenon.

If we look for examples for the theories that provided a basis for the West's claims against Islam, we will find, for example:

▪ The speech of Pope Urban II (1088-1099 AD) in Clermont, south of France in 1095AD as he exhorted Europe's feudal knights to take up the arms against Muslims early in the Crusades –:

"*Let those who for a long time, have been robbers, now become knights. You, who have so often been the terror of your fellow men, go and fight against the barbarians.*" The holy war was described as the will of God (Deus vult) and not intended to claim back one city but all of Persia's provinces in Asia Minor with their riches and countless treasures. *"Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves. That land which as the Scripture says «floweth with milk and honey,» was given by God into the possession of the children of Israel Jerusalem is the navel of the world; the land is fruitful above others, like another paradise of delights.*"

"*Go and fight the barbarians (meaning the Muslims) – to free the holy lands from their grip. Go, armed with the sword of my patriarchal keys (keys to heaven made by the Pope), and earn for yourselves coffers of eternal divine blessings. If you triumph, the Eastern kingdom shall be your share and your legacy.*"

"*Let those who have formerly been accustomed to contend wickedly in private warfare against the faithful fight against the infidel, and bring to a victorious end the war which ought already to have been begun.*"

"*This is the time for you to cleanse yourselves of all crimes you committed when you painted your hands red with blood unjustly. Wash these hands now with the blood of the unfaithful.*"

"*What shame and what disgrace do we deserve if this race of infidels, unworthy of nothing but contempt, who fell in the abyss of human indignity and proclaimed itself as the slave of Satan, was allowed to triumph over God's chosen people.*"[9]

That is how the Pope laid down the foundations of Islamophobia. He was the leading figure of God's chosen people and Muslims were the unfaithful barbarians and devil worshippers who deserved nothing but contempt. The swords of European feudal knights and the keys to paradise were the way to claim the East of which the lands flow with milk and honey and the riches resemble a heavenly paradise. Paving the way for the distortion of the image of Islam and its Ummah and instilling animosity towards them was aimed at usurping the Islamic Orient and plundering its riches for the benefit of the West.

When the European feudal Knights marched against the East under the banner of the Church and with financing from trading cities, and when they stormed into Jerusalem in 492AH/1099AD, they massacred, burnt and drowned 70,000 Muslims in seven days. Even the Muslims who fled to the 'Umari Mosque (the Dome of the Rock) believing they would find asylum there from death were disappointed. The crusaders, foot-soldiers and horsemen, entered the mosque and wiped out all who had taken refuge there till torrents of blood flowed in the mosque, rising to the knees of horses and even their bridle reins, the blood of –Islam- Muslims, slain at the sword of Crusader armies.

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(9) Maximus Monornd: ***The History of the Holy Wars*** (***Tarikh al-Hurub al-Muqaddasah Fi al-Mashreq al-Mad'uwah Harb al-Salib***). Vol.1, p. 4, 12, translated by Maximus Mazlum, Oroshalem Edition, 1965.

As dusk fell, the Crusaders jostled to the Church of Resurrection, laughing to tears (?!) after having wiped off the stock of wineries (?!). They laid their blood-soaked palms on the walls of the church as they chanted prayers (!!). Then they wrote to the Pope saying: "*We wish you were with us to witness our horses swim in the blood of infidels* (i.e. Muslims)."[10]

Feudal knights were however not the only ones to engage in these displays of Islamophobia and were accompanied in this by men of the cloth. The European historian Michel Le Syrien described a religious scene in the Jerusalem massacre where the patriarch himself was running through the streets of Jerusalem, his sword dripping blood, reaping the souls of everyone he found on his way. He did not stop until he reached the Church of Resurrection and the Holy Sepulchre where he began to wash the blood off his hands as he intoned words from the psalm: "*The righteous will rejoice to see vengeance done, they will wash their feet in the blood of the wicked; and people will say, «Yes, the righteous are rewarded; there is, after all, a God who judges the earth.*" (Psalm 58:11-10). Then the patriarch began to perform mass, saying that he could not have presented a sacrifice greater that that to gain the blessing of God.[11]

To entice the hordes –by fuelling hatred against Islam - to join these crusades, folk epics were written by poets who extolled the benefits of these crusades in markets, including the epic Chanson de Roland written by the priest Konrad in 1300AH in Regensburg and in which the Muslims are described as people whose thirst for blood cannot be quenched, a people cursed by the Lord of Heavens. They are unbelievers, dogs, swine and immoral. They are worshippers of idols who have no might, and they deserve nothing but death and for their carcasses to be cast in the wild since their final abode will be hell. With no exception, they are Satan's followers who forsake this world and the hereafter. They warranted the wrath of God who destroyed them, body and soul, and damned them eternally to hell.[12]

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(10) Ibid, volume 1, pp. 172-175.

(11) Dr Sigrid Hunke: **Allah ist Ganz Anders**, translated by Gharib Mohamed Gharib, Dar Al-Shurouq, Cairo, 1995.

(12) Ibid, p. 44.

Thus, Islamophobia fuelled the Crusades which turned into a source of wealth and affluence and a gateway exploited by the Crusading West to colonize the Muslim East. The historian and theologian Maximus Monrond said in this regard that many noblemen and crusaders considered war as a profession to amass wealth and spoils. In fact, attraction to some specific booty was one of elements luring armies to war"[13]. Peter the Hermit (1050-1115AD) considerably contributed to spreading this demonization of Islam which became a mobilizing factor attracting the mobs by feeding a culture of blind hatred, to join the Crusades that sought to invade the East and turn the page of Islam forever.

French orientalist Maxime Rodinson (1915-2004 AD) referred to the false image created by the culture of Islamophobia on Prophet Mohamed (PBUH) when Latin authors unleashed the ignorance of the triumphant imagination to please the masses. In their eyes, Mohamed, as for R.W. Southern, was a sorcerer who demolished the Church in Africa and the East through sorcery and deception and guaranteed his own success by legalizing sexual encounters. Mohamed, as portrayed in these epics, was the chief idol, and itinerant poets considered him as the greatest of the Saracens' gods. His statues (as they said) were fashioned out of the most valuable materials and in enormous sizes. During the Middle Ages, Islam was regarded as a sort of religious dissent or a heresy within Christianity. It was perceived under the same light by Dante (1295-1321 AD).[14]

Italian orientalist Francesco Gabrielli (1904-1997 AD) addressed these images which provided a base for the culture of blind hatred – Islamophobia- in Western consciousness. He explained that during medieval times, the West perceived the advent of Islam and its spread as a satanic schism in the core of the Christian Church which had barely defeated paganism three

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(13) *The History of the Holy Wars*. Vol.1, page 176.

(14) Rodinson: *The Western Image and Western Studies of Islam*, a study published in *Thuraat al-Islam* under the supervision of Joseph Schacht and C.E. Bosworth. Part 1, pp. 27-28, translated by Dr Mohamed Zuheir Al-Samhoury, edited by Dr Chakir Mostafa, editions of **'Alam al-Ma'rifa**, Kuwait, 1978.

centuries earlier. It was a sinister schism caused by a Barbarian people.[15]

The German thinker Hubert Herr Komer addressed the falsehoods born out of the crusader's sick imagination about the Prophet (PBUH) stating that the Europeans claimed that the prophet of Islam was a Catholic cardinal who was passed over by the Church during the pope's elections and in reaction created an atheist cult in the East to take his revenge from the Church. Christian Medieval Europe saw in Mohamed the greatest Christian apostate who shall forever bear the sin of dividing humanity and diverting half of it away from Christianity.[16]

Prominent ecclesiastic figures and great leaders contributed to the making of this distorted, bizarre and even ridiculous portrait of Islam and its prophet (PBUH), and of Muslims and their civilization.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the greatest Catholic philosopher of medieval Europe, said that the Messenger of Islam "*Seduced the people by promises of carnal pleasure to which the concupiscence of the flesh goads us. He perverts almost all the testimony of the Old and the New Testaments by making them into a fabrication of his own, as can be seen by anyone who examines his law. Those who believed in him were brutal men and desert wanderers.*"[17]

Martin Luther (1483-1546), pioneer of Church Reform and Protestantism described the Holy Quran as a despicable and horrible book filled with falsity, myths and deviations. He considered that the harassment of Mohamed and undermining Muslims should be the motive for translating the Qur'an and providing Christians with knowledge about it. He urged the clergy to focus in their sermons on the atrocities committed by Mohamed in order to arouse the hatred and ill-will of the masses towards him, strengthen their faith in Christianity, boost their courage and boldness against the Turks and encourage them to sacrifice their fortunes and souls in these battles.[18]

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(15) Francesco Gabrieli: *Islam in the Mediterranean World*, Ibid., pp. 104-105.

(16) Hubert Herr Komer: *Image of Islam in Western Heritage*, pp. 23-24, translated into Arabic by Thabit 'Eid. Preface written by Dr Mohamed Imara, editions of Nahdat Misr, Cairo, 1999.

(17) Ibid, pp. 32-33.

(18) Ibid, p. 21.

That is how apprehensible and unabashed was Martin Luther's declaration that the translation of the Qur'an did not have as a purpose the acquisition of knowledge about this religion, but rather to prejudice Mohamed and undermine Muslims. The purpose behind creating this false image of Islam, its prophet and its nations was to strengthen the faith of Christians, increase their courage and embolden them in the Crusades to sacrifice possessions and life in these wars.

These very same motivations continue to exist in today's forms of Islamophobia and the reality we are experiencing.

This same path, i.e. fabricating a false image of Islam and Muslims, was followed by the greatest of all Renaissance poets, Dante (1295-1321AD), in his Divine Comedy. Dante placed the Messenger (PBUH) and Ali Ibn Abi Taleb (May Allah be pleased with him) in the eighth circle, their bodies split and mutilated in the blazes of hell because they were in life (through his lies and fallacies) sowers of discord.[19]

Sigrid Hunke (1913-1999AD) testified to the misperceptions of Arabs, Muslims and Islam engineered by Islamophobia and how the minds of the vast majority of Europeans held an arbitrary contempt for Arabs whom they unjustly stigmatized them in ignorance as shepherds, uncouth, raggedly dressed, devil worshippers and invokers of dead spirits, charlatans, spell casters and black magicians who mastered this art and were seduced by Satan. They are guarded by legions of Satan's minions and at their gilded throne sits Mahomet -Mkhamidat under whose feet were laid human sacrifices that his worshippers slaughtered to be in his favour.

Arnold J. Toynbee (1889-1975) described the Arabs in his 1949 book *A Study of History* as uncivilized, a strange breed totally alien to the Hellenic world, intruders on the Hellenic civilization and primitive Muhammedans. He goes on to describe them as a philistine imitation of the Syriac civilization which is strange to them, and contents that their primitiveness and limitations prevented them from seeking to embrace Christianity.

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(19) *Image of Islam in the Western Heritage*, Ibid.

William of Salisbury described them as worshippers of the lowliest demons. In his eyes, they were despicable infidels so long as they did not believe in and worship Jesus or God, but that it was possible to Christianize them. In his eyes, they were no more than worthless worms, bastards and villains, the enemies of God and of Christ, and the desecrators of Christ's sepulchre.[20]

The European church portrayed the Messenger (PBUH) as a mighty sorcerer, and described Córdoba, in Andalusia, as the land of devil worshipers who call on the dead for help and who presented Mohamed with a golden statue that was guarded by a league of demons placated with human sacrifices.

The land of Islam was seen as the ground of myths and legends, devil worshippers, sorcerers who solicited Satan, the land of human sacrifices presented to a golden statue named Mohamed, guarded by a league of demons.[21]

This is how the crusading West portrayed Islam and Muslims, laying the foundations of Islamophobia and seeking to embed in the European psyche a culture of blind hatred for Islam, its Qur'an, messenger, nation and civilization. This culture permeated school books, literature and epic poems and remained latent, roused from its slumber now and then by developments in the relationship between the West and the East.

The Crusading West manufactured this culture to strengthen the faith of Christians and boost their bravery and audacity so that they sacrifice money and life in the war against Muslims, as Martin Luther clearly said.

To lay hands on the East of which the lands flow with milk and honey and of which the riches resemble a heavenly paradise, in the words of Pope Urban II, instigator of the centuries-long Crusades (489-690 AH/1096-1291AD).

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(20) **Allah ist Gants Anders**, pp. 8, 11, 14, 19 and 23.

(21) Dr. Sigrid Hunke: **Faith and Knowledge**, pp. 99, 161, 162, translated into Arabic by Omar Lotfi al-Alem, Damascus edition, 1987.

Modernist Thought and the Crisis of Ethics

Dr Mohamed Kettani*

The question of ethics has preoccupied human thought throughout the ages, whether from a religious point of view or from a philosophical one, the reason being that Man is primarily a moral creature. Since he gained awareness by reflecting on the significance of his life and questioning the meaning of his existence, Man became conscious of his accountability for his actions as a result of the free will he exercises as he commits these actions. He also took cognizance of the power his mind has over his morals. Thus, to describe the human being as moral takes precedence over his description as a rational creature. This sense of ethical responsibility has lingered with Man throughout the ages, either as a result of his religious belief or of philosophical dogma. However, religious thought was primarily preoccupied with practical ethics, i.e. with individual and collective behavior. It laid down rules and principles to suit the mentality of the masses while philosophical thought pored over theoretical ethics that were more based on a philosophical perception of the universe or of nature and Man's responsibility in this universe. Ethics, as tackled by philosophers addressed the mind while the ethics that preoccupied theologians spoke more to the heart and to conscience. Thus, our starting point in this comparison is to draw a line between practical ethics and theoretical ones, the latter being the subject of our study.

Irrespective of our own opinion on the worth or banality of human existence, there is no denying that human identity, as embodied in Man's culture, history and civilization, underscores the spiritual dimension of the human being, which dimension elevates him above his physical existence and through which he opens up to what transcends this existence. With this duality (body and soul),

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Man straddles a position between the real and the virtual, the world of the virtual lighting up the way towards the ideal model. Thus, Man remains the moral creature that finds itself at a dead-end whenever he loses this dimension.

When modernity hailed, changing the European Man's view of the universe and of himself within this universe, it upset all the frames of reference and constants that had previously been considered absolute truths and firmly established immutable constants, hence the need to analyze the factors that either influenced or were based on a new perception of the universe and of Man.

Modernity can be addressed either through its history from the mid-16th century to date as events founded on the dialectic of interaction between thought and reality, and constancy and evolution within its societies, as manifestations at the level of philosophical thought, at that of scientific research, technological innovation and political and economic production, or at that of ethical thought. However, the latter did not receive the attention it warranted, hence my decision to address it at this international symposium[1].

I believe that one logical motivations for addressing the relationship between modernity and ethics is the striking paradox observed in this regard. Modernity, in as much as it stood behind remarkable achievements in our material, political, economic and cultural life, has eroded many moral values in its path, shaken all the constants that had been crucial in the edification of old human civilizations that we continue to admire today. In other words, what Man has achieved in modern times by way of progress, abundant material production and higher well-being, the scientific and technological harnessing of nature's laws, the ability to meet many challenges, and the progress achieved at these levels carried within its folds many seeds of imbalance and contradiction. These were not confined within the social and spiritual dimensions only, but extended to literature and arts, especially in the aftermath of the two world wars of the first half of the 20th century. Since then, Man has been battling a spiritual emptiness, the disruption of his vision of the future and the absence of a moral compass. He developed a sense of alienation and loss in the

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(1) The author presented this paper at the 44th session of the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Rabat, held on 22-24 January 2017 around the theme "**From a Single to Multiple Models of Modernity**".

maze of growing ethnic, ideological and material conflicts, removed from his hopes of achieving freedom, security and social justice. This is attributed to the modernist thought that concluded the 20th century in contradiction, confusion and prey to dilemmas after tackling the phenomenon of ethics in isolation from its spiritual rationale.

To better understand the reality of the dichotomy between modernity and ethical values, we must first recall modernity's historical context and its key orientations on the one hand, and its impact on ethics on the other. We will then tackle the manifestations of the ethical crisis experienced by mankind today in direct correlation to this impact.

What is meant by modernity in the context of our approach?

Over the past four centuries, modernity has experienced four stages: **the first stage** was the revolution against the Church's dogma and the destruction of the traditional premises of science, doctrine and morality. From the mid-sixteenth century, Europe was violently shaken by what was close to a devastating earthquake that ensued from the religious conflict between the Protestant Reform Movement and Catholicism. Europe became then divided into South and North. The Germanic north and the European center espoused the Protestant Reform Movement led by Martin Luther (died 1546) and John Calvin (died 1564), while the Latin South established traditional Catholicism in France, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula, attacking anyone that rebelled against its power. Luther attacked the Church's system of indulgences, absolute ecclesiastic power and the improvident disposal of the Church's riches. One of the ramifications of religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics was a profound ideological and religious chasm that divided Europe and resulted in a tremendous intellectual and cultural chaos that swept across Europe and pulled to its violent battlefields many writers and thinkers[2].

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(2) For a comprehensive view on this conflict, see *The Crisis of the European Mind* (1680-1719), by Paul Hazard, member of the Académie Francaise, translated into Arabic by Jawdat Othman and Muhammad al-Mestikawi, Chapter IV, pp. 81 and beyond. Edition of al-Katib al-Masry, 1948. Re-published by the Ministry of Culture as part of the Series Afkar, Cairo, 2004. See also: *A History of Europe by Herbert Fischer*, translated into Arabic by Zeinab Esmat Rashed and Ahmed Abdel Rahim Mostafa and revised by Ezzat Abdelkarim, chapters 8 and 11. Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1970.

The second stage resulted from the perusal by many European scholars and thinkers of the legacy of the Orient, especially the Arab scholarly and philosophical heritage in astronomy, mathematics and experimental sciences. This legacy provided seeds for the emergence of a new scientific thought in Europe. Mention can be made in this regard of the astronomer Copernicus (died 1543) who demolished the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic theory (in relation to Ptolemy who died in 161) that earth was static being the center of the universe and that the sun and other planets were revolving around it. Popular beliefs about the pivotal position and immobility of the earth, upheld by the Church, also changed. Other pioneers included Galileo, (died 1642) who proved the theory of his predecessor, Copernicus, and then Isaac Newton (died 1727) who discovered the theory of gravity which explains all physical phenomena in nature. These scientists altered Man's view of the universe and paved the way for the perception of this universal system as one that moves like clockwork, a system based on simplicity and mathematical laws that are the key to all sciences in nature.

In **the third stage**, modernity began to consecrate the rational approach thanks to the emergence of enlightenment concepts that were disseminated by philosophers such as Descartes (died 1650), Thomas Hobbes (died 1679), Spinoza (died 1677), John Locke (died 1704), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (died 1778) and Kant (died 1804). The most important aspects that emerged from the new thought in Europe were its departure from serving religious dogma and its orientation towards serving man and subjugating nature to serve him. Francis Bacon (died 1626) said that the true and legitimate goal of all science is to gain knowledge of nature and that knowledge has no purpose other than to control this nature, and there can be no control except through obedience to its laws[3]. Bacon wrote the ***Novun Organun*** which represented the foundation of the empirical approach to science in the 17th century. Among the fruits of these philosophers and others' work wasthe establishment of new rules for scientific research and the proposal of general principles for economic, political and social life. This is the stage that spanned the Age of Enlightenment in Europe and replaced the Church's dogma with the religion of reason.

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(3) ***The Making of the Modern Mind***, John Herman Randall Jr., lecturer at Columbia University (died 1989), p. 353, translated into Arabic by Georges Toueima, p. 515, Dar al-Thaqafa, Beirut, 1965.

In **the fourth stag**e of modernity, spanning the entire 20th century, modernist thought in Europe faced a contradictory reality, constrained by ideological conflict and the impulses of colonial expansion and domination, after the hopes of modernity translated into a reality where individualism, communism, capitalism, socialism, specificity and universality were all vying for domination.

In brief, modernity was a comprehensive historical and cultural movement that gave birth to profound mutations in European thought and societies and the development of capabilities when it enabled European countries to acquire economic, military and communication powers, thereby empowering them to dominate the ancient world, exploit its wealth and spread their modern culture to its different parts, thus making it a global culture.

It is worth of note in this regard that the European economy progressed from the subsistence mode to large-scale production through the use of new technologies and the creation of consumer markets. This economy continued to develop and expand thanks to the discovery of new energies that revolutionized production and manufacturing methods and enabled the exchange of products and communication in an unprecedented way. From using manual tools and animals, the use of electrical energy began and evolved since then to the use of nuclear energies. Modernity acquired its most important manifestation which is the use of machines and technology to turn the wheels of the economy, transform European societies into industrial societies, employ large masses in their vast workshops and factories and run their markets locally, regionally and internationally. The ensuing European colonial movement which targeted most countries in Africa and Asia was inevitable. Populations in these countries were subjected to European domination and the expansion of Western economy, thus subjecting them to the dynamics of European modernist development.

It was only natural that this great economic transformation, the growing productivity, marketing dynamism and the participation of large swathes of Western society in this movement were accompanied by the rise of an industrialized society and the ensuing labor union movements, as well as the emergence of a new concept of the State in Europe, if not a new concept of the sources and forms of power. Along with these, political rights and civil institutions came into existence, imposing the involvement of the civil

society in political governance. It also exposed the stark disparities between the social classes that were either exploited for the ends of this growth or benefitting from it. Political, technical and capitalist role-players acquired new influential roles in steering policy and the state, and society in Europe acquired a new vision and a new logic.

It was in the midst of these profound economic transformations and the resulting social and national conflicts that political thought took shape. The new social order, as consecrated by Age of Enlightenment philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau came to be seen as the product of a social consensus that prompted individuals to relinquish some of their rights to the State's authority in order to bring about a global social peace. All these philosophers discussed natural rights as compared to the laws of nature and consecrated the concept of the social contract. They also defended the association of this institutional development with the logic of reason because they were striving for a political system that bows to the logic of reason[4]. Society, within this modernist philosophical vision, is in reality and in the eyes of these philosophers, a coherent social body, enlightened by the power and authority of reason, excluding any interference from outside society and its institutions, even if such intervention came from religion or by divine revelation. From this modernist philosophical angle, the human being was considered a social role-player whose identity is defined by the roles he plays within society, that is, by his behavior as related to his social status. All moral values must be determined in the light of what benefits or undermines Man, and they have no source other than this positive source.

This new outlook, arising from the new scientific and philosophical thought in Europe altered the notion of ethics among Europeans. Morals were subjected to the balance of individual or collective interests. This propelled ethical thought into a spiral of divergence as myriad as society's interests and inclinations. This caused modernist thought, an advocate of freedom and pluralism, to divide more than to unite. Certain thinkers considered that the concept of modernity in this transformation, consecrated by the Age of

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(4) John Herman Randall Jr.: *The Making of the Modern Mind*. Translated into Arabic by
    Georges Toueima, p. 515, Dar al-Thaqafa, Beirut, 1965.

Enlightenment philosophers, was a revolutionary one, but that it was nothing more than that. It did not propose an alternative frame of reference after demolishing the previous one, neither cultural nor political or philosophical. This thought is one that sparks a revolution against the traditional society rather than determine the mechanisms of building a new society.[5]

It was only natural that this moral orientation would lead society itself to be considered a reference for values instead of ideals. Goodness is what society considers good, and evil is what society considers as such. Society is a legislator for itself, and is the reference for all moral values. It was on this basis that secularity emerged in Europe and the will of the civil society replaced religion. This is explained by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his book *The Social Contract* where he addresses this aspect at length. The social system is no more than the expression of society's will and consensus, but this will can only be fulfilled if it is based on a rationality that recognizes the necessity for society's members to renounce some of their rights in favor of guaranteeing the rights of the community. The 1789 French Revolution took this political development to its extreme limits by unifying the nation's will with the logic of reason, and the integration of individual rights with the obligations of citizenship.

Similar to other philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment, Rousseau excluded divine revelation as a basis in the organization of society and replaced it with reason. Contrary to the beliefs of the Church and other faiths, Man was not created by God in His image. He is an active social role-player whose behavioral values are defined by the principles of harmony and compatibility with society's desire and the State's will. Moral values are determined in light of the creation of the optimal political system for reconciling the rights of citizens with their obligations.

But what was the fate of these ideas once put to the test of time? Did they resist in the midst of Europe's swift social and economic changes?

The clash between economic progress and wealth creation through to thriving industry and technology, on the one hand, and social justice on the other, became more profound and resounding. Some Age of Enlightenment

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(5) Alain Touraine: *Critique of Modernity*, translated into Arabic by Anwar Moughit, p. 41. Higher Council for Culture, Cairo, 1997.

philosophers aspired, in vain, to consider reason as capable of overcoming this contradiction that was disrupting social unity. Modernist concepts were unable to achieve anything tangible at the level of social and political life, especially once the concept of market economy emerged, becoming one of the driving principles of emerging liberalism. Economic actors forced the State to disengage from controlling the economy in favor of a growing capitalism.

This new modernist ethical orientation entrenched the values of the State's national interests and the principle of relative values. The latter was a natural consequence of the change that occurred in people's perception of the concept of truth. The truth is neither static nor absolute, but rather a changing matter depending on what is dictated by evolution. This led modernist thought to reject the notion of 'absoluteness' in every philosophical or moral sense. Neither history, nor society or personal life would bow to the will of what constitutes the foundation of divine religions such as faith in God, i.e. belief in an absolute being or one that is superior to all other beings. Man is his own master and bows only to nature's physical laws, and the more in tune his behavior is with this nature, the happier he becomes. Thus, corroborated scientific knowledge must take the place of metaphysical beliefs irrespective of their origin, and man-made relative ethics must take the place of religious morality or idealism. The political must be separated from the religious in the management of modern society, this being embodied by secularity which became the foundation of political systems throughout Europe. These are the values of reference on which modernist thought is founded.

What is meant by ethics in the context of our approach?

In philosophical terms, ethics stands for one of two meanings: the **first one** refers to the general values of reference that define Man's behavior as he sets about fulfilling the purpose of life, be it happiness, pleasure or reaching personal perfection. The **second meaning** refers to the set of virtues that man has to adhere to as defined by social traditions.

Since ethics in the first meaning can only be determined on an epistemological basis, it has become vital, in constructing any moral theory, to fully complete knowledge of Man, internally or externally, in body and soul, as an individual

or an integral part of society. In this regard, two or three frames of reference emerge: a religious reference, an idealist philosophical reference, and a scientific reference, each having its own universal outlook from which the system of ethics arises. Modernists endeavored to replace Church dogma with the religion of reason, in their own words, or in clearer terms, to ensure that ethics support progress after the latter became the creed of Europeans. To this end, a declaration of human rights was made in Europe and in the United States of America and the French Revolution erupted. The European citizen began to familiarize himself with the notion of duty and the concept of citizenship entered the dictionary of political life. Since this trend was violently opposed by the ecclesiastic institution and other opposing political powers, the European society was propelled into in a spiral of violence that pitted the supporters of each position against their opponents. In this climate, ethical thought adopted many positions, most salient of which were the idealist and the empirical scientific positions. While ethical thought in Germany strived to entrench an idealistic universal view in its philosophical and historical dimensions, the utilitarian ethical stance in other parts of Europe, such as England, took stronger roots and adopted several social, psychological and biological patterns. One of these approaches was developed by the French philosopher Auguste Comte (died 1857). His doctrine, known as positivism, is based on the exclusion of theological and metaphysical thought from ethics by positioning these ethics within a social theory framework based on the empirical study of reality, in line with the spirit of modern science.

Throughout the ages, idealistic ethicists have emphasized the absolute nature of moral values. Other philosophers, including old sophists and neo-positivists, rejected any absolute perception of morality, i.e. perceptions that assert the absoluteness of good or of evil, or absolute values that do not change with time and space. In the eyes of idealists, these values are primordial, derived from Man's innate nature and therefore are not the result of an experience or education since they are predetermined, similar in this to all basic principles. As such, these values emerge from a source that transcends every limitation or restriction[6].

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(6) Ibid, p. 32.

In this context, it is possible to evoke the role of ethical conscience which constitutes the source of appreciation and dislike for any behavior or action by Man. In the eyes of idealists, these sentiments do not have as their reference some knowledge born out of experience or corroborated by reason, because the human conscience responds to basic principles that are innate to Man[7]. In sum, ethical conscience is not the result of knowledge, science or experience. It is first and foremost a reaction to the sense of duty experienced by the righteous person and the urge of compliance he feels, as mentioned by the German Emanuel Kant[8] in his book **Metaphysics of Ethics**[9].

Relationship between the crisis of modern thought and the crisis of ethics

In the process of evaluating modernity, it is necessary to draw a line between the intellectual approach on which it was based on the one hand and its representations on the ground and its political, social and moral repercussions, on the other. This distinction allows us to describe modernist thought as represented by philosophers and its representations as embodied by political, economic and social actors. This in fact is what explains the emergence in the previous century of a movement that was critical of modernity on the grounds of its unforeseen ramifications.

Rousseau was the first to criticize modernity or modernist thought when he noted that society's general will or that of the state, defended by modernists such as himself, was unable to safeguard the purity and essence of modernist ideas. He also noted that institutional mechanisms, no matter how disciplined they were, had not been able to prevent society from contradicting the values of social justice, freedom and equality. When put to the test, modernity was more dividing than it was unifying[10] and even turned every rational project into a mirage.

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(7) Ibid, p. 58.

(8) Ibid, p. 68.

(9) This book was translated into Arabic by Hikmat Hemsi with a preface by Adel al-'Awwa. It was published by Dar al-Sharq in Aleppo, 1961.

(10) Ibid, p. 45.

The above sheds clarity on the key factors that underlie the dilemma and uncertainty that dominated Europe's ethical thought during the last century, making it incapable of acquiring a firm knowledge of ethical phenomena. These factors include:

First: Under ancient and modern philosophies, ethical thought endeavored to explain human behavior in the light of the movements and goals that guided it, searching for the principles and values that make these behaviors a consistent moral phenomenon. This thought failed to achieve this, which is the basis of empirical knowledge of ethical phenomena. Since scientific certainty remained unattainable in the field of ethical research or the science of ethics, questioning the usefulness of ethics became an excuse for its rejection by modernists.

Second: An increasing number of contemporary thinkers believe that engaging in the philosophy of ethics in its conventional sense is a waste of time, especially after the failure of positivist ethicists who adopted the approaches of biology, anthropology and sociology in the belief that it is possible to reach a theory of ethics in which moral attitudes can be predicted in the same way it is possible to predict biological phenomena, and sometimes even social phenomena. Although they spent much time and effort on their research, they could not come to any scientific formula explaining human behavior because man is free by nature and his reactions are not predictable. In the view of contemporary thinkers, it is essentially futile to use ethical research to achieve any scientific knowledge of human behavior.

Third: Throughout its history, ethical thought oscillated between the descriptive and the normative approaches. As such, it remained subject to a duality between subjectivity and objectivity, or between emotion and reason, lacking clear methodology and suffering numerous setbacks and failures. It was unable to formulate a clear and consistent moral approach despite the wealth of remarkable achievements it managed to accumulate.[11] It was thus easy for modernist thinkers with rationalist and critical tendencies to undermine all the hypotheses of ethical thought edified by former thinkers or established by

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(11) Albert Schweitzer: *The Philosophy of Civilization*, translated into Arabic by Dr. Abderrahman Badawi, p. 130, Dar al-Andalus, Beirut, 1980.

religious thought on metaphysical beliefs. This does not mean that modernist thought is oblivious to the importance of ethics or that it rejects them entirely. Rather, it strives to transcend metaphysical perceptions, favoring positivist ethics that are founded on an empirical approach and values that renew at the rhythm of social life renewal. However, none of this was achieved and from the end of the 19th century, ethical thought began heading towards the impasse[12].

Fourth and most importantly, the scientific revolution and materialist philosophy that gained in strength in the 19th century managed to disrupt ethical constants by stripping them of every absolute attribute.

Both the scientific revolution and the materialist historical philosophy played their part in defending the relativity of ethics. Prior to that, they played a part in advancing the theory of the lack of objectivity in ethics. In his analysis of this, the English philosopher Walter T. Stace (died 1967)[13] stated that the discoveries in physics, biology and spatial sciences have led to the consecration of a scientific conception of the universe that soon became a general doctrine that considered the universe, with all its material, physical or biological phenomena as self-regulating and therefore not governed by an external source, similar to a self-regulating clock, the way Sir Isaac Newton (died 1727) discovered the law of gravity and that the universe evolved through its own motion and did not need any external power. This is indeed what the solar system and all the other celestial bodies represent, and the same system governs all beings, small and large.

After Newton's scientific breakthrough and Darwin's biological revolution (died 1882) in which he deprived Man of his specificity and attribute as Allah's vice-regent on earth, making him the mere result of a biological evolution process with monkeys as his ancestors, it was time for the psychological revolution launched by Sigmund Freud (died 1939) who considered ethics as no more than a set of reactions acquired through Man's education or his raising. All these revolutions played a crucial part not only in destroying

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(12) Ibid, p. 307.

(13) Walter Stace: **Religion and the Modern Mind**, translated into Arabic by Dr. Imam Abdelfattah Imam, pp. 132 and beyond. Maktabat Madbouli, Cairo, 1998.

idealist ethics but also in raising the burning question: What is the meaning of Man's existence in this universe after being tossed by science into despair and senselessness and granted freedom, albeit a destructive one? Was there indeed some scheming mind or creative and wise force behind the creation of the universe in this format, or was it just an eternal matter governed by its own laws? The answer to this fundamental question gives definition to many situations or facts. If there was indeed some purpose to the world's existence, it would suppose that its system has implications for the behavior of the human being as part of this system and as capable of grasping it. But if there is no purpose to the world's existence, what is the point of saying that Man must have ethics that are needed for their own sake? If we acquiesce to the idea negating the purpose of the universe's existence, we would then be entitled to ask: What evidence can be put forward by skeptics and those denying the purpose behind the universe's creation?

Yes, Europe's empirical sciences have since the 17th century been ruling out a purpose behind the universe's existence, i.e. to say that the universe was created for a divine purpose manifest to some and obscure to others. Europe actually decided that it was useless to scientifically try to prove this purpose and has therefore limited its interest to causality which is science's single mission, i.e. to prove that physical phenomena have causes that control their existence or the lack thereof. Science, or all sciences related to inanimate or living matter, must provide an automatic interpretation of the phenomena that occur or the facts related to these causes. To question the purpose behind them is however senseless in the eyes of contemporary thinkers. It is at this level that ethical thought, which seeks to identify purposes, parted ways with scientific thought which is only interested in causes.

The scientific revolution sparked off violent religious reactions, as well as disillusion about the ethical heritage, if not about the religious heritage in general. Pessimistic philosophies ensued along with absurd actions and reactions embodied by the destructive fundamentalist movements that all religions experienced in this age.[14] The number of psychiatry patients,

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(14) On the subject of fundamentalist reactions, cf. Karem Armstrong's book **The Battle for God**, **Fundamentalism in Judaism**, **Christianity and Islam**, translated into Arabic by Fatima Nassr and Mohamed Anani, Cairo, 2000.

suicidal and desperate people increased, and modern and contemporary European literature depicted this moral decay through what is known in art as nihilism and absurdity, particularly in drama, cinema and plastic arts.

This is what can be said about the impact of the scientific revolution on ethical thought at the theoretical level. The influence of the materialist philosophy (Marxism) had a more profound impact in furthering the disruption of ethical values. There is, for example, its materialistic view of Man as mere living matter, a set of biological functions attributed to cells and organs that have an order that runs like a clockwork. Therefore, there are no such things as free actions undertaken by Man, but rather an unyielding inevitability that controls all cells and devices and turns Man into a phenomenon governed by its own laws which never fail. If we concede the lack of free will, as advocated by scientific determinism, we must also recognize the lack of any meaning for ethics. It is around this principle that historical determinism, economic determinism and behavioral determinism were established. It is now possible to shirk responsibility for any crime, aggression or sin committed by Man because the true culprit are his glands, heredity, genes, social order, etc[15]. When we look at these factors, we find that they conclude with the negation of three principles that had served as the backbone of religious ethics and morality, namely:

First: Dismissing the spiritual dimension of Man as a mere biological phenomenon that advanced Man through a process of evolution to the top of the animal order. This phenomenon is embodied by the human body which is steered by instincts and genes.

Second: Negating Man's invariable identity. In fact, Man sways between two possibilities. He is either compelled to act a certain way, being automatically reactive as a result of his biological nature, instinctive motives or the traditions imposed by society; or he is a being with the power to freely decide on his destiny, as claimed by existentialists, which freedom is often negated by science. Neither position allows us to say that Man is firmly set in an identity, for whether we agree on freedom or compulsion, Man is in both cases irresponsible if he is forced, and inconsistent in his positions if he is free.

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(15) Water Stace: *Religion and the Modern Mind*, translated into Arabic by Dr. Imam Abdelfattah Imam, pp. 145 and beyond.

Third: Dismissing the thesis that ethics are absolute values. Whether we accept the theory that proclaims the relativism of these values or the one that advocates utilitarianism, we recognize the principle of these ethics' evolution and change, and thus negate their immutability.

This attitude, in all its dimensions including the denial of Man's spiritual dimension, the negation of his constant identity, the denial of the constancy or immutability of ethics, all of this embodies the moral crisis that we perceive as a reflection of the crisis of European modernist thought itself when it replaced absoluteness with relativism and in so do doing erected a barrier between this thought and certainty about any fact in religion, philosophy or science. This was expressed by the contemporary German philosopher Ernst Cassirer (died 1945) when he stated that there was no longer any central paradigm to which the mind can refer when a difference arises, such as religion, metaphysical philosophy or science, or any other reference capable of filling this void.[16]

We go back to the concept we started with at the beginning of this study on the relationship of modern thought with ethical thought in Europe and its impact on the crisis of ethics. There is no doubt that over four centuries, the history of modernity in Europe served as a laboratory to experiment with philosophical and ethical ideas thanks to the bold critique and brave intellectual emancipation that represented a true revolution in science, politics, economics and ethics after demolishing every conventional frame of reference from medieval times. However, the historical experiences that put all ethical notions to the test of reality for European societies dispelled all hope of building positive ethics that have a fixed frame of reference. The testimonies presented by many European thinkers in this regard stand witness to this failure as they reveal the gravity of the crisis that ethical thought has reached. One of these thinkers stated that the modernist principle of evaluating conduct, i.e. the principle of social utility and of the submission of individual behavior for the benefit of society has invaded everything. 20th century thought is torn between the need to maximize secularization and technology, and the need for protection against positive ethics and social expediency[17].

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(16) Franklin Baumer: **Modern European Thought**, translated into Arabic by Ahmad Hamdi Mahmoud, vol. 4, p. 22. Al-Hayaa Al Masriyya Al-'AmmalilKitab, Cairo, 1989.

(17) Alan Touraine: **A Critique of Modernity**, translated into Arabic by Anwar Moughit, pp. 221-222.

If we peruse the content of newspapers and other media over the last decades in the way of reports and testimonies about the increasing prevalence of drugs and propensity to violence, the murder of innocent people and the rife sex trade, it is possible to see the extent of depravity that human societies have fallen to, particularly in Europe, the lack of values of reference or their transformation into an obsolete and discarded heritage.

In conclusion, European thought remained divided about ethics in various doctrines and theories between a multi-pronged idealism and a sociological experimentalism, and utilitarian or relativist doctrines. This drove ethical thought into a crisis that had two manifestations, one is the dissolution of Western societies and the second one is skepticism and sophism.

As a result of these modernist experiments in ethics, we believe that it would not be judicious to consider the modernist experience in Europe, with its myriad manifestations, as a universal experience, particularly at the moral level, as it claims for itself. It should instead be considered from the angle of its relative limitations and its historicism. Unlike science, ethics cannot be dissociated from human motives, nor from personal sentiments, will, freedom and the sense of responsibility. Thus, if we were to consider science in its empirical sense and philosophy in its universal rational approach as a frame of reference since both are based on perception and perceptual experience, and on reason and rational logic, all of which are common to all human beings in all times and places, we cannot consider ethics under the same light, especially if we consider that the ethical frame of reference must be based, in its universal dimension, on the sense of responsibility that stems from Man's faith and how he perceives the purpose of his existence. Faith in Allah, in the continuity of life after death, in sanction/reward in the afterlife and other key beliefs that define Man's ethical perspective, are factors that make ethical values immutable, even in a changing world.

The conclusion I wish to highlight is that Man remains a moral being, and that he could not be otherwise. This has served as the premise of the idealist ethical philosophy of ethics for Kant who strongly argued that idealist ethical values should be sought for their very essence and not to attract some benefit or fend off some prejudice. It is the perpetual drive to bring peace to our conscience which is only at peace when meeting the call of

duty. Conscience, as a researcher in the history of ethics said, is an innate core shared by all speaking creatures. It shows on Man before he is able to gauge the consequences of his actions and their impacts, i.e. before the awareness that empirical ethicists amalgamated with conscience. Leanings towards goodness and aversion towards evil are inherent to human nature. Without this, we would be unable to explain the nature of moral authority or understand the sense of shame that follows the committing of a sin[18]. This researcher further says that it was scientifically proven that propensity towards perfection is inherent to human nature and therefore the ideal that Man seeks did not arise from illusion, but is instead ingrained in his very nature[19].

We conclude by reiterating the basic idea that we have tried to prove - that Man is a moral creature by nature and that, in the same way he is distinct from other living creatures by reason and speech, he is also distinct thanks to the moral authority that springs from his conscience. And that is the way Allah decreed mankind to be, and there can be no changing of Allah's decree.

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(18) Dr Tawfiq al-Taweel: **Al-Falsafa Al-Khuluquia: Nash'atuha wa Tatawwuruha,** p. 351/ Munshaat Al-Maarif, Alexandria, 1960.
(19) Ibid, p. 357.

On the Arab-Islamic Thought's Need for Authentic Modernity*

Dr Abbes Jirari**

By the nature of his making and existence, his self-awareness and sense of responsibility within the small and larger community, Man is perpetually striving to advance himself and renew his life, in the ways made possible by the times in which he lives and his capacities, and as dictated by the conditions of progress, provided these do not clash with his innate nature and its prerequisites, and most importantly with his faith in the Creator. He evolves within a framework that preserves the individual's freedom and dignity, and those of his close or extended community.

In order to achieve this, Man needs a contemporary model of thought and tireless efforts to grasp what this thought imposes at all levels and on all fronts, whether political, economic, social or cultural, and what the latter interface involves in the way of thought, literature and art and the creativity necessitated by all these levels.

For Man to live his times and interact positively with them, i.e. in ways that fulfill his aspirations to progress and prosperity, he must rely on what was right in his past and blow dust off what is obsolete and defective. This not only enables him to recognize what he aspires to, but also to open up to the world and what is new in it, the changes unfolding within this world and what he can contribute to enrich it.

However, 'new' is not meant to refer to the technological innovations and inventions abounding around the world, often easy to consume and within

everyday reach of the general public. Instead, it relates to the cultural element and the stances it requires vis-à-vis identity components, particularly in reference to history, customs, traditions and everything that constitutes or is related to heritage.

This calls for a reflection of this self and its components and what governs it in the way of conscience and mindset, keeping in mind the extent of its readiness to cleanse itself from the negatives and impurities that have accumulated in that heritage, and freeing itself from the constraints that weigh down on the custodian of this heritage in his relation to the superior 'Other' who prevails through the pattern of his culture and behavior. This Other goes further to project the universality of this pattern and leads many thinkers to fully preoccupy themselves with his model and dedicate effort to understanding and solving its problems in order to keep pace with it. It would have been more worthwhile for them to expend these efforts and attention on researching their own heritage issues which they relegate to others –who are often enemies- at the risk of their causing confusion, distortion, provocation and sensationalism, and perhaps engage in intimidation and threats.

From this angle we tackle Western modernity and the attitudes adopted towards it and what followed it, and to the possibility of finding a model of modernity that could serve as an alternative that would free Arab Islamic thought from the dilemma and turmoil it experiences, particularly after its failure to resolve the problem of authenticity and modernity in discussions that have been ongoing for a very long time.

When we look at the notion of Western modernity – though other terms may be used to refer to it such as modernism - we will find that it was associated with modernization which pursued enlightenment and intellectual revival within the context of what was appropriate at the time of its emergence, and as it freed itself from the backwardness of Middle Ages, from the power of the Church, the tyranny of feudalism and all other manifestations of regression that marked these centuries.

This movement may have seen its first light at the beginning of the 16th century with the emergence of Protestantism and the revolutions that erupted in parallel, whether philosophical, industrial or political, along with the early manifestations of Western Renaissance. During this period, many names emerged such as Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), Martin Luther (1483-1546), Francis

Bacon (1561-1626), Galileo (1564-1642), René Descartes (1596-1650), Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), and others. Soon after this, other movements gained in importance such as existentialism and Marxism. In fact, they may have emerged long before that with the invention of printing by Johannes Gutenberg (1397-1468). Certain historians even claim that they date back to the mid-19th century in France and the time of poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) with romanticism which soon spread to many cultural and civilizational fields, though the term itself was only used at the beginning of the 20th century in relation to some literary and artistic forms.

While this modernity may have appeared to suit the European environment, it also coincided with the rise of the capitalist tide, the first colonial forays, and the decline that Arabs and Muslims came to experience, from the fall of Andalusia to the annihilation of the Ottoman Empire.

Despite the ambiguity surrounding the concept of modernity, which calls for probing and critical questions, it remains a movement, a theory, a trend or an approach based on a philosophical vision that rebels against the past with its history, religious sanctities, doctrinal and moral values and cultural achievements, as well as every constant that was inherited. It is also a revolution against the present with its politics, economy and culture while calling for releasing thought and freeing expression to revisit the common conception of Man and nature and strive to control them and rationalize all of this.

All this criticism has made modernity - even among Westerners – the subject of divergent positions between proponents and opponents. Suffice it to mention that modernity was closely followed on the heels by the post-modernist movement which constituted an improvement of this concept though it was more of a negation and rejection of modernity. In fact, post-modernism carried a fair share of criticism directed against modernity and the crises and wars it caused. It was an attempt to rectify certain viewpoints or supplement what it perceived as incomplete, giving a greater importance to criticism. It went beyond modernity's stance vis-à-vis religion and called for its outright abolition, urging for the exclusion of the absolute truth and considering it non-existent, and touting relativism in everything.

Thus, post-modernism seems to have refuted all the theories put forth by modernity, warning against anything that may lead to anarchy, i.e. chaos and

nihilism. Yet, it supported the West's call for rapprochement and for openness onto others, although this call only led to further hostility and conflict.

When we consider modernity from an Arab-Islamic perspective, and in all objectivity, we find that it erred when it narrowed its vision of the world by perceiving it through the eyes of the European context and the culture and civilization it produced, ignoring or negating what other environments experienced and continue to experience, particularly the cultural and civilizational progress attained by Arabs and Muslims and which constituted one of the most important foundations of the West's modern renaissance.

It further perceived progress and refinement from a material angle, supported in this by some philosophical ideas that had little concern for the human being in terms of his existence, needs and aspirations, and from a totalitarian vision that steers clear of the individualism that had dominated it. It thus dismantled his relations and stripped them of their closeness, propelling Man into a trajectory that run counter to his needs in the present and future, in an attempt to rally the colonized peoples around the intellectual and behavioral model inherited from the colonizer.

Add to this the secularization character it adopted at the expense of spiritual values, calling for abandoning religion as a mere illusion, and even a scourge associated with the primitive phase. It also focused on challenging language and sanctities, starting with the Qur'an and the noble *hadith* and the associated Prophet's sunnah, and challenging the Islamic legislation and provisions, and the methods, terms and standards it adopted as its tools.

This in turn led to adverse results that were behind the Islamic religious awakening that began in the mid-20th century and was believed to bring about salvation from the scourges that had befallen the Ummah and signal the end of the era of Western modernity, not only for Islam, but for other divine religions as well. This was expressed by movements, activities, writings and others as witnessed, in the past and present, on the ground of most religious societies, especially Muslim ones.

For reasons that cannot be addressed in the present study, this situation gave birth to the phenomena of extremism, violence and terrorism. This in turn led to the deadly wars ravaging Arab Muslim peoples and other vulnerable

peoples and endured at the same time, consciously or unconsciously, by major developed countries as they gloat in the destruction of others.

Yet, and despite all these failings and the criticism that the Westerners have leveled at themselves under this modernity, when we reflect on the reality of Arab Islamic thought and the stance it has taken vis-à-vis this modernity, it is possible to observe a host of trends that can be delineated in the following:

First: Embracing it wholeheartedly with all its advantages and inconveniences, with insistence on negating sanctities and the past, and calling for abandoning this past and rejecting the civilization and culture they brought.

Second: Totally and fully rejecting it because it separated science from religion, breaking away from identity and its components and choices, especially the constants and components that enrich this identity.

Third: Faith in modernity with consideration of the possibility of amending it by removing some of the negatives and trying to rationalize it with philosophical and moral ideas, in the hope of conferring a humanist imprint on it.

Fourth: Replacing it with a modernity based on authenticity in its different components but with a profound conscience, a progressive mind and rational approaches, which is what we aim for in this paper.

It is worth of note that certain Arab and Muslim thinkers who viewed Western modernism in awe and admiration and were influenced by its dynamism, were helped along by the emergence of the translation movement, some missionary trends and Masonic institutions. In this regard, they look forward to espousing and adopting this modernity, oblivious to the drawbacks that Arab and Islamic thought cannot accept, particularly with regard to religion, values, heritage and history. The most important aspect drawing them together relates perhaps to literature in general and poetry in particular. The first stirrings of this emerged in the mid-20th century with some writers, poets and intellectuals in Iraq and the Levant and among the Arab diaspora. However, they often dealt with modernity from the angle that considers it a consumer commodity that they did not study well, nor did they delve deep in its substance to fully realize its advantages and disadvantages. The prevalence of such influence, especially among younger generations has

been – along with profound political, economic and social factors- among the reasons why Arab and Muslim societies lost their own capabilities and distinct characteristics and are prone to quick frustration and disintegration.

Further confirming the above, and before addressing aspects of modernity as advocated in this paper, we need to point out that refusal to walk the walk of Western modernity stems from the diverse circumstances surrounding its inception in the West, and the status of the Arab and Islamic world and the reality of its societies. Notwithstanding its imbalances, this reality reflects these societies' values, components and constants as inherent to their religion, language, heritage and traditions, as well as their attachment and pride in their freedom, dignity, political, economic, cultural and social rights, their legitimate aspirations to progress, advancement and prosperity, as well as their desire to fulfill their mission and play the part devolved to them in today's world.

Moreover, and whilst positive in its enlightenment and creativity aspects, western modernism, in other aspects and when practiced by some of its advocates, is no more than tampering with the mind, with knowledge and freedom of thought, and stripping people of their humanity, driving them not only to alienation, but also to destruction and annihilation. This led the Arab and Islamic world to suffer from its destructive woes, and its subversive effects may affect those who boast power should they persist in their arrogance and tyranny.

However, the path to a true modernity may be littered with obstacles. These may include:

First: We failed to study properly and deeply enough our heritage in its roots and frames of reference to gain a sense of its essence and purge it of the unfortunately many weaknesses affecting it, so that we can recognize these truths, whether at the level of thought or of method.

Second: We are still unable to deal with religion –Islam in this case- in a way that enables us to keep pace with our times through an innovative jurisprudence and a novel discourse with fresh content and original ways of delivering it.

Third: Despite our principled stance on Western modernity, we did not delve properly into its epistemic and rational dimensions in order to expose its deviations and criticism it was subjected to. We limited ourselves to capturing its material manifestations and some of its most salient characteristics. We even went as far as to regard it as a primarily European product without taking into consideration what competes with it such as other models of modernity, especially the American and Asian ones which have undoubtedly surpassed what Europe presented and can be put to contribution in reaching the model of modernity we aspire to.

The Arab-Islamic thought we seek to modernize today seems to need a review more than ever before. This review would begin with a bold self-criticism, proper knowledge and without any sense of inferiority, until the causes behind the decline are exposed. This review must extend to the different aspects of knowledge and meet the prerequisites of scientific research, keeping in mind the tremendous expansion achieved in modern sciences thanks to their approaches and developments in every field. This entails that we do not confine ourselves within the inherited and prevailing legacy and also dictates re-reading and adding to it to better match this age, and before that to purge this legacy from the impurities that have clung to it from the eras of weakness and decline.

Such a review of the different areas of Arab-Islamic thought should begin with an enhanced awareness of the need for *ijtihad* on the genuine issues that arise from today's reality with its multiple and diverse challenges, leaving behind the puerile and fabricated problems that only consecrate backwardness and cause frustrations.

This calls for a new discourse - as already pointed out – to be developed by qualified theologians, in cooperation and coordination with other scholars, thinkers and researchers from different disciplines, figures who are tuned to the pulse of their societies and their needs. Armed with deep knowledge and courage, this discourse would be able to convince all components of society. Yet, this is only possible through what is inclusive and shared by Arabs and Muslims and therefore far removed from any form of sectarian, doctrinal or ethnic strife that divide, scatter, tear apart and spread hostility and hatred, leading to conflict and clashes.

We must perhaps start by stressing that religion, which is a key target in Western modernity, represents, with its concepts, teachings, laws, values, practices, visions and perceptions, the safety valve for both individual and society. In preserving attachment to a religious identity, a person acquires a sense of personal and public existence, his place in the universe and the mission he carries in this universe. Religion is thus the safeguarding vessel of conscience and a source of psychological and intellectual serenity. It achieves a balance between the self and the universe and the mysteries, secrets and abstractions that the universe conceals and that science cannot fathom unless it is armed with faith. It is no secret that the need for faith has become urgent in these times where knowledge and its developments have reached peaks that almost represent a threat to man's humanity. Faith helps Man to confront the materialistic dimension and the crises of life and their resulting suffering. These crises worsen -as is the case today- when religion is confronted by those who negate or fight it or stir trouble around it, causing confusion and anxiety among people, including in the hearts of the believers of different faiths. This can easily affect the way relations should be between the followers of these religions, based on a mutual recognition that is founded on tolerance, respect and ability to engage in dialogue and accept differences.

Contrary to what the advocates of modernity in the West and beyond believe as they accuse religion of being behind the decline of those who embrace it, the key factor in this regression is not religion, heritage or culture. It is instead and primarily inherent to the political and economic imbalances that arose as a result of the failure of regimes that are often despotic to enforce democracy, social justice and human rights as per the Western model, having tried to imitate this without understanding the essence of its goals, and even without a desire or willingness to understand it, let alone apply it.

Religion is what brings Man in touch with his Creator who controls him and who created the universe. He loves this Creator and obeys Him by performing his duties and committing to their accomplishment out of obedience to His commands and avoidance of His injunctions. This places in a lofty relationship with his Creator, which relationship elevates him and continually teaches him how to deal with God, with himself and with people in a waythat may not be perfect, but is based on values that alert him to the need to steer

clear of corruptions and draw closer towards what is sacred. This helps Man achieve the lofty and elevated status he aspires to, soon feeling that the rites of worship he performs bring him closer to the unseen world which is sacred. And as he draws nearer to this world, he is able to visualize it and unravel some of its inexplicable mysteries and secrets, such as death.

There is no doubt that religion gives its follower a sense of freedom that has no limits other than submission to Allah. Man neither dominates nor controls. Instead, he tolerates, coexists and shows compassion and mercy for the weaker. Thus, the holistic human dimension is fulfilled, a dimension that can only be achieved through religion and not through any philosophy or rational model.

This discussion of religion leads us to the matter of values considered in the Islamic perspective as intrinsic to religion. The individual's behavior evolves in line with rules where his social existence is governed by established morals that carry special significance for individuals and societies. There is no doubt that in this fact lies the dissonance that Muslims feel in their actions today, a dissonance between those rules and the unfortunately predominant practices that are imposed on generations and can aptly be described as immoral or contrary to the Sharia and the traditions flowing from it.

Islam needs to be viewed not only as just another religion, i.e. as comprising laws and values, but also as a history, a civilization and a culture. Such consideration requires constant renewal through *ijtihad* in Sharia and other fields to enable this religion to meet the requirements of this age, i.e. the needs of modern day Muslims, their relations with each other or their interaction with others.

In terms of heritage, another target of Western modernity, it must be safeguarded and preserved as well as adopted as the Ummah'scollective memory, its frame of reference, the guardian of its identity and legacy, and the sum of the genius it has produced throughout the ages, highlighting the essence of this Ummah's civilization and culture. Heritage is the fruit of the distinction and excellence of past generations. There is no difference between what is stored in libraries and art and archeology museums and what stands before us in the way of architectural manifestations, and what lives and takes body in our lives in practice such as customs, traditions and

folklore creations, as well as the impurities that need to be purged and that have accumulated, far from any boastfulness and hollow pride but to draw benefit from it in our present experience.

The same can be said about history and its importance. What the Islamic state or states experienced throughout the different ages, before Muslims began to decline and suffer eras of colonization, was no coincidence. Similarly, the cultural and civilizational prosperity that history recorded under these states was no accident, and served, by the admission of objective Western historians, as a foundation for the West's renaissance. Yes, those states' regimes were far from exemplary and suffered in most cases from political, economic and social disparities and problems, the most dramatic of which was perhaps their inability to preserve the unity and cohesion of the Ummah, persevere with and encourage ijtihad in law and fiqh and empower scholars with freedoms that would undoubtedly have helped achieve this.

However, a consideration of history requires first of all the assessment of its impact on societies' progress or regression and the factors accounting for this. This consideration should be based on a critical approach that would lead to the modernization of this history, i.e. helping it become capable of being one of the elements of the desired modernity. As we reflect on history, we must recall our presence in the Mediterranean region which witnessed many distinguished and prosperous civilizations – European, Arab and Muslim. This dictates that we all be mindful that our shared history is not distorted or its legacy falsified.

The authentic modernity we strive for –as the adjective 'authentic' intimates- is and must be based on this authenticity, that is, on the elements of Islamic identity and its Arab and Amazigh tributaries and all other trends that have contributed to and enriched it with their religious, moral and cultural frames of reference. But also and most importantly –as said earlier- in order to purge it of all the impurities that have accumulated over centuries, and then capitalize on what is good and examine its suitability for what appears to be positive in Western modernity, especially with regard to its novel rational approaches and what could be beneficial to use in our research. We should not forget though what the Arab and Islamic thought achieved in science and reason back in the Middle Ages when the West was slumbering in the stupor of ignorance and regression.

Without elaborating further on these aspects, it is enough to mention the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadith in their praise of learning and reason and their encouragement of their pursuit. This was advocated from the first century Hijriby Muslim theologians who reflected, in all knowledge and freedom, on the matter of divine entity, its attributes and relation to events. Such scholars include Ibn Khalid al-Jahani (died 805 AH), Ghailan Ibn Muslim al-Dimashqi (died 1055AH), and al-Hasan al-Basri (died 110 AH) from the Qadariyya who believed in human free will, as opposed to Jabriya scholars such as al-Ja'd Ibn Dirham (died 117AH) and al-Jahm Ibn Safwan (died 127AH) from among those who restricted this freedom.

In addition to these, the Mu'tazilites analyzed the principles of freedom and divine justice and reflected on the attributes of Allah, stopping at speech which they considered as a subsequent attribute, and by association denying that the Qur'an, the word of God, was uncreated. Some of them were influenced by Greek philosophy, such as Abu Hudhayl al-'Allaf (died 226 AH) and Ibrahim Ibn Sayyar al-Naddham (died 231AH). In opposition, the Achaarites came up with a middle way that helped them reach a rationalized formulation of faith that was further developed by Abu al-Hassan al-Ashari (died 324AH). Among them were Abu Bakr al-Baqlani (died 403AH) and Abd al-Malik al-Juwaini, who was also known as the Imam of the Haramain (died 438AH).

Within these rational scholarly movements emerged a philosophical school spearheaded by Abu Yusuf Ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (died 260AH) who meticulously summarized, translated and explained a number of Greek philosophy books in a way that blended them with the teachings of Islam. Another name that stands out in this regard was Abou Nasr al-Farabi (died 339AH) who took particular interest in the writings of Aristotle, Plato and in Platonism, poring over the dilemma of divinity and the relationship of Allah (SWT) with the universe, as he directed his philosophy towards a certain goal, namely happiness to which he dedicated his book *The Virtuous City*.

This philosophical trend was further strengthened by eminent scholars from Andalusia and Morocco such as Abu al-Walid Mohammed Ibn Rushd (Averroes), (grandson, died 595AH) who achieved distinction in many sciences, especially philosophy where he endeavored to explain the works

of Aristotle and correct their translations. He takes credit for bringing Europe closer to what came to be known as «Rushdism». In such liberal scholarly field, some of the scholars were wise in that they warned against dabbling in delicate and esoteric issues that could be confusing to lay Muslims. If time allowed it, we would mention more examples of the innovations produced by Arabs and Muslims in the Orient, Andalusia and the Maghreb in engineering, mathematics, geography, medicine, sociology and other inventions related to architecture and even music and other arts. This is an indication of the level of genius and creativity reached by this scientific and intellectual movement and its significant impact on the West's Renaissance. Suffice it to mention names such as al-Sharif al-Idrisi al-Sabti (died 560AH) in geography, Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun (died 808AH) in sociology, and before them Ibn Sina (died 428 AH) in medicine to which Ibn Rushd had already dedicated his book al-Kuliyat (Generalities in Medicine).

But as we aspire to an authentic modernity, attention to this heritage does not mean that we must confine modernity within the past and close it in on itself. Instead, we wish it to be open to all forms of enlightened modernity through appropriate knowledge patterns, including Western modernity. We would like to carry a universal vision that pays attention to the human being in all his dimensions. With its authenticity and its emergence in the folds of Arab Islamic thought, this modernity becomes suitable for another thought, out of belief in the multiplicity and diversity of the manifestations of human thought, as well as of its acceptance of difference and the necessity of two-way interactions. This is what western modernity, which emerged within societies at a particular time and place, failed to take into consideration in order to be suitable for other societies, even failing to suit its own societies of origin and thus opening the door to other trends, as mentioned earlier.

Yet, and despite all the optimism we feel towards the emergence of a true modernity, one should remain alert to the difficulties that will be encountered by intellectuals who share this optimism. Some of these difficulties lie in the perception some of them have of history and heritage, those who believe that the adoption of this past and of heritage may run counter to any modernity. Others concede the possibility of integrating religion within certain limits, provided sacred texts are dealt with using rational approaches that strip them of their sanctity, making it possible to adapt, in their view, to Western or any

other form of modernity, and hence achieving the universality sought by the West from this modernity.

In fact, universality is not limited to what the other has, the more superior 'Other' who wants to fully impose his model or forcibly control what others have until they adapt to his own model, if we were to judge from the stance adopted towards religious texts. Instead, it presupposes inclusion of what exists in other modernity models with their identities and particularities, some of which may be shared already and some may differ but all ultimately enrich this universality, especially in the areas of values and culture and their belief-related content. This has escaped the two parties, i.e. the developed party and the follower or the one who wishes to follow even at the expense of some of his identity's components. Both parties believe that universality is immutable and does not evolve or renew while everything, including religion, is subject to modernization as long as its fundamental components are preserved.

To make a success of the true modernity called for in this paper, it is most important for the Arabs and Muslims, peoples and regimes, to believe in the possibility of this modernity's fulfillment and the absolute need for it, and to muster the will power needed for this. This dictates that the thinkers who are convinced of this necessity tackle modernity through study, analysis and critique so that this vision of modernity can be completed from all angles, concretized then applied. However, they must not satisfy themselves with approving it as a mere formality, or at the worst rejecting it or taking it lightly, or even considering it as a dream that will never materialize.

We would like to add that it is not possible for the desired modernity to bear its fruits at the current stage and in the future unless we commit ourselves to a future vision that takes into account all the prerequisites of this objective, starting with the mentoring of present and future generations and their integration in this dynamic. This calls for a comprehensive review of educational curricula, approaches and methodologies in order to instill new knowledge and educational values in young generations through teachers and professors from different schooling levels, provided these are well trained and qualified to keep pace with this modernity and enrich it with more credible scientific studies, notably at university and research center levels.

However, we all need to be convinced of the necessity to modernize our personal and general affairs, since modernization itself is a constantly

evolving phenomenon in any society and should not cease no matter what the obstacles that may divert its course or stand in the way of redressing intellectual conditions and revisiting real and inherited manifestations.

This is not an easy obstacle to overcome. It requires strong willpower to accept the principle of renewal, change and the need to keep pace with the times without fear of self-critique and without being in awe of modern developments to the point of simply surrendering to them and accepting them as they are. We need to add to them instead while acquiring the keys to innovation and the ability to find linkages between them and a heritage that cannot be renounced to, especially in matters of beliefs and the values that spring from this heritage and that are in symbiosis with the nature in which Allah created mankind and all other beings.

We do not have the luxury to hesitate, falter or retreat, nor are we allowed. We are instead under an obligation if we wish to overcome the crises weighing heavy on us and endured by our Arab and Islamic world of which the foundations and the cornerstones are beginning to crumble*.

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* Some of the reference works in this paper were written by the author (consult titles in the author's website, published in Arabic, French and English).

Spiritual Modernity and Intellectual Servitude

Dr Taha Abderrahmane*

It is truly surprising that some of our own intellectuals find it neither shameful nor despicable, or even embarrassing to imitate others in the intellectual patterns they produce, whether these were right or wrong. It would have been a lesser evil if our intellectuals had limited this imitation of the others' thought to themselves. Instead, and regrettably, they harness their pens and minds to tout the rightfulness of this thought and called for the adoption and dissemination of its spirit and canon among their fellow citizens, in the process prejudicing their own history and heritage. They defend the failings and detriment of such imitation as if they have achieved a feat unparalleled in greatness and unprecedented in time. They make this imitation the quintessence of their endeavors and their rigidity the peak of their creativity, yet their only claim to modernity is to rehash one idea after another and one phrase after the next. But they do not all follow the same path in their imitation of modernist thinkers. The manifestations and extent of their hackneyed intellectual modernity are as diverse as their disposition and ability to fully grasp the reasons behind this modernity. The most radical amongst them in their dedication to this imitation are the two following categories:

- **A first group** comprising those who know of their heritage nothing but its outer layers and of their history nothing but a vague outline. The spirit of true heritage has expired in their hearts, as if they were never raised within its folds. They embraced the heritage of others and proclaimed it as the only gateway to the advancement of humanity. From their minds was obliterated the canon that regulated this authentic history, as if they were never part of it, resorting to the history of others and electing it as the history of all mankind.

- **The second category**'s state is even more astonishing than the first one. It comprises those who were prevented from experiencing modernist thought from its sources because of their own special circumstances, the inadequacy of their means or the mediocrity of their knowledge. This left them with no option other than to cling to this modernist thought through means that would never rise to the level of a first-hand experience or the virtues of knowledge at its primary sources. They know little of the object of their imitation other than its surface or a few shreds that cannot enable them to fully acquire this modernity, while, at the same time, their bonds to their own heritage are disrupted and enfeebled. Some of them may even be found to compete with the first category in claiming a total separation from heritage, as if prejudice in favor of an imitated thought and alienation from their own thought would help them compensate for the inadequacies that tainted their own development in the first place.

All these imitating intellectuals do not follow the same path in this emulation, for they are not of the same class but hail instead from different strata of which we can list three. There are those who imitate modernists directly by referring to their original sources albeit with variations in how they assimilate their ideas. These are the first class imitators. Coming second are their followers who flutter around them in the hope of gaining some insight into the imitation of western thinkers as their role models of the first category did. Then we find the third category which comprises the disciples of these followers. These disciples may not be bothered by the fact that their mentors are no more than intermediaries to intermediaries, i.e. second class middlemen. They proceed to imitate them, never daring to look further, assuming that the ideas transferred to them by their mentors are their very own and the fruit of their minds. This is how imitation at this stratum is totally perverted, for it is no longer the imitation of a direct source but inspiration from a far removed branch.

Besides the fact that these imitators follow different paths and at different layers, their imitation of the others' ideas is the most loathsome kind of imitation that could be experienced by a member of a given nation.

a. This imitation is not motivated by a spirit of **competition**. A person may imitate another person as he vies with him to achieve some purpose first and not fulfill it in the same way the other did. His sense of competition is rooted in his belief that the desired object acquires its worth from the other's pursuit, and thus he competes with him to reach it first and acquire it for himself. This form of imitation preserves a measure of independence of one party from the other, for their can be no competition except among peers[1] and there can be no parity in the absence of independence. As for the imitators of intellectual modernity, they are as far removed as possible from parity. They feel completely powerless to compete with the masters of modernity over some ideas, either to reach them first or defeat them in this race. Instead, they are content to simply assimilate these ideas, in total acceptance and acquiescence as if they were receiving religious teachings.

b. Their intellectual imitation is not one of **similarity**. A person may imitate the other by having similar achievements and thus deserve recognition since what is recognized for a thing is also recognized for its equal. The imitators of intellectual modernity are utterly incapable of coming up with a similar or equal thought, yet, and strangely enough, they aspire to the same recognition as reserved for those they imitate, imagining that this imitation warrants recognition and blessings on the part of the imitated. Little did they know that those are far too insightful to give them any credit based on their imitation, even if they urge them to engage in it and deem it fitting for reasons known only to them. How difficult is it to see that they do not attribute the production of these imitators, no matter how well the imitation is and how eloquently expressed in their own language, to the sources of their own culture. And when they show lenience and attribute some of it to this heritage, the most they would deign acknowledge would be scraps of little import, let alone include the imitators' names among their own.

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(1) For further insights into René Girard's theory on competitive imitation, see ***Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde***, recherches avec J.D. Oughourlian et Guy Lefort, Grasset, 1983.

c. Their intellectual imitation is not one of **emulation**[2]: A person may emulate another, following his lead in order to ascend to higher levels of moral perfection and spiritual loftiness. If he achieves this spiritual ascension, he would be able to depart from a state of imitation to one of fulfillment, and from replication to creativity. Alas, the imitators of intellectual modernity among our intellectuals are the farthest possible removed from such spiritual advancement. Most likely, they are not imitating thinkers who sought to preserve the bond with religion even at its lowest level, except when they seek to divert their readers from their religious heritage, convincing the dupe to preserve their bond to religion in the same way those thinkers proposed. They, in turn, satisfied themselves with a few scraps of faith when all they needed to do was apply logic, as if no religion was ever revealed among them.

Yet, it is the habit of these imitators to wholeheartedly embrace the thought of thinkers who believe they have severed all ties with the spiritual world, revolting against the church -as beliefs, rites and clergy- because from their free-flowing imitation they seek nothing other than to achieve a measure of material progress to expand the scope of their worldly joys and consumption of life's pleasures. They fail to grasp that the intellectual theories and models they pursue will inevitably carry within their folds remnants of religious concepts that are primordial for their holders such as the trinity, incarnation and deification, either because these notions have permeated their hearts to the extent where they become as affirmed in their minds as the most rational of concepts, or because they strived to obliterate their religious roots and disguise them with the mask of reason until they came up with what only a select few can grasp. The result is that the imitator transfers into his own culture these religious remnants which contradict this culture's religious principles, thinking them to be universal and all sound minds should be amenable to them when, in fact, these doctrines and opinions are specific to that culture of the imitated thinkers and are binding to none other than themselves.

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(2) Emulation as in the sphere of attributes and morals.

Attention must be drawn here to one peculiarity. While this transposition is acceptable from intellectuals who share the same religious convictions as the ones they imitate, it is utterly inadmissible when engaged in by intellectuals who do not share such convictions and stand independent in their beliefs. Inattention to the difference between these two categories of imitators has led to a further entrenchment of imitation for the following reason: circumstances have allowed the first category a greater opportunity at education and culture and therefore their ability to transfer is broader and has a more profound impact. This advantage led the second category to follow suit in order to compensate for its missed opportunities, thus falling prey to imitation, unlike the first one which had the advantage of the concordance of its religious beliefs with those of the imitated.

Once this scourge of intellectual imitation that has become so prevalent ceases to be an imitation of competition, of similarity of or emulation, all that remains is the imitation of servitude, not by coercion but in absolute free will. There is no doubt that these imitators have freely and in full cognizance chosen, convinced of their outstanding work, to hand their minds and hearts over to others to think and reflect on their behalf. They feel no urge to contradict what they are borrowing, even if just to assert their existence, nor do they have the ability to produce an alternative to what they are borrowing, even if it runs against the grain of their cultural roots. They are imitating these thinkers opinion for opinion and word for word[3] and continue to do so even after being alerted to their flaws.

At this point, there is no avoiding their labeling as being «intellectually dependent» and even in a state of «intellectual servitude», as was the case with the masses before the French revolution who were more dead than alive, and for whom the Church did all the thinking on the matters of life and religion[4]. In fact, this judgment seems more appropriate for them than for

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(3) Ponder the hadith marfo' that reads: It is reported on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger (PBUH) said: "*You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you hand span by hand span, cubit by cubit, to the extent that if they entered the hole of a lizard, you will enter it too.*" We said: "O Messenger of Allah, (do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?" He said: "Who else?"

(4) Emannuel Kant: ***Qu'est-ce que les lumières***.

the oppressed masses because they have the privilege of choice while the former were forced to comply. Needless to say, the coerced person is allowed more than what a person enjoying the luxury of choice is. Surrendering the mind to the Other is a more profound form of 'voluntary servitude'[5] than is surrendering one's body. He who willingly surrenders his body into slavery remains free of mind, but he who wittingly seeks to enslave his mind will never be able to preserve the freedom of his body. These imitators have strayed from the chosen path from the start. In their quest for modernity, they chose the path of servile imitation. Whilst modernity, as they claim, enlightens minds, it can only exist along with independent creativity and in the presence of creative independence, contrary to their situation.

Some of our intellectuals have spent much time rehashing the first type of separation they were introduced to through imitation, namely 'the separation of politics and religion', otherwise known as secularity. They continue to debate this today, endlessly and in all futility arguing about it, except when they came to agreement about the notion of «political Islam» in which they also imitated the other and which imitation extends also to the way they dramatize its dangers. Some of them find cause for and shamelessly support the persecution and humiliation of its supporters by authorities, in the hope of an opportunity to share with these authorities the role of masters.

And here they are now starting to imitate modernists in their opinions and claims about a second form of separation of which the effects have a more profound impact than the first, and that is the separation of ethics and religion, or let us say the post-secularist separation. Our aim in this respect is to fully grasp the nature of this second form of imitation. To this end, we selected from modernist theories three postulates related to this post-secularist separation. By discussing each of these separately, we seek to show how our intellectual imitators, by adhering closely to intellectual mimicry, are undermining their minds in worse ways than what could be exacted by their enemies. Such crime results in terrible intellectual poverty since these intellectuals constrain the horizons of their thinking and imagination and curb the potential of

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(5) Etiennie La Boetie: *Discours de la servitude volontaire.*

creativity and enrichment intrinsic to certain aspects of their culture when it meets the culture of the other. They also waste opportunities of intellectual independence and freedom from what hails from outside, putting shackles on their ability to act vis-à-vis what is extraneous, either through correction, expansion or orientation, satisfied with remaining forever dependent upon other modernists.

1. The restriction of ethics to individual interactions

After this introduction, let us now look at the modernists' claim of restricting ethics to individual interactions. The first formulation of this claim is:

▪ **The goal of ethics is to govern relations with the other based on a distinction between good and evil.**

Our objections to this first post-secularist claim are as follows:

a) The term «Other»[6] has been used in Western culture in reference to anything outside the self: be it human or otherwise since the goal is to establish absolute 'otherness', and wherever it materializes this term becomes applicable. The world is the other, God is the other. In fact, even if an entity stands to represent the 'other' for itself, it becomes possible to label it as such although it is part of this self. In this post-secularist drive, the 'Other' is limited to the meaning of 'a human being other than the self". The imitating intellectual had no option but to imitate them in this perception and thus confine the meaning of the other (in Arabic) to the 'other human being', in addition to omitting other terms that convey, at varying degrees, the meaning of 'otherness' such as 'peer' and 'equivalent' and which may open new doors to understanding the notion of an otherness that is not necessarily human, if he were not so consumed by his blind desire to emulate them.

The imitating intellectual is prey to two scourges that dramatically shrink his horizons of reflection, confining the moral bond within human interactions, and limiting the attribute of otherness to the human 'other'.

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(6) The notion of the 'Other' as seen by the famous French psycho-analyst Jacques Lacan.

b) This post-secularist claim reduces ethics to human interactions. This contraction generates an extreme impoverishment of these ethics since Man's interactions extend far beyond his dealings with other fellow men to interactions with all creatures, living or dead, speaking or inanimate. Man is called upon to apply ethics in his dealings with all creatures, of whatever nature they are. In fact, Man deals with his own self as if it has rights over him, and if he acts morally towards himself, it is even more important to apply these ethics when dealing with other entities and things. Furthermore, Man interacts with his creator through compliance with His commandments -because divine commands carry nothing but goodness- and respects His injunctions because what Allah enjoins against can only be the root of evil. When Man acts in morality with Allah, this will surely incite him to act morally vis-à-vis all creatures, starting with himself.

And since the imitating intellectual perceives ethics the way his role models do without a slight change in this perception, this narrow perception cuts short any efforts to fathom the ethical truths contained in his heritage and based on which he can build further truths. He can thus contribute to meeting the newly arisen ethical challenges, resolve the ethical crisis that has prevailed in economy through consumption, in environment through pollution, in the media through immorality, and in genetics through compromising life.

c) The present post-secularist claim makes «good» and «evil» two relative and clear values. Some even illogically claim an ability to by-pass the limits of these values[7]. Their contingency upon the human mind makes them inherent to his contexts and this inherence to context strips them of their attribute of absoluteness. It is no secret that the mind never settles in a given state, changing in tune to the tergiversations experienced by Man, the result being that Man's actual perceptions sway between two extremes that are never fulfilled: «absolute rationality» and «absolute irrationality».[8]

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(7) Nietzsche: ***Par-delà bien et mal***. Gallimard.

(8) Contrary to Kant who believed in the purity of the theoretical reason and the practical reason.

These perceptions invariably include a share of rationality and an either equal, lesser or higher share of irrationality, but this relativity affects only the ancillaries of values while their origins, if they do not preserve their contents either entirely or partially or even not at all, will always be preserved in images. It is for example impossible for senseless murder to be good, or for fairness towards the enemy to be bad. Add to this that the principle of distinction between bad and evil can never be negated, even if we accept that some evil may turn out to be good, or some evil may transform into goodness, for the simple reason that there is a primary will that transcends Man's reason and precedes his will, and that has decided that this distinction must always exist to regulate human actions.

Yet, the imitating intellectual will remain attached to the relativity of good and evil in the same way as the object of his imitation, either forgetting or oblivious to the limitations of this relativity which is the result of divine will, and that his own culture had achieved distinction by being firmly anchored on this supreme will. This intellectual may use his commitment to relativity as an excuse to gradually disavow every value constant, even the absolute constant that is the root of every value, namely divine will, in the same way it was disavowed by the thinkers he imitates. He may even invoke this commitment as a reason to be ready to accept values that reek of worthlessness and that humanity has often discarded[9], and neglecting other rightful ones that it has embraced for long, under the pretext of keeping pace with the developments of intellectual modernity.

2. Separating the religious from the spiritual

Let us now address the second postulate of modernist thinkers and that we label as separating the religious from the spiritual. This post-secularist postulate is formulated as follows:

> ▪ **The association between the religious and the spiritual does not obviate the difference between them. It is therefore possible to abandon the religious and retain the spiritual.**

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(9) Such as homosexuality, lesbianism and gay marriage.

We object to this second postulate in the following terms:

a) This post-secularist postulate acknowledges that the relationship between religion and spirituality is one of the specific to the general since spirituality falls under religion while religion does not fall under spirituality. It is therefore correct that everything religious is spiritual but that not everything spiritual is religious. This postulate is debatable for why cannot the opposite be correct, i.e. that spirituality is more specific than religion[10]. Some religions may not carry any spirituality in them. The primary role of religion is to organize life in community, and the fact that this regulation is built on some absolute religious principles does not necessarily signify the presence of some special spiritual content. Ample examples can be found in the ideologies that abounded in the 20th century world such as Nazism and Fascism, considered secular creeds[11], and which are the farthest possible removed from spirituality. When the imitating intellectual adheres to this postulate at its face value, he not only falls into a wrong judgment as would a mere imitator, but he also commits two additional errors:

The first one is that he settles on this postulate when its initiators may not do so, being intent on faithfully preserving what he imitates. The extent of his rigidity is such that his mind cannot envision the possibility of contesting this postulate or acknowledging that its opposite may be correct, thus further impoverishing his own thought. Meanwhile, this possibility is very much present in the minds of those he imitated even when they proceed to state the opposite.

The second error is worse than the first one. The imitator forgets that he belongs to a nation that stands out by being the nation of the seal religion and there is no doubt that such a nation is more worthy of being imitated and its scholars emulated in this field than all other nations. Therefore, the work of the imitator is akin to that of one who replaces the good with the bad, or the rich with the poor, causing misery not only to his readers but also to himself. However, this only applies if he fails to recall the religious particularity of this Ummah. If, on the other hand, his action comes in

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(10) Meaning that everything spiritual is religious but not everything religious is spiritual.

(11) Cf. Taha Abderrahmane: **Ruh Al-Dine**, chapter 4.

premeditated defiance of the religiosity of this nation, then his poverty of thought has progressed to the extent where his mind is totally alienated. Indeed, irrational is the mind that does not see where reason stands in this nation's religion and where vain desires stand within the religion of other nations.

b) This second post-secularist claim was built around a second postulate that has two parts:

One argues that all religions are equal, based on a misconception embedded in modern culture that religions have no claim to reason, or in other words the irrationality of religions or the confirmation of the whimsicality of religions.

The second is that all forms of spirituality are equal, based on another erroneous belief equally embedded in modern culture, namely that spirituality is not inherent to life, or the assertion of the non-life of spirituality, or in other words the affirmation of the death of spirituality.

In truth, religions come in types and phases, and they are neither equal in type nor identical in phase. They differ in the degree of their rationality, in addition to the fact that religious thought sits at higher levels of the mind than does positive thought. A fabricated religion cannot ascend to the same level in the mind as a revealed religion, nor can polytheist religions ascend to the loftier plane reserved for monotheist religions though the minds of modernists were saturated beyond reason with Greek myths till they ceased to see in the multiplicity of gods anything absurd. On the contrary, they may see in this a higher rationality than can be found in the rationale of monotheism, arguing that plurality is a legitimate democratic demand while the principle of monotheism breeds violence, though now is not the time to respond to this. In fact, we need to distinguish between the religion's rationality and its irrationality based on its own rational requisites and not on the rational requisites of positivistic thought.

Spirituality comes in types and levels and its types are not homogeneous, nor its levels infinite since they vary in their relationship to life. Furthermore, the spiritual experience occurs at levels of life that are higher than those of material experience. Acquired spirituality cannot rise to the rank of conferred spirituality. It is therefore essential to draw a line between what is livelier

and what is simply alive based on its own life requisites and not on the life requisites of this materialist experience.

It becomes clear that the imitator who espouses this second postulate is actively engaged in impoverishing his own thought whilst believing that he is enriching it, along with the intellectual poverty he causes to his readers and imitators, the reason being that he engages in two blatant abominations:

First: He abandons the quest to distinguish truth from falsehood in religion and spirituality because,similar to those he imitates, his argument for the equality of religions while he believes that they contradict reason or equating all forms of spirituality while believing that they contradict life, forces him to state that religion and spirituality are blatant falsehoods. In reality, nothing could provide greater motivation for seeking the truth and fending off falsehood than these two spheres: the religious and the spiritual as their dedication to fathoming the mysteries of life and the questions of destiny exceeds all limits. We can thus fully appreciate the extent of damage that this imitator is inflicting not only on his nation but also on the fate of all humanity. Man has no greater need thanto reveal these existential secrets and answer these momentous questions, and surely this can only occur through elucidating the truth about religion and spirituality.

Contrary to the statement: "Everyone thinks his religion or spirituality is the rightful one," the answer to this objection is: "Conviction that a belief is rightful is not the same as the rightfulness in the belief itself; what is needed is to establish the rightfulness in the matter itself". Instead of "the claim by religions and spirituality to rightfulness breeds violence among them", as the answer to this second objection is: "The origin of violence is not the affirmation of rightfulness through multiple evidence, but the existence of unlawful interests, and what is needed is to depart from these false interests."

The second abomination committed by the imitating intellectual is that heforegoes the broad and focuses on the narrow. He emulates others by narrowly focusing on a tunnel-vision rationality that severs its connection with religious action when he had within reach a much broader rationality that encompasses and builds on this abstract rationality, capable of shaping and guiding it, a rationality that has origins in religion and branches in worldly life.

Thus, the imitator would have ruined his mind, and a man with a ruined is a miserable human being.

This imitator followed in the footsteps of others in confinement within a narrow material life that cutsall ties with the spiritual experience when he had at his disposal a life that was broad enough to enfold and add to this material life, able to enlighten and elevate it, a life of which the motivations lie in the soul and its impacts show on the matter. Thus, the imitator would have amputated his soul, and a soulless Man is a most miserable human being.

c) This second secularist claim entails a third postulate, namely that religion is stuck in the rut of customary rituals, unlike spirituality which dos not freeze over these and may even be devoid of such rituals. This comparison is not valid and its invalidity is clear in the following:

- This postulate stands witness to the earlier statement that religion is specific and spirituality is general. We have already refuted this statement with the counter argument of secular religion. This religion is utterly devoid of spirituality even if it throws a few lofty meanings around, placing these on pedestals and urging citizens to embrace them. If secularism was more specific than spirituality, it would not have existed without it.

- There is no spirituality outside religion. It is religion that drew out its outline and arranged its principles and terms in the first place. Therefore, all those who pursue it are required to perform the worship rites and rituals decreed by this religion. In fact, they must perform them in the best possible way if they wish them to bear fruit, cleanse the senses and ennoble behavior. Spirituality is nothing but the fruit of acts of worship through which the soul is purified.

- There is no spirituality without true religion, and the foundation of true religion is belief in the oneness of God. Spiritual insight is gained by seeking closeness with Allah and this closeness is possible through what God has decreed. The claims of certain thinkers that they have attained spirituality without taking this path betray that they are either confused or are just confusing others.[12]

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(12) Such as the French ethicist Comte-Sponville.

Faithful to his tradition of glorifying the other's thought, the imitating intellectual will be prone to accepting this postulate the same way he accepted the previous ones, wallowing in further intellectual impoverishment on four fronts:

▪ **The fact that he abandoned the terms «rites», and 'acts of worship'** which are firmly established religious terms in favor of the term 'rituals' (الطقــوس, this word being the Arabicized form of a Greek word). This substitution betrays a desire to shed the rich spiritual benefit associated with these terms and affirm only the ceremonial and formal connotation inherent to these acts of worship. In doing this, he imitates those intellectuals who became impatient with the prolific rituals that were not dictated by a divine authority by revelation but were instead diligently invented by the Church. Needless to say, this imitation is not justified at all since there is no parallel in our heritage of these ritualistic inventions that are common to all believers.

▪ **He leans towards reducing religion to rituals** while implying that these rituals are devoid of any sense. Ultimately, he leads his unaware readers into generalizing this senselessness to all other pillars of religion, thus fulfilling his heart's desire, in the best imitative tradition, and that is to drive readers, albeit gradually, away from their religion in the same manner the followers of those he imitates were driven. At the very least, he manages to belittle religion in their eyes and make light of the need to safeguard and valorize it, thus causing them to play with religion as the first followers did, casting doubts on revealed books and reported *hadiths*, vilifying beliefs and rites and denigrating prophets and messengers.

▪ The imitator cannot see that **rites and spirituality are the two non-dissociable and interactive** -if not dialectical- faces of the same equation. If performing rites gives rise to spiritual sentiments and acts, the opposite is also correct. Acquiring these spiritual qualities confers insight, particularly in the case of prescribed rites, and bestows on them a living reasonability other than the abstract reasonability contained in worship acts, in addition to an enhanced ability to perform them better thanks to absorption and reverence. Whoever fails to recognize this association between the ritual and the spiritual, of impacting and being impacted on, would have missed many religious truths. It seems

that even when he takes cognizance of this dialectical relationship, the imitator will still advocate the need to separate them, his heart being too preoccupied with emulating the other to whose thought he has become enslaved.

▪ **The imitator emulates others in the claim of confining religion within life's private sphere**. This restriction of religion occurs at two levels: the individualistic aspect in that it makes religion inherent to individuals only and not to the community; and the internal aspect where this confinement limits religion to Man's interior and not to his exterior. All of this is aimed at depriving religion of the right to exit in the public arena, as if religion was an avowed enemy.

The imitating intellectual enthusiastically strives to convince his readers, albeit in a devious way, of the private nature of religion, as if his was a major breakthrough. His only maneuver to achieve this is to weaken the worth of rites in peoples' hearts, knowing that religious rites strengthen social bonds in the same way they reinforce people's bonds with their creator. Unless he manages to disrupt this communal cohesion of religion, he would not be able to concretize his theory of the private nature of religion. Once he sways their hearts and has an inkling of the diminishing esteem in which they hold their rites, he will be emboldened to declare these rites as pure myths and exhort people to abandon them. He would extol the virtues of a religion confined within the private realmand urge them to espouse it in a drive to serve a spirit of citizenship that believes in nothing other than secularity. Once he senses that they have embraced this privacy, he would lead them through the next step which is to consider the openness of modernity onto all possibilities. One of these possibilities is the denial of divinity, at which stage nothing would be left of people's religiosity and that is his ultimate goal. If such goal is fulfilled the way he desires, he would lead all creatures to worship each other, the way he has been revering those he imitates instead of worshipping their creator.

3. Claim of the perpetuity of spirituality

Having invalidated the modernists' second post-secularist claim, let us look at their third claim which we shall label as the perpetuity of spirituality. This claim is formulated as follows:

- **Religious people are not more deserving than modernists of spirituality considering its place in human existence.**

We can make the following observations in this regard:

(a) Spirituality is fundamentally seen as arising from religion, particularly revealed religions. Modernists would therefore have derived it from religion as they did with many other religious concepts, including the notion of enlightenment as in the concepts of 'lights' and the 'lights of reason'. Vanguard 18th century modernists had no qualms about naming themselves enlightenment philosophers. It is clear that 'spirit' and 'light' are similar in the precision of their meaning and the esotericism of their gist, so if some of them were to label themselves as 'spiritualists', they would surely not be inventing a new notion.

However, they manipulated some of these borrowed religious concepts in such a way as to make their new connotations contradict the original ones, so much so that only the literal meaning of these concepts now brings to mind their religious roots, leading to a terrible conceptual confusion and driving their readers into error.

(b) Modernist thinkers did not gain knowledge of spirituality from its existence but from its non-existence. To experience spirituality through its existence presupposes faith in religion and engaging in an internal battle with the self to apply its tenets. This knowledge springs from a live emotional experience while they do not believe in the existence of religion. For them, all religions are equal in their irrationality and even in their falsity. The only recourse left to them to gain knowledge of spirituality is through an abstract mental process that follows two ways:

One is to negate the attributes of material existence in the spiritual existence. For example, since material existence is known to be 'relative', 'finite' and 'extinct', spiritual existence should, in contrast, have the attributes of 'absoluteness', infinity' and 'perpetuity'.

The second aspect is to deny the attributes of material action in spiritual action. For example, when the material action is characterized by 'panic', 'terror' and 'greed', the spiritual action should have the opposite attributes of 'patience', 'safety' and 'piety'. Thus, the knowledge these thinkers have

of spirituality is no more than indirect 'hearsay' knowledge and not a knowledge born out of first-hand experience.

(c) Modernist thinkers seldom cared about the matter of death, whether as representations or as inferences[13]. In fact, death is the same as life for the human being, for both are equal dilemmas that define his essence. Such negligence on the part of modernists has no excuse because after the revolution against the church which had unjustly and corruptly enslaved human beings, they had committed to questioning and probing human existence in ways never done before. There is no denying that this question is inherent to man's death as much as it is inherent to his attachment to life. Death is a horizon of life equal to no other horizon in how it reveals its meaning and provides a true measure of its worth.

In contrast, it is incomprehensible that they would delve into the issue of divine destiny, concluding to the death of god as they did with the death, or murder, of the Christ, as if there can be no life for man except through the death of God, until one of the late modernists proclaimed the 'death of man' himself. He used the term 'death' in a figurative way but his general thrust was that Man is governed by forces and factors outside his will and beyond his consciousness. But let us not dwell here on this gross omission.

Where do those oblivious to inevitable death stand from those spiritualists whose interest in death equals their interest in life since they deal with life within the context of its other horizon, i.e. death- the same way they deal with it within its first principle .i.e. genesis. Death for them is not a static state but ascension, not a separation but an encounter. Thus, the spiritualist is forever ready to rise as no other person is, aspiring to the encounter that no one else aspires to until his end comes, the reason being his conviction that were it not for this ascension and this encounter, life would lose its meaning and value. It would instead be void and senseless, closer to the life of beasts than to that of humans. Thus, while

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(13) We previously mentioned the theory of salvation which for Luc Ferry included the matter of death. There is also the theory of the German philosopher Heidegger on death which considers that to exist in order to die is an essential structure of the human being.

some modernists claim affinity with spiritualists, they are not aspiring to any ascension or encounter. Instead, they are creating dubious emotional causes that grant them some relief from the utter terror that grips them whenever they remember this inevitable fate.

(d) Those thinkers have made all forms of spirituality one and the same, and this is utmost perversion. We must distinguish between two types of spirituality which are, in our own words, the 'spirituality of domination' and the 'spirituality of purification' (or trusteeship spirituality). The first one is about taming the self in certain actions or attributes that do not drive it outside its limits. The person continues to evolve within the orbit of his own self regardless of the difference in its actions and attributes. The proof is that he never stops attributing things to creatures, to himself or to the surrounding world, meaning that he does not preserve the relationship of ownership towards things, i.e. the relationship of domination over things.

Some may say: «Buddhism, a form of spirituality adopted by modernists, does not accept this attribution since it calls for a negation of the 'self'. The answer to this objection is that the human being has two options only: he either attributes all things to creatures or to the creator. If he does not attribute things to creatures, then he has to attribute them to the creator, and vice versa. Since Buddhism does not believe in a creative god, even if we suppose that the Buddhist is able to free himself from the power of the 'self', he still maintains this attribution within the sphere of other creatures.

The purification or the trusteeship spirituality is a sort of internal struggle of the self to regain its primal nature. It moves from the circuit of the self in which it has been evolving to one of the soul, the sign being abandoning the attribution to creatures and limiting it to the creator, in compliance with the provisions of the first covenant and the duties inherent to the greatest mission[14]. Thus, this form of spirituality is only found in religious people who adhere to true religion when they engage in the struggle against the self to depart from its afflictions and curb its vices.

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(14) Taha Abderramane: ***Ruh Al-Dine***.

To further clarify the idea, let us use as an example the hollow ring. If we visualize the world as an immense hollow ring, the individual floats within this ring in every direction and at any speed but he will never get the sense of being trapped, let alone get the notion that there could be another ring or rings above it. That is the state of the dominating spiritualist, no matter how wildly his situation changes or his features shift, his far horizon remains his own psyche.

On the other hand, the purist spiritualist is closer to someone who holds two rings, one surrounding the other but with a distance between them of which the width is known to his creator. He struggles against himself as much as he can within the ring surrounding him until the mercy of the Creator draws him to the outer ring. The latter is the orbit within which the soul evolves, striving towards the lofty values he perceives, espousing them in all his states, small and large, manifest in his actions, the private and the public.

(e) The claimants of spirituality among modernist thinkers acknowledge the supremacy of the materialist consumption in today's world, but do not think of confronting it except with a little «spirituality of domination». In so doing, they logically fail on two fronts:

One of these is that the **response should be at the same level as the challenge**. The challenge here is the obscene consumerism that is sweeping across the world, as all inhibitors and limitations have toppled before the variety of temptations and lures on offer in markets, and no end to the needs and desires they awaken with the promise of fulfilling them. Meanwhile, the only opposition they put up to this unbridled consumerism consists of a few exercises specific to the spirituality of domination. As said earlier, this form of spirituality believes in the degree of attribution/ownership that defines the self, and needless to say the foundation of consumption is ownership. Therefore, this form of spirituality, being of the same nature as consumption, can never halt modern consumerism.

Second, the **insufficiency of the spirituality of domination calls for a stronger spirituality** and what could be stronger than the spirituality of purification since it involves a relationship of trusteeship. This takes things beyond the status of mere possessions to that of charges entrusted by the

Creator into the care of Man. That counters the relationship of ownership/ attribution which places Man in possession of what he has between the hands and that is governed by a spirituality of domination. It becomes then clear that the spirituality of purification is more able to curb unbridled consumerist desires. However, these thinkers do not think of seeking this form of spirituality despite its effectiveness because they do not recognize its religious roots, nor can they bear its worship functions. This behavior clearly betrays the favoring of desires over the demands of reason.

We have now concluded our response to the postulates of modernists which fall within the context of the separation of ethics and religion, namely: confining religion within the sphere of individual interactions, the separation of the religious and the spiritual and the perpetuity of spirituality. We have shown how some of our intellectuals have imitated them by making these three post-secularist postulates in a show of clear intellectual servitude. Let us now ponder the extent of intellectual poverty that this blind imitation has caused them.

These thinkers are often modifying, in tune to the fluctuations of modernists, their position vis-à-vis religion. After seeing in religion nothing but man-made texts of which the truth is only revealed through a probing historical critique, some of them veered towards making an exception of spirituality from this critique. Once their readers acquiesced to this exception, they gradually led them towards considering spirituality as entirely independent from religion. The imitating intellectual sprang in turn to follow suit, proclaiming this spiritual independence as if he had gained insight into some valuable secret of modernity. Meanwhile, they have reason to explain such fluctuations that he sorely lacks.

Among these reasons are the challenges and developments that keep arising before modernity in its cradle with advances in science and technology in various walks of life, which advances were not part of the equation for their predecessors. These developments include the reversal of modernity's goals and values into their opposites to such extents as to consider homosexuality or lesbianism as a legal union protected by constitution or law. This forced these modern thinkers to alter their definition of modernity to better suit these changes and found their hearts' desire in the concept of the 'project'. They

said for example: modernity is an open project[15]. And lo and behold, the imitator quickly snatched this new definition, in its entirety and indisputably, the way chicks snatch food from their mothers' beaks. One can only imagine his joy with this piece of imitation and how close it is to Archimedes' Eureka moment when he discovered the principle of buoyance shouting "I found it!:

Only now can he engage in the rationalization of what he could not or dared not rationalize or even engage in, either out of inadequacy or of fear. The door to the possible has been thrust wide open and he rushed in to wander into its ephemeral valleys. What a waste of intellect! The door to alternatives has been closed forever and his imitation of the possible of the others has become a duty for him. He can never realize that this description of modernity is too poor to be mentioned even if produced by some most prominent modernist. Its broadness of content is verging on the limits of vulgarity.

What would prevent any institutional action from being an open project, starting with religion out of which modernity made an injustice and an arch enemy. Religion is the first open project in the sense that its followers continuously apply the general rules derived from its revealed texts to new situations. Its jurisprudence continually evolves in phases, open to possibilities that do not turn good into evil nor benefit into harm. Since his creation, Man has known that his existence has constraints and his behavior has limits and if he outsteps these limits he would be doing an injustice to himself or acting irresponsibly with his humanity.

When the imitating intellectual claimed the independence of spirituality from religion in his mimicry of modernists, he echoed their claim that modernity was in need of a spirituality that supports it and even frees it from its woes and ethical flaws. But how can modernity scamper to spirituality when in the past it arose on its vestiges, unless it goes into self-denial and turns into its own opposite? And it would have been acceptable if this thinker had limited himself to simulating this call only! Instead, he believed in his ability to produce, of his own volition, another conception of spirituality to reduce the gravity of his imitation's impacts.

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(15) This definition is originally attributed to the German sociologist Habermas. Cf. foreward of the author's book: **Ruh Al-Hadatha**.

But he went way too far in this simulation, calling for the same spirituality that those he imitated called for, making the mistake of matching his causes to theirs and his circumstances to theirs as if his heritage was theirs and his religion was the same as theirs. He ceaselessly proclaimed to all that he adheres to history and follows its ways in all the spheres of life.

Even if we assume that modernity will unite the different nations, logic dictates that before such unification is achieved, every nation will have to follow its own path to reach this modernity, as dictated by the constraints of its own culture. But he who insists on imitation does not know such logic and even if he knew it his road would be full of stumbles. Even if he does not stumble on this road, he would still be unable to persevere in it since it mars the imitation for him and deprives him of its pleasures.

The spirituality of modern thinkers is a spirituality of domination which is based on the principle of appropriation (ownership)[16]. More often than not, when the imitating intellectual follows their lead, he chooses the most extreme among them in this call. Whenever he finds those for whom spirituality is founded on openness onto the 'absolute', 'infinite' and 'perpetual'[17], for example, the imitator will choose from among these values those that apply to creatures and push aside the others, choosing, for example, the 'infinite' value. It is a fact that natural number sequences are not finite and so are the spaces above us. However, he may trade the values of 'absolute' and 'perpetual' for those of 'relativity', 'temporality' or 'historicism'. He has no issue with making these values absolute though he denies absoluteness out of conviction that everything is relative, temporal or historical, calling on his fellow men to wholeheartedly embrace relativism or historicism.

It is clear that those who embrace these modern forms of spirituality, with their gross errors and contradictions, are opting for the lesser and the poorer. Is the trusteeship spirituality that is based on purification not much loftier? It is based on the principle of innate nature which opens before Man broader and wider horizons, the conclusion being that the imitator favors spiritual poverty over the spiritual riches made possible by this much nobler spirituality.

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(16) Since Buddhism does not attribute things to the creator, it must attribute them to creatures. In fact, Buddhism does not recognize the existence of a creator.

(17) André Comte-Sponville : *L'esprit de l'athéisme, Introduction à une spiritualité sans Dieu*.

Our Islamic Sciences in the Contemporary Global Context

Dr Ahmed Abbadi*

1. Linking Islamic sciences to the Holy Qur'an

As we peruse the Glorious Qur'an, we come across two categories of science, a *fiqh* of submission (subjugation) as inferred from the holy verse: [*And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: Behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect,*][(1)] and a *fiqh* of facilitation, as in the divine word: [*And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?*][(2)]

This philosophy of submission can be grasped through reflection: [*And contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth.*][(3)], and by inference as in the verse: [*Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them?*][(4)]

The *fiqh* of submission has significantly evolved while the sciences of facilitation did not develop at the same pace. The philosophy of submission/subjugation progressed thanks to the perpetual dialogue between Man and the universe and Man's diligent endeavor to fathom the secrets of the universe and the language through which this dialogue takes place. This led to the scientific explosion we witness today, from small industries to cybernetics in their immense complexities, as well as in the fields of synthetic life.

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(1) *Al-Jathiya*, verse 13.
(2) *Al-Qamar*, verse 17.
(3) *Al-Imrane*, verse 191.
(4) *Muhammad*, verse 24.

As we reflect on this aspect, another issue rises, always in connection with the slow evolution of facilitation fiqh, namely the existence of an extraordinary intellectual fiber in the first generations of scholars among the Prophets' companions and followers, and the followers of his followers. The first pages in the book of facilitation sciences were written by Imam al-Shafi'i in his book **al-Risala**, by Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hanifa, and before them by the Seven Scholars. The first stirrings of *Usul al-Fiqh,* of Qur'anic and *hadith* sciences, Islamic scholastic theology and other sciences were beginning to take shape and provided a channel to seek out inspiration from revelation and from the Glorious Qur'an.

However, what followed shortly after that was a considerable decline in these efforts and a waning of that pulse, leading to a sense of inadequacy among the subsequent generations before the achievements of their predecessors. This resulted from acclamation and praise that were initially well-intentioned and blessed but of which the profuse practice may have resulted in a lack of harmony and complementarity between the Ummah's different generations compared to their role model, the Messenger (PBUH). Subsequently, certain theses began to appear, such as 'There is no possibility of anything more perfect than what exists'. Many of the efforts expended at the time were interpretations and explanations or annotations and comments on the works of previous scholars.

Yet, when we delve deeper, we clearly perceive the presence of a religious duty of continuous renewal, as expressed in the Prophet's hadith (PBUH): "*Knowledge is to be carried in every generation by the upright and just. They repel from it the distortions of the over-zealous, the forgeries of the fabricators, and the misinterpretations of the ignorant.*"[5] Renewal in the *fiqh* of facilitation in all these aspects is a duty to be accomplished by the custodians of knowledge, yet we note that this duty was not fulfilled as diligently as dictated in this noble *hadith* and similar hadiths.

Renewal in these approaches is what enables the contribution of Muslims and their participation in shaping the universal history of knowledge and

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(5) Narrated by Imam Ahmed.

civilization, based on a power of suggestion that is open to understanding and consideration, resistant to contradiction or refutation, otherwise this history of knowledge and civilization will continue to take shape while we are partially oblivious.

Those able to engage in dialogue with the Glorious Qur'an on any given subject must have a mind of which the structures have been etched and engraved to be able to rise to the challenge of this dialogue. It is for example unimaginable that a person bent on inferring from the Glorious Qur'an aspects of Islam's approach to education would not be an education specialist or scientist, for only such a person would be able to decipher the profound and minute education-relevant indicators and signals embedded in the Qur'an, someone whose brain has been schooled in this art and has developed reflexes that enable him to grasp these signals and references to education in the Qur'an.

But the common denominator between the person who engages in dialogue with the Qur'an on education sciences, or someone who will question the environmental issues, or sociology, or politics, or cybernetics or any other field must have some sort of background on this field in order to be disposed and able to embark on this dialogue. Thus, a host of horizons, diverse but complementary, open up before us but always with a degree of this common denominator mentioned earlier, i.e. knowledge of the nature of the Qur'an and ability to sustain this dialogue with the Glorious Qur'an while mastering the enabling tools for this. These conditions were laid down by our scholars in their exhaustive works such as Imam al-Suyuti (911 AH) in his **Al-Itqan**, Imam Badr al-Din Zarkashi (794 AH) in his **Al-Burhan** in a meticulous and all-encompassing approach that sets out the premises of interaction with the Glorious book. Thanks to this, Man can accomplish his duty which is to convey the guidance to the most right path enshrined in the Holy Qur'an to people in this life, as Allah (SWT) said: [**Verily this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable).**][6]

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(6) *Al-Israa*, verse 9.

If we reflect on this statement and apply our minds to understanding its dimensions, we will note the existence of a certain imbalance. If we ask ourselves one question with the holy verse 'Verily this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable)' in mind, and since this is a divine statement, can it be in any way affected by distortion or falsehood? Can we imagine a state where the Qur'an does not guide to the most right? The answer is of course no. If this Qur'an guides to that which is the most right, can this statement be applied to our current state in considering this state as the most right in all fields? Which fields can we decide are not part of what is most right? And what fields can we claim are already part of what is most right? Which fields can we decide are not part of what is most right? And what are the criteria applicable here?

There is no doubt that a good deal of knowledge and many of the disciplines that emerged here and there could enable us to start a scientific approach with the help of this verse from the al-Israa, such as setting the criteria that are the closest to what is most right in each field separately, catching up from our regression, recovering from what is far from being the most right and bringing about what is indeed most right.

2. Reviving the Sunnah of questioning

A look at the history of Man reveals that questioning has been one of the levers of human fulfillment on this earth and that it fans out in indefinite possibilities: [**Verily, (the ends) ye strive for are diverse.**][(7)] These possibilities are determined by Man's desires, inclinations, hopes and aspirations, and the questions these motivations trigger and that speak to them. The higher the attention and precision taken in posing these questions and the greater the mastery of inferring answers, the higher the impact of Man on the universe surrounding him. These questions, as well as their answers, should be in a language that the universe understands.

Unfortunately, when dialogue ceased in our civilizational reality, we became mere consumers of what the others produce because the *fiqh* of submission is contingent

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(7) *Al-Lail*, verse 4.

upon readings in Allah's visible book. We became dependent on what we owned before we came into contact with this civilization that continued to carry the torch it wrenched from us. It forged ahead in this reading and interaction, harnessing the discoveries made before, building on and adding to them.

When dialogue with the universe lapsed into silence in our world and our civilizational space, we became a burden on what was … When question marks disappear, processes also disappear because it is the process of questioning that reveals the approach. This is highlighted in the holy verse: [*Concerning what are they disputing? Concerning the Great News. About which they cannot agree.*][8] The questions continue until the verse: [*Verily the Day of Sorting out is a thing appointed.*][9] Life ends with the Day of Judgment, the Day of Resurrection, meaning that this questioning must accompany Man till life comes to its end. Today, our texts suffer from a sterility that manifests itself in the lack of questions, a state that reflects the level where dialogue with the world's two books stands in these times.

Man's questioning, in and with this universe, embodies his dynamism. The motives and inclinations inherent to this movement define its destination. It is therefore possible to describe Man's movement in the universe as dialogue. Whenever he receives an answer from the universe, he turns it into a bigger question in his quest to meet Allah who says in the Quran: [*O thou man! Verily thou art ever toiling on towards thy Lord- painfully toiling,- but thou shalt meet Him.*][10] If dialogue is fruitful, and making it constructive is a duty that falls on Man's shoulders as the vice-regent in the universe entrusted to him, Man's life in this universe becomes possible, otherwise it ceases to exist.

The history of mankind abounds with examples of the difficulty or outright end of life that resulted from Man's inability to engage in a constructive dialogue with the universe. The Almighty (SWT) measured all things to give them nourishment in due proportion [*In four Days, in accordance with (the*

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(8) Al-Nabaa, verses 1-4
(9) Al-Nabaa, verse 17.
(10) Al-Inshiqaq, verse 6.

needs of) those who seek (Sustenance).][(11-12)]. There are also experiences where human life continues to exist but in constant regression as it plummets to the abysses of humiliation, dilemma and dependency. The cause is the channeling of inappropriate desires within a legitimate framework that clearly shows their consequences, causing these desires to generate a driving energy that leads to their fulfillment.

The diversity and multiplicity of sustenance means, its places and the obstacles as well as the diversity of Man's aspirations and hopes, the variety and multiplicity of the sufferings he wishes to escape impose a constant fluctuation in stances, which makes it difficult to align his action to the direction he is heading for. Setting a target thus becomes essential in Man's life as the sine-qua non condition in this espousal. For safety and success, it is essential to know the direction towards which he will bow or seek: [*Nay, heed him not: But bow down in adoration, and bring thyself closer (to Allah.)!*][(13)]. It is crucial to discern the signs and signals that delineate the right orientation [*And marks and sign-posts; and by the stars (men) guide themselves.*][(14)]and [*Now have come to you, from your Lord, proofs (to open your eyes): if any will see, it will be for (the good of) his own soul; if any will be blind, it will be to his own (harm)*][(15)]. It is equally important to move and perform the act of prostration, for there is no sense in seeking the qibla and identifying direction if this is not followed by action and prostration towards them.

If we move from perceiving man as an individual to his status as part of a community where the means of seeking sustenance are myriad [*By (the mystery of) the creation of male and female;- Verily, (the ends) ye strive for are diverse.*][(16)], stances become as many as the people, and as diverse as the motives each one infers, and the challenge becomes higher. How do we align ourselves towards the same qibla through a tapestry of

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(11) *Fussilat*, verse 10.
(12) Japan can be cited as an example. In this archipelago affected by frequent earthquakes, people have made life possible by mastering dialogue with the universe.
(13) *Al-'Alaq*, verse 19.
(14) *An-Nahl*, verse 16.
(15) *Al-An'am*, verse 104.
(16) *Al-Lail*, verses 3-4.

different directions and targets that actually make their followers move in complementarity and symbiosis and not in contradiction or clash? In other words, how is this community, inspired by revelation and seeking out one qibla, able to perceive the miracles, the essence and the detailed vision that make it possible to identify harmonious directions, each from his own position, so that the community mutes into an Ummah that bows towards one and the same qibla?

For an Ummah to exist, the presence of an imam is inevitable as he guides it with his enlightened vision, steering it in a direction of which the destination is lighted with verses and insights, ennobling the members of the Ummah so that they form a community filled with yearning for Allah. He also enlightens them by revealing how wisdom can be acquired through interpreting verses and insights and acting upon them.

The creation of all beings -with the exception of Man- is defined by the predestination of their actions and purpose, i.e. the perpetuity and inevitability of their obedience and surrender. It also makes action and purpose one and the same in the cosmos. With exception of human beings, all creatures can from the start move towards their qibla and purpose for the moment they were imbued with life they were also set on their course of righteousness: [*They said: «We do come (together), in willing obedience.*][(17)] [*He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance.*][(18)] and [*Glorify the name of thy Guardian-Lord Most High, Who hath created, and further, given order and proportion; Who hath ordained laws.*][(19)]. Accordingly, movement and revelation in the universe are symbiotically one and the same, unlike with human beings where these two are independent of each other. Man's act of surrender and obedience is contingent upon his liberation from the various shackles[(20)] that

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(17) *Fussilat*, verse 11.

(18) *Ta-Ha*, verse 50.

(19) *Al-A'la*, verse 1-3.

(20) Man frees himself from his own prison (whims, urges, inclinations …) by striving to rise above them, from the power of his surroundings by relying on Allah only, from the shackles of doctrines and fallacious concepts through devotion, from the weight of material things by longing for the afterlife and favoring asceticism, from the sway of false gods by the greater *jihad* with the Qur'an and what the Qur'an has decreed as deserving of *jihad*.

hold him hostage and on his shouldering the responsibility entrusted to him out of all other creatures: [*We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it;- He was indeed unjust and foolish.*][21]

What guarantees the effectiveness of this movement is the science of the universe (the *fiqh* of subjugation) and what enables Man to adhere to the right path and destination is the *fiqh* of revelation (the *fiqh* of facilitation).

At the same time, neither the universe nor revelation make bowing in obedience an inevitability for Mankind. Instead, they make it a possibility for Man and it is up to him to take the decision of its application in life, as an individual and as a community. Giving is neither interrupted nor prohibited as the Almighty says: [*If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), We readily grant them - such things as We will, to such person as We will: in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. Those who do wish for the (things of) the Hereafter, and strive therefor with all due striving, and have Faith,- they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah.*][22]. It is instead a chance for Man in this life, whether one of adherence to guidance or one of aberration and deviation.

Our shared historical experience has shown that the maturity we displayed as a community has not been sufficient even under our myriad manifestations of religious following and faith. A reading of history proves that our interactions with revelation and its guidance were often not governed by our desire to seek answers for our questions in this revelation. Instead, they were mostly of a functional nature as we seek to find supportive arguments for our shallow causes and our ephemeral interests, which causes and interests are often detrimental to the self or the environment, or to both.

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(21) *Al-Ahzab*, verse 72.
(22) *Al-Israa*, verses 18-19.

3. Importance of awareness of position and bridging the gap between this position and these sciences.

One of the first signs of civilizational presence and an Ummah's status as a witness is its ability to understand and absorb the events and facts around it, decipher their significance, beliefs, and values and their underlying approaches and ideas, as well as its ability to develop stances vis-à-vis all of this. These stances are measured according to their impact on public behavior and ability to steer this behavior in such a way as to avoid imbalances, as well as ability to formulate dreams with a mobilizing power that can steer Man's endeavors in harmony with his surroundings and with a rational use of time. It is regrettable that the achievements of our Ummah in this regard have long ago receded and dwindled. The bonds with reality, the universe and revelation have broken down and we have begun to deal with these sources -which are directed towards Man's benefit- in a fragmented, rehashed and imitative way that is the farthest removed from their complementarity.

There is no disagreeing that one of the most salient features of today's world is the complexity, interrelatedness, swiftness and immensity of the repercussions of actions. Thus, one of the requirements in modern times is the ability to understand these features on the one hand, but also the ability to interact effectively and positively with them.

Deriving guidance from the Qur'an and the Sunnah is conditional upon understanding the revelation that is subject of faith and the reality in which this belief evolves, and taking into account the mechanisms of adaptation and adjustment between the two.

At present, we are in dire need of opening the doors to reality as it is, to be able to grasp it as it is and thus be better prepared to shape it into the reality we all dream of. We all dream of tolerance and beauty and of a human race capable of cooperating in righteousness and piety on this earth. However, reality proves that there are epistemic precedents and paradigms that condition the mind, and through this conditioning steer reality and human behavior. It is therefore necessary to open up this aspect, enter, explore, purge and re-arrange it. These are five actions that cannot be conceivably achieved in the absence of their prerequisites, at the top of which come the epistemic research and knowledge base.

Bursting the bubble of beliefs, perceptions and epistemic precedents and paradigms, values and standards, enumerating them one at a time, measuring their effects and tracking their manifestations in people's lives as individuals and as communities cannot occur without mastering the sum of supportive knowledge, embarking wholeheartedly on the necessary scientific research using the appropriate methods and taking due note of the diverse historical, civilizational and cultural contexts.

It is equally impossible to imagine embarking on these complex fields without the appropriate temporal, psychological, mental and material investment. Indeed, such a project cannot be undertaken without direct interaction with the peoples and components of the various civilizations.

As for exploration, it cannot be envisaged without the necessary methodological and linguistic mechanisms of co-existence and the skills and material prerequisites for the study of sciences, literature, arts and crafts and laws and regulations, all of which are manifestations of beliefs, perceptions and paradigms and of values and norms. It is also necessary to remain attentive throughout all this to the differences between the various scientific and practical fields and to historical disparities, and to take careful notes and gather all information to be studied and analyzed through suitable methodologies that the explorer has sometimes to build from scratch.

Likewise, we cannot engage in purification without proper and detailed knowledge of principles and premises, after all, purging means cleansing things of what came to mar them over time and returning them to their original state without resorting to cunning or theatrics, sweeping away conceptual pitfalls and perception inadequacies that may have seeped into these patterns over the course of history and social mutations, minimizing and curbing them or opening them up to the catacombs of totalitarianism, civilizational violence and destruction.

This bridging action is a practical process par excellence and requires clarity in its eight components, namely:

1. **Orientation** which is the discretional strategic aspect.

2. **Planning:** this is design in the human, temporal and spatial dimensions, aimed at explaining how to translate these strategies on the ground, the related programs and the inherent measures, verification and control.

3. **Legislation** refers to the laws and regulations that govern, facilitate and protect the implementation processes.

4. **Organization** is about managing all the implementation operations and the human, technical and material resources that aid in this implementation.

5. **Appointment:** this refers to the role-players of this concretization process as individuals and institutions, identified in accordance with clear functional indicators.

6. **Empowerment:** there is no sense to appointment without providing the material and moral resources necessary to meet the needs of this implementation process.

7. **Achievement** of all the foregoing.

8. **Evaluation**, which enables the assessment and further development of this implementation.

Models of Religious Co-existence in Islamic History

Dr Esam Ahmad Al-Bashir*

Introduction

Speaking about religious coexistence in Islamic history requires first the definition of this concept, the determination of its contents and the models of its application in the course of non-Islamic civilization, then briefly describing the foundations of Islam's vision and its practice throughout history.

Concept of religious coexistence

Coexistence in language: the meaning of the verb 'coexist' is to exist at the same time in the same place[1], living in harmony and affection, such as in peaceful coexistence. To exist with someone means to live with him and share those aspects that define living such as sustenance, drinking and income..

In terminological terms, if we reflect on the connotations of this term, our search will lead us to a number of meanings laden with contradictory concepts but which can be classified at three levels:

- **The first level** is political and intellectual and carries the notion of putting an end to conflict, managing differences or endeavoring to contain them, or managing this conflict in ways that open channels of communication and enable handling it as dictated by the exigencies of civilian and military life.

- **The second level** is economic. It embodies the cooperation ties between governments and peoples in everything related, directly or indirectly, to legal, economic and trade matters.

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(1) *The Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford University Press.

- **The third level** is religious, cultural and civilizational. It is the most recent one and encompasses the notion of religious -existence or civilizational coexistence.[2] This speaks to a convergence of the will of people from different religions and civilizations to work towards expanding the base of what is shared by civilizations and human beings in order to meet the requirements of positive interaction while safeguarding specificity.

This study focuses on the third level of coexistence, namely religious coexistence.

Religious co-existence among non-Muslims

Before we delve deep into history to cast light on models of co-existence in the Islamic Ummah, we should perhaps start by looking at the state of coexistence among other nations, to better grasp the singularity of the Islamic civilization over all others in this regard.

As we engage in reflection on the history of civilizations, we systematically find a bleak record of how the Other - who differs in religion (or race) - was perceived. Aristotle said that nature intended for the Berbers to serve as slaves at the service of the Greek since it conferred physical power on the former while the Greek were granted intellect and willpower.

The Romans considered all others outside themselves as objects and not human beings and described them as 'Hostus' which means stranger or foe, while the Jews proclaimed themselves as 'God's chosen people' and deemed that outsiders shall remain their slaves.

European history is replete with episodes of bloodshed from when the Malankara Orthodox persecuted the Jacobites of Egypt and the Levant, killing and exiling them in the 6th century, and up to the genocide of Bosnian Muslims late in the 20th century. Add to this the forced eviction of Muslims and Jews from Andalusia in the 10th century, and before that the extermination

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(2) Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri: *Islam and Inter-Religious Coexistence in the 21st Century*. Publications of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). Rabat, 1998.

of the Christians in Denmark during the reign of King Cnut and from southern Norway under King Olaf Tryggvason. The latter had ordered the slaughter of all who refused to convert to Christianity, or cutting off their hands and feet and banishing them outside his kingdom.[3]

These are a few glimpses of how opponents during non-Islamic history were dealt with and how peaceful coexistence with the followers of other religions was not allowed under these civilizations, resulting in conflict, discrimination and despicable fanaticism. We will mention other examples as we address Islamic history in comparison and by way of drawing lessons.

Religious coexistence in Islamic history

Islam is a universal religion in its divine tenets, moral values and all-inclusiveness. Its universality manifested itself in its ability to coexist with all non-belligerent human communities, Christians and Jews … kings and paupers…blacks and whites …etc. in line with the following rules and principles:

1. Recognizing that difference among human beings in religion is a matter of divine will:

Allah granted mankind freedom and choice to do and not to do, to believe or disbelieve: [*Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject*].[4]

The Muslim accepts that divine will is irreversible and cannot be altered, and that Allah wills only that which brings goodness and wisdom, whether human beings grasped this or not. Thus, the human being's role is limited to conveying this message, in words and deeds, and with no coercion whatsoever: [*If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed,- all who are on earth! wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!*][5]

Allah (SWT) says: [*If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people: but they will not cease to dispute. Except those on whom*

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(3) Fahmi Huwaidi: *The Other in the Islamic Experience: Concept and Practice*, page 1.
(4) *Al-Kahf*, verse 29.
(5) *Yunus*, verse 99.

thy Lord hath bestowed His Mercy: and for this did He create them: and the Word of thy Lord shall be fulfilled: "I will fill Hell with jinns and men all together."] This means that if Allah had willed, He would have created all men in the same disposition. Instead, he created them with various degrees of this disposition, no version is duplicated or repeated. He provided guidelines to righteousness and misguidance through which His will is implemented among people, each responsible for his own deeds. Difference in faith is no reason to break covenants –for example- since this difference has reasons that pertain to divine will. A covenant is to be respected no matter how different the beliefs are. This embodies the loftiest plane of interaction and religious tolerance and only took body in real life under Islam, guided by the light of this Qur'an.[6]

2. Unity of human origin and dignity:

In light of the divine verse: [*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you."*][7], and the verse: [*We have honored the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure.*][8], those most favored by Allah are the most pious and a human bond exists between them whether they wished it or not. This association gives rise to religious obligations such as standing up for a funeral procession regardless of the faith of the deceased. Al-Bukahri reports that a funeral procession went past the Prophet so he stood up. He was told: It is the funeral of a Jew. He said: Is it not a soul?[9]

3. Mutual acquaintance:

Because the Almighty said: [*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that*

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(6) Sayyid Qotb: *Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an*. Vol. 4, pp. 486-487.

(7) *Al-Hujurat*, verse 13.

(8) *Al-Israa*, verse 70.

(9) Al-Bukhari: *The Book of Funerals*, on he who stood up for the funeral procession of a Jew, *hadith* No. 1229.

ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)."[(10)] and the noble *hadith* says "*I witness that all mankind are brothers*"[(11)], mutual acquaintance is a fundament that Islam upheld, and a necessity dictated by sharing the homeland or nation in today's expression and applying the spirit of human brotherhood instead of rejecting it.

Social bonds between humans are many, as expressed in the verse: [*Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear a decline: or the dwellings in which ye delight - are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause;- then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious.*][(12)] The blood bond, the nationalist bond and the homeland bond, the bond of interests and the bond of Islam.

4. Coexistence:

The life of partners cannot proceed in the absence of tolerant coexistence: be it in selling or buying, in voluntary or compulsory actions, in roaming and in settlement. The history of Muslims abounds with shining examples of noble interaction with non-Muslims.

The holy Qur'an stated that the fundamentals of treating non-Muslims in Islamic society are goodness and justice, true to Allah's words: [*Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just.*][(13)]

Other verses instruct Man to treat non-Muslims well, such as the verse regarding infidel parents who try to convince their son of renouncing to

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(10) *Al-Hujurat*, verse 13.

(11) **Sunan Abi Dawoud**, vol. 2, page 83.

(12) *At-Tauba*, verse 24.

(13) *Al-Mumtahana*, verse 8.

monotheism in favour of *shirk*: [**Bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration)**][14], and the verse describing the righteous servants of God as those who: "And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive."[15] When this verse was revealed, prisoners were all idol worshippers.

Another verse provided an answer to Muslims about the legitimacy of spending money on their persisting idol worshipping relatives and neighbors: [**It is not required of thee (O Messenger., to set them on the right path, but Allah sets on the right path whom He pleaseth. Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls, and ye shall only do so seeking the «Face» of Allah,**][16] as well as the verse: "And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, [**We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah and your Allah is one.**][17]

There is also the divine verse: [**O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you**][18], a verse that shows the depth of coexistence between Muslims and other peoples of the book.[19]

Explaining the meaning of 'al-birr' (dealing kindly), Imam Quraafi says: "*It is to show mercy towards the meek, to cover the needs of the poor, to feed the hungry and clothe the bare, to address them in gentle words out of compassion and kind-heartedness, to show fortitude in the face of their harm if living beside them while striving to remove this harm out of compassion for them and not out of fear, praying for their salvation and their happiness, providing counsel in all their worldly and religious matters, minding their*

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(14) *Luqman*, verse 15.

(15) *Al-Insan*, verse 8.

(16) *Al-Baqara*, verse 272.

(17) *Al-Ankabout*, verse 46.

(18) *Al-Imrane*, verse 64.

(19) Dr Youssef El Qaradawi: **Non-Muslims in Muslim Society**. See also Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, ibid.

interests in their absence, preserving their wealth, children and honor and all their rights and interests and enabling them to enjoy all these rights."[20]

5. Cooperation:

Many general issues are shared by Muslims and others and can be the object of cooperation. In the same vein, the dangers and threats besieging them are not few, and these common denominators could serve as a starting point for coexistence and cooperation. The most important of these denominators include:

- Upholding fundamental human values and ethics. The values of justice, freedom and equality are shared by all religions and civilizations, and their consolidation within society is a common goal that can be the object of cooperation.

- Championing the world's underprivileged and fighting injustices. This includes the persecution of blacks and coloreds in America, the persecution of religious minorities and all the oppressed peoples in Palestine, Iraq, Kosovo, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Somalia and other countries. Islam is a champion of the oppressed regardless of their race and religion. The Prophet had said about the al-Fudul covenant which was concluded in pre-Islamic times: "*Certainly, I had witnessed a pact of justice in the house of Abdullah Ibn Jud'an that was more beloved to me than a herd of red camels. If I were called to it now in the time of Islam, I would have responded.*"[21]

- Cooperation in confronting the advocates of materialism who negate the world of the unseen, the atheists who deny the existence of God, and the pornography advocates who promote nudity and sexual debauchery and homosexuality, and abortionists.

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(20) Muslims use the term 'Al bir' to refer to the most sacred dues after what is due to Allah, and that is proper and kind behavior towards parents. Fairness means that parents are enabled to enjoy all their rights, but 'al bir' means that they are given more than their rights. Fairness means to request from them the exact measure of their obligations while 'albir' is to give up some of one's own rights by choice and out of magnanimity. Dr Youssef El Qaradawi: Thorny Questions and Clear Answers.

(21) Narrated by Talhalbn Auf, *hadith* mursal.

If we take Islam's vision of Western civilization as an example of the view it takes of other civilizations, we will find that it does not perceive it through disdaining or belittling eyes, nor does it hold it in awe or fascination. Instead, it perceives it in line with the following guidelines:

- Faith in cultural, legislative, political and social pluralism: [***To each among you have we prescribed a law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you.***][22]

- Striving to broaden the scope of civilizational interaction through such actions as drawing benefit from the Western civilization in its generalities and advanced administrative systems, reviving the sense of appreciation of the value of time and justice within a climate of dignity, calling for a true and sound partnership (fair exchange of interests) and diligently trying to quiet the voices of radicals from both sides.

- Confirming the clear commitment to freedom and human rights and the legitimacy of intellectual difference, religious and cultural pluralism, the peaceful transition of power as one of the fundamental principles of Islam and the renunciation to violence in political action.

- Calling for reviving the principle of civilizational coexistence, achieving the missing moral balance in Western civilization by serving by example and through integrity where example and reality are a match and where actions speak louder than words.

- Addressing the Western public opinion from a humanitarian angle towards the tragedies of Muslims -through powerful media and by putting this to contribution in advancing the wheel of dialogue and understanding.

- Promoting the concept of citizenship among Muslim communities in the West while remaining attentive to their needs.

- Muslim minorities should respect covenants entered into out of respect for laws and adherence to their provisions: [***And fulfil (every)***

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(22) *Al-Maida*, verse 48.

engagement, for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning).]⁽²³⁾

- Endeavoring to contribute to the resolution of the problems of Western society and such by-products of Western civilization as the dissolution of the family and social ties, moral decay, sexual deviation and racial intolerance, and shedding light on those contributions.

We come to the conclusion that what distinguished the Islamic civilization from other civilizations is the fact that under this civilization all people are equal. All human beings are "*either your brother in faith or your peer in creation*", as Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib said as he dispensed advice to his governor over Egypt to fill his heart with mercy for his subjects –all of them- and to love them. The prevalent rule was that a State's non-Muslim citizens enjoyed the same rights as those granted to Muslims and were subjected to the same obligations. They were not labeled, as under other civilizations, as 'self' and 'other' since these civilizations based their perception on natural determinants in which a person has no choice, nor was he capable of changing or abandoning them. The other could be anyone who differs in race, color, origin or physical traits, and therefore this other is unchanging through time, his traits are set. He may be the staunchest foe at certain times or a potential enemy at others.

In the Islamic vision, there is nothing called the 'Other' except those fighting Islam and Muslims. This adjective ceases to exist once the belligerence comes to an end and does not remain indefinitely attached to the aggressor: "*The state of hostility among human beings occurs in reaction to an idea or an act and not to the human being per se. The aggressor of Muslims becomes a mere human being and ceases to be an enemy when he lays his arms to rest or retreats, at which time it is no longer permissible to kill or harm him.*"

In application of these principles, the Islamic civilization enfolded many cultures that coexisted side by side in peace in spite of their interactions and dealings. This model of Islamic civilization became deeply entrenched thanks to two key factors:

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(23) *Al-Israa*, verse 34.

- The non-existence of an imperialist civilizational hub. There was in fact no impoverishing or annihilating of other lands so that this one hub could thrive and prosper as it usurped all fruits and collected taxes and levies. The Islamic tax regime was not based on a centralized tax collection system. Instead, every province or land collected different types of taxes and levies and these were all spent within that province's own territory, none of the funds collected going to the center except in cases of emergency or crisis. Thus, there were many civilizational hubs during Islamic history and whoever studies major cities will find it difficult to produce a ranking of these cities because each served as a hub at a point in time or within a specific geographical expanse.

- The rotation of leadership among diverse Islamic peoples and the multiplicity of capitals of the caliphate. A look at Islamic history will tell us that leadership in the Islamic Ummah was rotated among all the peoples who evolved under the banner of this nation, such as Arabs, Persians, Berbers, Ethiopians, Africans, Indians, Turks, Mongols and others. In parallel, capitals changed from Kufa to Damascus, Baghdad and Cairo, Isfahan, and Khwarezm, Qairaouane, Cordoba, Fez, Timbuktu, and many others. All these cities served as capitals and hubs of Islamic civilization. Yet, and despite its vast expanse, the Islamic civilization did not impose a particular cultural model despite its ability to do so on many occasions. It never imposed Islamization or arabization for example on its citizens, but we witnessed instead the following four models:[24]

- The association of Arabization with Islamization as in the North African model where North African peoples embraced the new religion and learnt the Arabic language at the same time.

- Islamization without Arabization as in the Persian model where Islam was embraced by the peoples who were ruled by the Persian Empire, yet they continued to use their own languages. The same applied to the Mongols, Turks, Indians and others. This model was the most

[24] Dr Nassr Mohamed Aref: *Dialectic of the Self and the Other in Islamic Civilization*, pp. 9-13.

widespread in the lands of Islam from Southeast Asia to Central Europe, Central Asia and Africa.

- The process of Arabization without Islamization: This was the case with the Christian minorities who lived at the heart of the Islamic caliphate in Iraq, such as the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Nestorians, and other minorities. They retained their religions and continued to use their own languages, proud of their identity.

This came in stark contrast to many other civilizations that deliberately sought to impose their cultural model and lifestyle on all who dwelt in their lands, voluntarily, in some cases, forcibly for the most part, so much so that they practically put an end to human diversity and plurality which is in itself a source of beauty and wealth and a means of mutual acquaintance and interaction.[25]

In addition to the above mentioned part on the manifestations of diversity and signs of tolerant coexistence between Muslims and others within the lands of Islam, we will describe a few other models that further corroborate this.

Models of coexistence during the life of the Prophet:

The era of the Prophet (PBUH) witnessed shining models that spoke of the greatness that Islam reached in its dealings with non-Muslims. It so happened that some people wanted to convert their children forcibly from Judaism to Islam, so the noble verse was revealed: [*Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error*][26] to prevent this. The Jews kept their religion despite the conversion of their parents to Islam.[27]

Other Quranic verses were revealed to exonerate the Jew who was unjustly accused of stealing the shield of a Muslim. The Prophet almost sentenced him based on the information and evidence available to him. A noble verse was revealed to affirm his innocence of the Jew and convict a Muslim from the Ansars who was trying to exonerate himself from his thieving by pinning

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(25) Ibid.
(26) *Al-Baqara*, verse 256.
(27) **Tafsir Ibn Kathir**, vol. 1, p. 682

it on the Jew: [*We have sent down to thee the Book in truth, that thou mightest judge between men, as guided by Allah. so be not (used) as an advocate by those who betray their trust.*][28], and even the verse: [*But for the Grace of Allah to thee and his Mercy, a party of them would certainly have plotted to lead thee astray. But (in fact) they will only lead their own souls astray, and to thee they can do no harm in the least. For Allah hath sent down to thee the Book and wisdom and taught thee what thou Knewest not (before): And great is the Grace of Allah unto thee.*][29]

Mohammed Ibn Hassan, a friend of Abu Hanifa and his scribe said that the prophet (PBUH) sent money to Mekkah's residents to distribute among their poor when they were hit by drought[30], despite the hardship and harm to which he was subjected to from the Meccans.

Another example was when the Prophet found copies of the Torah among the spoils of war after the battle Khayber. He instructed that they be returned out of deference towards the other's faith and holy books despite the state of war in which they were.

When a Christian delegation from Najrane visited Medinah–then capital of Muslims, the Prophet accommodated them in the mosque and allowed them to perform their prayers there. They used to pray in one corner while the Messenger and the Muslims prayed in the other.

Al-Bukhari narrated on the authority of Anas: The Prophet (PBUH) visited an ill Jew and while there invited him to convert to Islam and he did. The Prophet left his house saying: "*Praise be to Allah who saved him from the fires of hell through me.*"

Models of coexistence at different Islamic eras:

The Prophet's successors, his companions and followers emulated his example in his shows of kindness and fairness towards non-Muslims. In

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(28) *An-Nissaa*, verse 105.
(29) *An-Nissaa*, verse 113.
(30) **Sharh Kitab al-Siyar al-Kabir**, vol. 1, p. 144.

addition to the renowned shows of fairness of the caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab –second caliph after the Messenger- in treating non-Muslims in fairness even at the expense of such worthy companion as Ali Ibn Talib (4th caliph), or in confronting the companion Amr Ibn al-Aas (ruler of Egypt), there are many other instances of other Muslim rulers who proved their dedication to providing good treatment and justice to non-Muslims.

Al-Walid Ibn Abdul Malik had taken over the Church of John from Christians and integrated it into the mosque. When Caliph Omar Ibn Abdulaziz came to power, the Christians complained to him about the actions of Al-Walid against their church. He wrote to his ruler there instructing him to return the sections he had taken from them for the mosque, but they came to agreement with the ruler accepting compensation for their loss to their satisfaction.

When the Tatars took as prisoners many citizens of the lands of Islam, including Jews and Christians, the sheikh of Islam Ibn Taymiyyah demanded that the dihmmi prisoners held by the Tatars be released along with the Muslims, and said to the Tatar commander: "*We will not accept other than the release of all captives, Jews and Christians, for they are the people of our dihmma and we do not leave a prisoner behind, whether a dhimmi or a person of Muslim faith.*"

Non-Muslims held the highest positions, sometimes rising as high as the post of vizier. When German orientalist Adam Metz, in his book "Islamic Civilization in the Fourth Century of the Hegira" or "Muslim Renaissance", noted the large number of non-Muslim workers and administrators in the Islamic State in the early ages, his comment was that it appeared as if the Christians were the ones ruling over Muslims in the lands of Islam.

During the Umayyad era, Muawiyah assigned the State's financial management to a Christian family that had been inheriting this occupation generation after generation for over a century after the Islamic conquest. Muawiyah also assigned to his doctor Ibn Athaal the collection of taxes from Homs, a financial function never entrusted before to a Christian. Sargon was also a Christian scribe for Muawiyah.

The historian Al-Baladhuri wrote that Abdul Malik Ibn Marwan chose a Christian scholar from the city of Edessa named Athanasius to educate his brother Abdul Aziz. Athanasius was later appointed in charge of tax collection under the Caliph Abdul Aziz. Serving under the Caliph Al-Mutassim were also two

Christian brothers who rose to an esteemed status in the eyes of the Caliph.

During the time of Al-Mu'tadhid, Amr Ibn Youssef, the Wali of Anbar was a Christian. Al-Mu'tadhid appointed another Christian, Malik Ibn Al-Walid, as his scribe. At a later stage, during the reign of Al-Muqtadir, another Christian was entrusted with the secretariat of the armies.

Nasr Ibn Aaron was also a Christian and served as chief vizier for Adhud Al-Dawla Albuehi who ruled over Iraq south of Persia. Government offices, particularly the administration of taxes, remained for a long period largely entrusted to Christians and non-Muslim Persians. The same situation prevailed in Egypt until much later, the vast majority of Christians having almost total monopoly over such positions.

History witnessed episodes of greatness in the relationship with *Ahl al-Dhimma* considering the tolerance they enjoyed as they performed their rites and their equal access to positions. At the same time, the doors of Islamic universities and institutes were wide open to them to a point where they studied at the hands of Muslim scientists and scholars.

At a later stage, namely under the reign of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Dhahir, the position of vizier was entrusted to Abu Nasr Sadaqa Ibn Youssef al-Fallahi who was a Jew but then converted to Islam. The affairs of the state were managed by him along with the Jew Abu Saadal-Tusturi.

All of these are but a few examples of the many texts and events that testify to the dignified coexistence that prevailed between Muslims and non-Muslims throughout the Islamic history, based on authentic reference works and texts that cannot be altered or amended.

Conclusion

Islam recognized the pluralism and difference of human beings and sought to entrench coexistence among them as a point of reference, a thought and a practice. The Islamic civilization preserved the diversity of cultures and created an interactive play that did not negate any of them, nor did it seek to impose a specific cultural model. Islam guaranteed citizenship rights for non-

Muslims, a state we hope to see among the peoples of other religions and cultures, whom we invite to a common word so that none overpowers the other, and to pursue an equal dialogue without seeking to impose a model that does not recognize religious specificity.

Cultural Dichotomy between Islam and the West

Dr Mohammad Al-Sammak*

The first momentous discovery of mankind is perhaps that of reason. Man has since evolved into an inquisitive animal. No amount of knowledge and intellectual acquisitions abounding in universities, libraries, museums and computers can quench his thirst for learning. Man is continuously in the pursuit of more, and since Allah taught Adam all the names, the keys of knowledge have been placed in his hands, accessible through the pursuit of learning and studying.

In 1920, the American sociologist Karl Mannheim argued that the modern mind was neither closed nor limited. It is a dynamic and malleable mind in a constant state of effervescence that brings it permanently in confrontation with new problems.

From the horizons of the extinct past to the prospects of the unknown future, Man has moved from the question: "Why?" to that of "How?" that is from trying to fathom the purpose to searching for the cause.

The intellectual's duty is to tackle the dilemmas facing his nation, to explain and analyze them, and then pore over the appropriate solutions to these problems. The simple act of addressing a dilemma is in itself an intellectual exercise. A society devoid of intellectuals cannot face the problems plaguing it, for it is intellectuals who chart the path towards the future.

The former Soviet Union rose around the thought of a single thinker, Karl Max (1818-1883), as laid out in his book *The Communist Manifesto*. The capitalist economy emerged around the ideology of one thinker, Adam Smith (1723-1790) and his book *The Wealth of Nations*. The theory of the Protestant work ethic was based on the thought of one intellectual, Max

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Weber (1864-1920) and his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Culture is a common medium of expressing hopes and aspirations, the social legacy of customs, traditions and general aesthetics, and even of the narcissism inherent to a specific society or people.

The German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder summed up his definition of culture late in the 18th century by saying: "*The culture of a people is the blood of its being.*" Culture is in fact perceived as perfection by the English philosopher Matthew Arnold in his book *Culture and Anarchy*, published in 1869.

Definitions vary and views differ on the specifications of each civilization and culture. 19th century German thinkers drew a dividing line between civilization with its technical and mechanical components and its material factors, and culture with its moral and idealist manifestations and its intellectual and value attributes. However, many other thinkers did not accept this definition nor respect the distinction drawn by the Germans and to which they have adhered to date. Some considered culture as a set of phenomena inherent to societies perceived as primitive, non-evolving and uncivilized, while civilization was considered as the privilege of civilized, dynamic and complex societies.

Fernand Braudel confirms in his two books *On History* and *History of civilizations* (pages 205 and 212) that to separate culture from its civilizational roots was an intellectual luxury. Together, culture and civilization stand for the holistic character of living patterns of a given people. Civilization is in fact the natural law of culture as both contain values and thinking modes and ways to which the successive generations of a given society grant primordial importance.

Braudel considers civilization as a "cultural space" where multiple cultural characteristics and phenomena meet and converge.

Immanuel Wallerstein considered civilization as the point of convergence of visions, customs, cultures (material and intellectual) with the purpose of giving body to a history that co-exists with a host of other phenomena.

Christopher Dawson believes that culture is the result of a creative cultural process engaged by a given people, while Emile Durkheim sees it as a 'moral

milieu' that enfolds a number of nations, each having its own culture that sets it apart from the rest.

For Oswald Spengelr, civilization is the inexorable destiny of culture.

As for the Islamic culture, and by extension the Islamic civilization, its components and fundaments are directly and intimately linked to religion.

British Orientalist Montgomery Watt says in his book **Islamic Political Thought** that religious thought constitutes the general framework through which the intellectual sees all his work and activities. Through this relationship, his works acquire importance on a wider scale:

> "*If we look more generally at the relation between religion and politics, it is helpful to consider first the place of religion in the life of an individual. In the case of a person to whom religion means something and is not a merely nominal adherence, two points may be emphasized. First, the ideas of his religion constitute the intellectual framework within which he sees all his activity taking place. It is from this relationship to a wider context that his activities gain their significance, and a consideration of this relationship may influence his general plan for his life in particular ways. Secondly, because religion brings an awareness of this wider context in which the possible aims for a man's life are set, it may often generate the motives for his activity; indeed, without the motives given by religion some activities cannot be carried out. From these two points it is seen that religion has a central position in a man's life, not because it determines many of the details (though in some cases it may), but because it gives him general aims in life and helps to concentrate his energies in the pursuit of these aims*».

It is a given fact that the elements of Islamic culture and cultural traditions were formed and evolved and developed in symbiosis with religion. This means that breaking the intimate bond between religion and Islamic culture deprives this culture of its identity and uproots it from its spiritual origins. In contrast, modern Western culture, of which the multiple definitions were addressed earlier, took shape outside the frame of religion and at times was even based on challenging or contradicting this religion. This meant that the growth or

development of this culture entailed maintaining its state of rebellion against religion and ensuring its neutralization so as to minimize its influence on culture and its processes.

This resulted in a profound gap between religion and secularity, i.e. between the divine and the human, the sacred and the worldly, with the worldly always and inevitably prevailing when it comes to secularity.

This explains the gap between the Western and the Islamic cultures.

The European diagnosis of the Islamic world's reality is essentially based on this contradiction. The West attributes the regression of Islamic societies to their reluctance to break their cultural attachment to religion. It sees that these societies are falling short of keeping pace with the march of civilization as they are unable to emulate its model in creating a non-religious culture.

In Western culture, religion is a matter of the past. Remaining attached to religion is renouncing to the future. Thus, Western culture does not reject Islam per se, but refuses the maintaining of religion as a component of modern culture. It considers attachment to religion as a stumbling block to the spread and globalization of human civilization.

There is no denying that the Islamic Ummah suffers from a fundamental problem, not only in reaching consensus on the definition of its contemporary cultural components, but on determining the foundations over which it builds its relations with other cultures, particularly with the most influential culture in the Islamic world, the Western culture. There is also a divergence in the description of this problem, for although it is agreed that this problem has religious roots, a divergence exists and is actually almost exclusively limited to agreement on the possible solutions to this problem.

Former US President Richard Nixon wrote in his book **Seize the Moment**: "*More than 850 million people - one-sixth of humanity -* (naturally this number has risen to more one billion and a half now) *live in the thirty-seven countries of the Muslim world*".[1] Nixon goes on to explain how Muslims have 190 ethnic groups who speak hundreds of distinct languages and dialects and

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(1) The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) comprises 57 Member States.

who cover a 10,000-mile-long stretch of territory extending from Morocco to Yugoslavia, from Turkey to Pakistan, from the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union to the tropics of Indonesia. He also says in this book: "*We speak of the "Muslim world" as a single entity not because of any Islamic politburo guiding its policies but because individual nations share common political and cultural currents with the entire Muslim civilization.*"

As conceded earlier, there is a real problem in the Islamic world. However, this problem is not ingrained in the Muslim's genetic setup, i.e. it is not hereditary but lives instead in minds. As such, it can only be addressed through a modification of mindsets and encouraging minds to open up to the horizons of knowledge that the Qur'an, through many verses, urges Man to explore in the universe and in the inner self: [***Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls).***][(2)]

The Islamic civilization stood out by its ability to adapt and learn from other civilizations. At no point in its history did it seek to expunge or dissolve other civilizations. In contrast, the Western civilization, confident in and buoyed by its sense of supremacy, tries to impose itself on other civilizations. The fundamental problem lies therefore not in the rejection by weakened and backward civilizations of the principle of adaptation, but more in the insistence of the Western civilization on its supremacy and its failure to bypass its pattern of devouring and annihilating.

Octavio Paz (Nobel Prize laureate) admits that the Western philosophy's failure in the 20th century is owed to its inability to come up with a formula that marries its two main currents: liberalism and Marxism, providing only the choice of either dissolution or surrender. Now, with the fall of Marxism, Western philosophy has tried to end history on a note of the triumph of liberalism, which means the annihilation of all moral and structural values that abound in other civilizations, including the Islamic civilization.

Two years before the 9/11 events, Tariq Banuri, Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute in Islamabad, Pakistan, noted

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(2) *Ar-Ra'ad*, verse 11.

that Western writers continue to present Islam as synonymous with fundamentalism and terrorism. These writings have at their source a profound sense of hostility that lies in the subconscious and that portrays Islam as the evil and ignorant aspect of Western civilization. These writings project the West as the mind, and Islam as the body, the West as culture, and Islam as nature, the West as masculine and Islam as feminine. Ultimately, Islam comes across as a religion that stimulates anger, turmoil, violence and terrorism, all of which are natural instincts and necessitate, according to the concept of modernity, to be tamed. At the same time, Western intellectuals refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of any values or knowledge that could spring from Islam, for how can the mind learn from the body? Seen in this light, Islam truly becomes the alter ego of Western civilization. It is dealt with on this basis, which is the same basis on which Samuel Huntington based his theory of the clash with the Islamic one.

The disparity between Islam and the West (and the reader will note that I refer to the West and not to Christianity because Christian teachings and values are totally separate from Western culture and civilization) comes to a point of convergence when the West considers that its success and supremacy are the result of its adoption of capitalism and secularism, and when it considers, at the same time, that the Islamic world's failure and decline (as stated by Maxime Rodinson in his book **Marxism and the Muslim World**, pages 97-98) is the result of its steadfast attachment to religion. As for the Islamic world, it attributes Western superiority to its adoption of a plundering colonialism, and owes the regression of Muslims to what they suffered on the hands of the colonizer, the usurpation of their wealth and the plots they faced and continue to face and that aim to corrupt their religious character and subjugate them to hostile power pivots.

The Islamic world cannot stand up to this hostile or nihilist tide, especially after the events of September 11, 2001 and their grave repercussions by simply saying 'No'. Rejection is no longer possible or realistic after this civilization produced all the tools necessary to impose its culture, values and choices over others. But thanks to Islam's values and tolerance, the Islamic world can open up to the human civilization, participate in its production and contribute to its creations. It can even confer on this civilization a profound spiritual dimension and refine its behavior so that it becomes more human-focused than it is now.

The Social Dimension of Islamic Civilization

Dr Khaled Mohamed Azab*

The first premise of Islam was the preservation of human dignity and freedom. To Islam goes the credit of presenting the loftiest principles of human freedom and dignity, having as a starting point the divine verse: [**We have honored the sons of Adam**] (*Al-Israa*, verse 70). Human dignity is the foundation of a system that places social wellbeing above all other considerations. This dedication to Man's welfare provided a shield of inviolability and protection, safeguarding every member of society against the loss of his worth in the eyes of society and against the violation of any of his rights. The Holy Quran affirms the right of the poor and the needy to a portion of the possessions of the wealthy: [**And in whose possessions there is a due share, acknowledged (by them)**] (*Al-Maarij*, verse 24); and in another verse: [**And [would assign] in all that they possessed a due share unto such as might ask [for help] and such as might suffer privation.**] (*Al-Zariat*, verse 19)

The Prophet, May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, described in this hadith Muslim society in the image that the Almighty decreed it to be, attentive to the needs of its members: "The believers are like one body in their love, mercy, and compassion. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever." In another hadith, the Prophet said: "Believers are like a structure supporting each other." The Muslim community is one complementary and solidary body. It does not abandon one of its members to his or her fate, nor does it accept that they suffer humiliation or indignity.

On this basis, the Islamic civilization witnessed the building of many social welfare facilities that were a most eloquent expression of the community's

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care for its members, especially those in need. Islam was sent to organize this care on the basis of the relation between the individual and his community and the *takaful* they show in the pursuit of wellbeing, exhorting people to show compassion, integrity, justice and charity. These facilities were able to provide their services thanks to the income generated by *waqfs* (endowments), which endowments represented the essence of Islamic civilization which codified and transformed them into institutions that play a vital role in civilizational edification.

The State's role in Muslim societies has receded, focusing largely on ensuring the security of the country and its people and the defense of their land, lives, honor and possessions. In second place, the State focused on the country's infrastructures that provide services to people, such as roads between cities. This role was often limited, falling short of meeting the needs of society in education, health and social welfare, hence the important role of the waqf institution, fed by influential men and merchants at times, and by prominent landowners or religious scholars at others. This institution resembles in its role what is known in the West as community development institutions that finance health, cultural, scientific and educational activities and that represent an important part of the civil society's role that complements that of the state.

Meaning of endowment (*waqf*):

Waqf in language: the act of dedicating something, e.g. when a person dedicates his house for a specific purpose.

Sheikh Mohammed Abu Zahra defined it as making inalienable something of which the benefit lasts and of disbursing its revenue.[1] It is also defined as rendering inalienable something while keeping it operational, and dedicating its benefits to family as in the Islamic family trust (*waqf ahli*), or to a charitable cause (*waqf khairi*).[2]

Pillars of the *waqf*:

There are four pillars to a *waqf*[3]: the *waqif* (*waqf* founder), the object of the *waqf*, the beneficiary of the *waqf* and the type of the *waqf*:

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(1) Mohamed Abu Zahra: ***Muhadarat fil Waqf***, 2nd edition, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1971, p. 41.
(2) Mohamed Amine: ***Al-Awqaf wal Hayat al-Ijtima'iyya fi Misr*** (Waqfs and Social Life in Egypt). Dar al-Nahda al-'Arabiya, Cairo, 1980, p. 11.
(3) For more details, cf. Abdelajlil 'Ashshoub: ***Kitab al-Waqf***. Daral-Afaaq al-'Arabiya, Cairo, 1999.

First: The *waqif* (*waqf* founder):

The *waqif* is the donor or the person who creates a *waqf*. For this endowment to be valid, the *waqif* must meet several criteria:

1. To be competent to donate. 2. To be of legal age. 3. To be sound of mind. 4. To be free. 5. Not to be under restraint for being spendthrift, irresponsible or indebted.

Ownership of the *waqf*:

Scholars agreed that the *waqf* is only valid if its object is wholly owned by the waqif, is clearly demarcated and is well known. If it is known by its name, the Hanafis limited this condition of its name, but if unknown by a specific name, its four boundaries must clearly demarcated.

Second: Object of the *waqf*:

Scholars unanimously agree that the *waqf* must be perpetual. Imam Malik and the Shiite Imamiyya see differently and consider that a *waqf* can be of a temporary nature.

The Hanafis set the condition that a *waqf* object must be suitable for continuity but did not support its perpetuity. For this reason, they ruled that an endowed property must primarily be an immovable asset. Allowing the dedication of movables as *waqfs* would be a contradiction of the original rule, but they ruled that movables may also be *waqfs* but only in exceptional circumstances.

III. The *waqf* beneficiary:

The *waqf* beneficiary must be either a person or persons, or a social, cultural, medical or educational institution. It can also be a holy place, an animal or others.

Fourth: Formulation of the *waqf*:

The declaration of a *waqf* can take multiple formulations, either explicit or implicit. An example of the explicit one is when the waqif declares: I dedicate my land or house to the poor, to my children, or to others.

The implicit formulation is contingent upon intent, as when a person says: I give my land to the poor. If the *waqf* is customarily recognized through this formulation, it becomes a *waqf*. Otherwise, the purpose of the donation is queried. If the intent is a *waqf*, it becomes a *waqf*, otherwise it falls under the aspect of inheritance.[4]

Looking at scholarly jurisprudence on *waqf* rules, problems and ramifications and which see the concept as one of «public policy» that carries the connotation of managing living conditions with the concern of attracting benefits and preventing harm in mind, and enforcing the principles of social solidarity, the *fiqh* of *waqfs* is based on three key foundations[5]. These foundations somewhat provided legal protection for the *waqf* system and its institutions against the risks of State interference by making such capture illegal. There was indeed nothing preventing despotic authorities from committing this seizure in real life. These foundations are:

Respect of the *waqif's* will (the condition set by the *waqif* equates law): The will and desire of the *waqif* is expressed in the *waqf* document. He expresses this will through a set of conditions through which he defines who manages the *waqf*, how its proceeds must be divided and spent on the designated beneficiaries, as provided for in the document itself. These conditions are called the *waqif* terms and scholars conferred inviolability on these terms as long as they did not prevent what is *halal* or allowed what is unlawful. These terms acquire inviolability except in particular cases, by elevating the *waqf* deed to the status of a legally binding of which the conditions must be complied with, to such extent that scholars decreed these conditions to be akin to law.»

Jurists and judges considered the *waqf* deed as a constitution that should be referred to in every small and important aspect of the *waqf* and the different activities, institutions and actions that may be associated with this endowment. They even decreed that the methods of interpreting *waqf* documents should

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(4) Zuhdi Yekken: **Al-Waqf fil Shairah wal Qanun** (Waqfs in Charia and Law), I2, Dar al-'Arabi, 1971, p. 39, 40.
(5) Ibrahim al-Bayoumi Ghanem: **Al-Awqaf wal Siyyassa fi Misr** (Waqfs and Politics in Egypt). Dar al-Shurouq, Cairo, 1998, pp. 53-54

be the same as the ones used by scholars to interpret laws, the absolute being applicable to the relative, the general to the specific, and the newer abrogating the older, provided the facts allowed such applications. In general, the conditions of the *waqif* govern and regulate the *waqf*, unless the legislator decrees otherwise.[6]

Scholars give *waqf* conditions an immense binding force, but at the same time they limit it to its serving a legitimate benefit or compatibility with the general principles of Charia Law[7], namely: the preservation of religion, of life, of reason, of honor and of property. They annulled every rule that could lead to undermining a legal benefit or contradicts any purpose of the Charia. And that is how the legal and *fatwa* systems operated with regard to *waqf* matters.[8]

Judiciary jurisdiction over *waqfs*: Scholars decided that general jurisdiction over *waqfs* lies solely with the judiciary system, and that this mandate includes the settlement of religious or jurisdictional disputes.[9]

The State's jurisdiction includes the management of *waqf* affairs and the implementation of various related measures such as changing the *waqf* manager if the need arises, authorizing the amendment of the *waqf* terms, or some of them if these terms are detrimental to the *waqf* or its beneficiaries, as well as annulling any conditions that contradict the covenants of Allah and the general principles of the Charia.[10]

It is clear that such actions could potentially affect the independence of *waqf* and its associated institutions, particularly in their administrative, functional and financial aspects in terms of the cases that may arise in practice. Scholars

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(6) Mohamed Abu Zahra: ***Muhadarat fil Waqf***, 2nd edition, Dar al-Fikr al-ʻArabi, 1971, p. 41.

(7) Al-Rehibani: ***Matalib an-Nuhafe Sharh Ghayat al-Muntaha***. Damascus, vol. 4, page 315. At-Taher Ibn Achour: ***Maqasid al-Sharia al-Islamiyya***, Tunis, 1366AH, pp. 204-210. Abdelwahhab Khallaf: ***'Ilm Ususl al-Fiqh***. Kuwait, 1972, pp. 197-205.

(8) Ibrahim al-Bayoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyyassa fi Misr*** (Waqfs and Politics in Egypt), p. 55.

(9) Ibrahim al-Bayoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyyassa fi Misr*** (Waqfs and Politics in Egypt), p. 56.

(10) Ibrahim al-Bayoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyyassa fi Misr*** (Waqfs and Politics in Egypt), p. 56.

expressly banned the Sultan and his representatives from interfering in the affairs of the *waqfs* or contradicting administrative measures taken by the magistrate.[11]

Treating the *waqf* as a legal person: Scholars have dealt with *waqfs* as having a legal status. Evidence of this includes the asserted right of the magistrate on the *waqf* as he rules for or against it. They also ruled that in the case of property earmarked for exploitation –i.e. generating income-, the payment of *zakat*, levies or other dues is deductible from its revenue. This obligation does not fall to a person per se but to the *waqf* party (in the case of payment of dues) and for it in the case of the structure. Other evidence lies in the fact that scholars authorized willing and dedicating a *waqf* to 'parties' such as the poor –whose number is not countable-, the building of bridges and schools and anything that could be beneficial for the public. They made these parties as owners of all benefits flowing from the *waqf* though they are not real persons. The proof is that the legal rules and opinions of scholars regarding the *waqf* and its different issues have been conducted as if this *waqf* is legally competent in duties and obligations and morally liable, and as such acquires rights and has obligations.[12]

The *waqf's* social role:

In his ***Sunan***, Ibn Maajah reports that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "*Among the good deeds that continue to benefit a believer after death are: a knowledge that he taught and disseminated, a righteous child who lived after him, a Qur'an book that he left as inheritance, a masjid that he built, a house that he built for the two wayfarers, a stream that he ran, or a charity that he gave from his wealth during his healthy lifetime so that it would reach him (in rewards) after death.*"

Other qualities, a total of ten, were listed in the following order by al-Suyuti:

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(11) Ibrahim al-Bayoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyyassa fi Misr*** (Waqfs and Politics in Egypt), p. 57.

(12) Ibrahim al-Bayoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyyassa fi Misr*** (Waqfs and Politics in Egypt), p. 59.

If the son of Adam dies only ten of his actions will continue to benefit him

Knowledge he dispensed, the prayers of a son, a palm tree he planted and charities with ongoing benefit

A Qur'an inherited, a ribat on a border, a well dug or a running stream

A house for the passers-by or a place of worship built

All this reflects the progression of society's role in meeting its needs through the *waqf* institution, especially with the inclination of influential and wealthy people and property owners to contribute to supporting some community welfare facilities as a way of gaining favor with the Almighty, in the pursuit of goodness and to be part of charity actions. The forms of *waqfs* thus became numerous. Some *waqfs* were dedicated to the paving and maintenance of roads, to ransoming prisoners, helping wayfarers, aiding *hajjis*, the lending of gold jewelry to poor brides to appear under the best light to their grooms on their wedding night, and providing shelter to wives with no families to resort to or with families living too far to go to when in dispute with their husbands. The shelters were staffed solely by women who provided them with food and drink to keep them safe from the dangers of society. The home was run by a counselor who addresses the causes of the dispute and emotionally prepares women for the re-establishment of good relations with their husbands.[13]

The benefits of some *waqfs* were dedicated to the treatment of animals. One anecdote in this regard was that the **Marj al-Akhdar waqf** was dedicated to sick and old animals who could live their till their death. The cats' waqf in Sarouja market gave shelter to pets[14]. Entire orchards with fruit trees were endowed for any passerby to eat from their fruits[15]. One of the most anecdotal types of *waqfs* was described by Ibn Battuta in his journey as the utensils' endowment: "*I was walking one day in some alleys of Damascus*

(13) Mohammed Abdelaziz Marzouq: **Al-Fann al-Islami: Tarikhuhu wa Khasaissuh** (Islamic art: History and Characteristics). Matba'at As'ad, Baghdad, p. 168.
(14) Subhi as-Saleh: **Al-Nuzum al'Islamiyya: Nashatoha wa Tawworuha**. Dal al-'Ilm lil Malayine, Beirut, p. 370.
(15) Subhi as-Saleh: **Al-Nuzum al'Islamiyya**, p. 370.

when I came across a little Mamluke who had dropped an earthen recipient and broke it to pieces. People gathered around him and told him to collect the pieces and take them to the utensils' waqf manager. The boy collected the pieces, went to the man and showed him the broken recipient and the man gave him money to buy a similar one." Ibn Batouta considered this an action of great value since the master of this boy would have beaten him or berated him for breaking the dish and thus broken his heart, hence this *waqf* was "a mender of hearts."[16]

Public hospitality facilities:

The *waqf* extended to the celebration of the weddings of poor people. In Fez, there is palace called Dar Shioukh which was fitted for the celebration of the weddings of blind people who had no place to host their wedding. When two blind people married, the ceremony and wedding celebration took place at this house.[17]

Guesthouses:

During the times of the Prophet (PBUH), guesthouses were dedicated in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah to receiving and housing visiting delegations. Of such houses was the house of Abd al-Rahman ibn Auf, called «Dar al-Adiaf» and where a delegation from Takhu' stayed in the year 11 Hijri[18]. There was also the house of Ramla bint al-Ansari where delegations from Ghassan, Bani Tha'laba, Abdul al-Qais, Bani Fazara, 'Udhra and Banu Hanifa were housed.[19] There are three categories of guesthouses:

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(16) Ibn Battuta: *To'fat al-Nuzzar fe Gharib al-Amsar wa 'Ajaib al-Asfar*. Cairo edition, 1938, p. 63.

(17) Mohamed Abdelhai al-Kettani: *Al Malajie al-Kahyriyya al-Islamiyya fi Dawlat al-Mouahiddya wal Mariniya bil Diar al Maghribiyya* (Islamic Charitable Hospices under the Almohad and Marinid State in the Lands of Morocco). *Al-Majalla al-Zaytounia*, vol. 6, binder 3, Tunis, June 1939, pp. 21-22.

(18) Ibn Sayyid al-Nass: *'Oyounal' Athar fi Funoun al-Maghazy wal Siyar*. Vol. 2, authenticated by the Heritage Preservation Commission, Beirut, 1980, p. 328.

(19) Al-Samhoudy: *Wafa bi Akhbar Dar al-Mustafa*, vol. 2, authenticated by Mohamed Mohieddine Abdelhamid, Beirut, 1971, p. 739.

Arabs are renowned for their generosity and good hospitality. Islam urged Muslims to honor guests, particularly wayfarers. To accommodate these wayfarers, guesthouses or *madyaf* as were built in Islamic cities and *waqfs* were dedicated to cover their expenses. Amir al-Mumineen Omar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) established a guesthouse in the year 17 Hijri and fitted it with supplies of flour, butter and honey. He also set transporters to carry travellers from one water point to the next until they reached their destination. When Othman Ibn 'Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) took over, he hosted wayfarers and worshippers in the mosque.[20]

It is reported that the guest house set up by Omar Ibn al-Khattab was dictated by the drought that hit during the Ramada year in 17-18 Hijri, while the guesthouse created by Othman was related to the holy month of Ramadan, as inferred from al-Tabari's words: "*Food was set for Ramadan, stating that it was for the worshipper who delays at the mosque, the wayfarer, and the passersby in the month of Ramadan*"[21]. Most likely, the delegations and visitors who used to visit al-Madinah required the presence of guest houses.

Al-Walid Ibn Abd al-Malik built a guesthouse (86-96 AH/705-715AD)[22] that was taken over after him[23] by Omar Ibn Abdelaziz (99-101AH/717-720AD) who dedicated it exclusively to the poor, the needy and the passersby.

Guesthouses spread throughout the Islamic world. They were built by governors, merchants, individuals or families. In the town of Boulaouane in Morocco, the inhabitants built a house of several rooms used to accommodate passersby who crossed the city and were hosted at the expense of the population.[24]

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(20) Al-Maqrizi: **Al-Khutat**, vol. 2, p. 338.

(21) Al-Tabari: **Tarikh al-Rusul wal Mulouk**, vol. 3, page 246, Abdul Hussein Mahdi al-Rehim: **Al-Khadamat al-Ijtima'iyya fi Baghdad**. Dar al-Sho'oun al-Thaqafiyya, Baghdad, 1987, p. 98.

(22) Al-'Askari, Abu Hilal al-Hassan Ibn Abdullah (died 382AH/992AD): **Al-Awail**, published by As'ad Tarabzoni al-Husseini, Al-Madina la-Munawwarah, undated, p. 346. Ibn al-Kazrouni, Sheikh, Sheikh Dahir Eddine Ali Ibn Mohammed al-Baghdadi (died 697AH/1297AD): **Mukhtasar al-Tarikh**, authenticated by Dr. Mustafa Jawad and indexed by Salem al-Aloussi. Matba'at al-Hokouma, Baghdad,1970, p. 91.

(23) Ibn Sa'd, Mohamed Al-Zuhri (died 230AH-844AD): **Al-Tabaqat al Kubra**. Leiden, 1917, p. 279.

(24) Mohamed al-Monoufy: **Dawr al-Awqaf al-Maghribiyya fil Takamul al-Ijtima'i fi 'Asr Bani Marin**. Muassassat al-Awqaf fil 'Alam al'Islami, Baghdad, 1983, p. 219.

Egyptians, whether in the countryside, the desert or the seafront, were familiar with guesthouses. Many of them were recorded and their functions were diverse. In addition to providing hospitality and accommodation to strangers, these houses were also used in joyful celebrations and funerals where large and extended families would gather. One of these guesthouses was the *madyafa* of al-Shandaweely in the village of Shandaweel, Almaragha Center in Suhag. This guesthouse was established in the 19th century, by Mohammad Hassan al-Shandaweely, a Suhag notable who dedicated to this guesthouse three houses, 200 acres and 15 kirats of agricultural land. He stipulated in the text of this *waqf* deed that the proceeds from the rent of the three houses and the revenue from the 200 acres would be spent on the "*guesthouse known as the palace in Shandaweel, for guests and visitors and the necessary furniture, coffee, food, beverages, and alms for regular patrons,*" and to buy "*carpets, jugs, rugs, light fittings, pay of the cook, coffee and such supplies, as deemed necessary by the manager and in such a way that he is neither stingy nor wasteful or extravagant.*"[25]

The *waqif* required that the management of the *waqf* (*nizara*) would go after him to the most reliable of his sons and offspring, provided it remains within the family. Determined to keep his family together, he also set the condition of a family council made up of his children and the children of his nephew, tasked with requesting accounts from the manager at the end of every year to account for what he spent on the guesthouse out of the income allocated to it. If any amount was in surplus, it would be divided among them in sixths.[26]

Also in Fez, three houses were known as bridal endowments, specially furnished and founded as *waqfs* for the marriage of the not so well off notables and poor people. One was located in the Kuddan quarter at 'Udwat al-Andalus, and the second was at al-'Oyoun Quarter at 'Udwat al-Qarawiyyine. The third

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(25) *Waqf* deed of Mohamed Alshandaweely, drafted on 1/10/1899 before the religious court of Tanta. Records of the Ministry of Awqaf, register 11/qibli, series 1015. Ibrahim al-Bayoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyyassa fi Misr*** (Waqfs and Politics in Egypt), p. 327.

(26) Ibrahim al-Bayoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyyassa fi Misr*** (Waqfs and Politics in Egypt), p. 327.

one, perhaps the oldest, was known as Dar al-'Afia (house of good health), a good omen for those who married there. It was dedicated as a *waqf* towards the end of the 6thAH/12DH century and was located in Darb al-Tarroun known today as Darb al-'Araiss next to the Quarawiyyine mosque.

The newlyweds were allowed to spend a whole week in one of these houses, wearing fine silk garments, perfume and jewels with full coverage of the wedding's expenses, including a picnic at an 'orchard' near Bab M'Safer from 'Udwat al-Andalus.[27]

Pilgrims' guesthouses:

Clarifying the duties of the Islamic ruler in Hajj matters, Al-Hassan Abdullah said: "*He bestows on them food, water and abode*"[28]. These duties materialized in guesthouses intended for pilgrims, and the services provided to pilgrims thrived significantly during the reign of the Abbasid caliph Al-Nasser Li Deen Allah (575-622AH/1180-1225AD). Ibn al-Sa'i described this in the events he chronicled in 605/1208 in the month of Muharram when Imam al-Nasser Li Deen Allah decided to build a guesthouse on the Western bank out of a desire to please Allah. It was on the Tigris near the Seljuk graveyard close to sources of food and sustenance. Its building was contributed to towards the end. A great deal of food was made there and the *waqf* managers were instructed not to turn any pilgrim or other people away from the table. Each poor person was to receive one dinar when he sets out on his travel after being clothed and give road sustenance.[29]

The text shows that the caliph Al-Nasser built a guesthouse, stocked it with food and appointed staff to supervise its administration by providing food for the pilgrims and others. The house also sponsored poor Muslims who wished to perform the Hajj by giving them clothes, food and a dinar for the road[30].

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(27) Mohamed Al-Muntassir al-Kettani: *Fes 'Assemat al-Adarissa*. Casablanca, 2002, p. 487. Mohamed Labbar: *Dawr Awqaf al-Bimaristna fil Hayat al-Ijtima'iyya bi Madinat Fes*, p. 180.
(28) Al-Hassan Ibn Abdallah: *Athar al-Awwal fu Tartib al-Duwal*, matba'at Boulaq, Cairo, 1295, p. 33.
(29) Ibn al-Saa'i: *Al-Jami' al-Mukhtassar*, vol. 9, pp. 258-259.
(30) Abdul Hussein Mahdi al-Rehim: *Al-Khadamat al-Ijtima'iyya fi Baghdad*, p. 41.

General Kitchens:

Charitable people set up kitchens that fed the poor, the needy and passersby, whether these chose to carry the food outside the kitchen or eat it on the spot when these kitchens had seating areas. There are many historical references to this, one being founded by the Abbasid Caliph al-Nasser (575-622AH/1180-1225AD). Historian Ibn al-Athir described this in his chronicles of the year 604AH/1207AD saying: "*In Ramadan, the Caliph ordered the building of facilities in Baghdad to provide iftaar for the fasting poor and where lamb and good bread were cooked. He set this upon both banks of Baghdad. In each house, he appointed people of whose honesty he was certain. Every person was given a bowl of cooked food and meat and a pound of bread. Every night, countless numbers of people broke their fast with the food he provided.*"[31]

Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi wrote: "*The caliph set up in Ramadan catering houses in Baghdad to the count of twenty facilities. Every night, 500 cups and one thousand pounds of special dishes were served with white bread, sweets and others, throughout the month of Ramadan.*»[32]

Since the portions assigned to every head, as mentioned by Ibn al-Athir, were a cup of cooked food and two pounds of bread, it is clear from the number of cups and pounds mentioned by Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi that each house catered to 500 poor people, and since the total number of houses on both banks of Baghdad was twenty, this would mean that the number of poor people fed was ten thousand.[33]

Some other facilities used to play the same role along with their other functions. In the 5th/11th century, the waqf deed of the Tamghaj Befrakraman's school in Samarkand (located in nowadays Republic of Uzbekistan) read: "*For the cost of bread, meat and other catering necessities at this school during Ramadan nights, an amount of three thousand three hundred and fifty dirhams shall be disbursed...*"[34]. Though the *waqif* stipulated this would be

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(31) Ibn al-Athir: *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 9, p. 416.

(32) Sibt ibn al-Jawzi: *Miraat al-Zaman*, vol. 8, p. 534.

(33) Abdul Hussein Mahdi al-Rehim: *Al-Khadamat al-Ijtima'iyya fi Baghdad*, p. 43.

(34) Cf. the Arabic text of the *waqf* deed: Mr Khadr, *Deux actes de waqf d'un garahandie d'Asie Centrale*, Journal asiatique, Paris, 1967, pp. 305-334.

limited to the month of Ramadan, this type of *waqf* was later extended to all months of the year.[35]

Among the facilities that provided this service were the rest stations or *khans* which were first mentioned by Abu Bakr al-Khassaf. This was the case for al-'Atna Khan in northern Girod on the road between Damascus and Homs, built by Prince Rukn Eddine Mankrosal-Falaki (631AH/1233AD). The *waqf* inscription on the doorway stipulated that half a pound of bread would be provided to each passerby and traveler[36]. Bread was not the only product given to people as the *waqf* deed stated that every poor person who reached that khan would be provided with horseshoes for their rides.[37]

Baghdad was unique in its role of providing hospitality and catering to the poor. But in 720AH/1309AD, Prince Abu Said Sanjar al-Jawli, custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Mamluke state representative, built the Ibrahimi Mosque and established in its vicinity "*A kitchen where dchicha[38] was cooked for patrons and incomers.*"[39] The al-Khaleel kitchen had a known tradition of sounding "*the drum every day at the gate of the kitchen to announce the meal*", a tradition that was considered one of the world's wonders. He further describes "*the great care taken in the preparation of food such as grinding the wheat, kneading and baking the bread, preparing its requirements such as firewood and others and showing dedication in this.*"[40] This facility continues to play this role today despite the difficulties it is experiencing.[41]

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(35) Mohammed al-Arnaout: **Tatawwur Monsahaat al-Waqf 'Abr al-Tarikh: al-Imara/tekiyya namoudajan** (Development of *waqf* facilities throughout history, *imaret/takiya* as a model). Al-Mishkat magazine, issue 5, 2010.

(36) Mujamma' Ahmed Dahmane: **Fi Rihab Dimashq**, Dar al-Fikr, 1982, p. 165.

(37) Mujamma' Ahmed Dahmane: **Fi Rihab Dimashq**, p. 165.

(38) *Dchicha*: a soup made out of crushed grains. The term was used to refer the *waqfs* of the Two Holy Mosques.

(39) Mujeer-eddine al-Hanbali: **Al-Uns al-Jaleel**, p. 63.

(40) Ibid, p. 63.

(41) The original building of the kitchen remained operational until 1964 when it was demolished as part of a project to organize the area surrounding the Ibrahimi Mosque. It was moved to a temporary location in the vicinity of Birkat al-Sultan until 1984 when the Jordanian Waqf Ministry built modern premises on the northern side of the holy precinct. The kitchen is staffed by six employees who cook following modern methods and take charge of catering, distribution and cleaning. However, the amount of crushed wheat cooked is now 80 kilograms. Al-Arnaout: **Tatawwur Monsahaat al-Waqf 'Abr al-Tarikh**, p. 10.

This kitchen was built in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah and in Mekkah. They were referred to by Historian Ibn Eyyas in these words: "*When the Sultan Qaitabay performed hajj in the year 884AH/1479AD, he noticed that the inhabitants of this blessed city were living in extreme poverty owed to a lack of food. He vowed to start a good deed of which the benefit would last after his time. He disbursed his private money to buy farms, places and sites that he set as a waqf to benefit the city every day by providing it with dchicha, bread, oil, etc. as he used to do in al-Khaleel. Then the Sultan proceeded to create a board to supervise and manage the facilities he established in Bab al-Nassr, al-Bunduqiyyine, al-Khashshabine, al-Dajjajine, and other quarters of Cairo.*"[(42)]

The *waqf* deed of Sultan Qaitabay confirms that the *waqf* was dedicated to financing a catering facility for the making of *dchicha* and wheat in al-Madina al-Munawwarah[(43)]. Al-Samhoudi refers to this saying: "*They started to build a water fountain, an oven, a mill and a kitchen to make dchicha, an agency to collect proceeds from the houses that the Sultan had bought from al-'Abbassa… Then he wrote to some trustees to collect the harvest of the lands he had bought in Cairo. The total yield was seven thousand and five hundred erdabs of wheat every year... Each resident was given enough wheat to cover the needs of his dependents, each individual granted seven Egyptian erdabs, equating in this the young with the old and the free with the slave.*"[(44)]

The quantities of wheat sent to the two holy places to make *dchicha* had a great impact on the inhabitants of the two holy mosques, the neighbors, the poor and the needy, students, invalids, widows, orphans and homeless. It increased their love for the *waqif* in addition to their prayer for them and asking Allah to bestow His forgiveness, rewards and blessings on them because they eased the burdens of life, in addition to lowering prices of food items such as wheat, barley and oil.[(45)]

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(42) Ibn Eyyas: **Badai' al-Zuhour fi Waqai' al-Duhour**, vol. 3, p. 165.

(43) *Waqf* deed of Sultan Qaitabai, dated 15 Dhul Hijja, 895 AH, deed No. 890/*waqfs*.

(44) Al-Samhoudi, Noureddine Ali Ibn Ahmed (died 911AH-1505AH): **Wafa bil Wafa bi Akhbar Dar al-Mustafa**, vol. 2. Authenticated by Mohamed Mohieddine Abdelhamid, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, pp. 644-645.

(45) Ahmed Hashem Badrashini: **Awqaf al-Haramayin al-Sharifayn fil al 'Asr al-Mamaluki**. Centre of al-Madinah al-Munawwara for Research and Studies, al-Madinah al-Munawwara, 2005, p. 306.

The kitchen was part of a facility such as the *khan*, agency or *ribat* for many centuries, providing services to the residents of these facilities as well as to the poor or wayfarers. During the Seljuk era, they were known as '*Imaret*', 'stew or soup houses' in many Seljuk cities.[46]

This facility had its own building within a complex that usually included a mosque and a school. One of the oldest examples of this new development was the '*imaret*' built by Musa Pasha in Qara Mafi as part of a new urban complex in the mid-8th/114th century.[47]

This pattern began to spread to many parts of the Islamic world. The Ottoman sultan Murad I built in a complex in the new capital Bursa in 787AH/1385AD, then another compound in Aznik in 790AH/1388AD, each containing an "*imaret*". The imaret of Azni still exists and is currently used as a museum.[48]

The Crimean Prince Yaoub Bek II (792-832AH/1390-1428AD) also built a compound in Kutahiyyat, comprising a school, a university and a restaurant.[49]

Thus, the Ottomans revived the legacy of the Abbasids in creating catering facilities for the needy, whether they were called guesthouses in the Abbasid era, *dchicha* kitchens under the Mamlukes, kitchens or soup/stew houses or the Ottoman *imaret*, this charitable establishment which provided a full meal consisting of bread, meat and soup to students, to the poor and to strangers, were the provider of basic life necessities for the destitute in Islamic cities.

The Ottoman undertaking consisted of a square building that comprised a large dome in the middle with smaller domes around it, surrounding a spacious courtyard that overlooked, through arcades, side rooms topped by small domes, including the kitchen where the meals were prepared and other rooms where the grain was stored.

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(46) For more information, see: Qlus Arik: **The Turkish Contribution to Islamic Architecture**. Turkish Review, vol. 1, No. 2, Ankara, 1985-1986, pp. 140- 146.
(47) Mohamed al-Arnaout: **Tatawwur Monsahaat al-Waqf 'Abr al-Tarikh**, pp. 3-4.
(48) Mohamed Al-Arnaout: **Tatawwur Monsahaat al-Waqf 'Abr al-Tarikh**, p. 4.
(49) Aqtai Aslan Aba: **Arts and Architecture of Turks**. Translated by Ahmed 'Issa, IRCICA, Istanbul, 1987.

This facility became an outstanding landmark symbolizing the contribution of the Islamic civilization from the Balkans to Mekkah. The Ottoman traveller Evliya Celebi, in his "Seyahatname", brought to us through his journey a description of this when he visited Belgrade and praised the Imaret of Mohamed Pasha saying that if a person visited it for a full month, all he had to pay was a recitation of the *Fatiha* for the soul of its builder"[50].

In Macedonia, Senqor Beik, one of the governors appointed by Sultan Murad II (825-852AH/1421-1451AD) built an '*imaret*' in addition to a large school in the city of Manastir[51]. This facility was described in its *waqf* deed, written in Arabic, as a *zawiya* dedicated to providing the poor and guests with food[52].

Still, this facility, as with similar structures, was more famous as an "*imaret*", a word that was adopted in the local languages of the Balkans along with other expressions such as Imareti bread, Imareti rice, Imareti soup, and others[53]. The imaret of Senqor Beik offered free meals for five centuries until 1941 when Yugoslavia collapsed during World War II.[54]

Waqf deeds provide a description of the dishes offered at these Imarets, such as the one created by Sinan Pasha (the famous architect) in Kuchnik. This *waqf*'s deed, dated 994AH/1556AD states that cooking takes place twice a day in the Imaret, a rice with sauce dish for lunch and wheat broth for dinner except on Fridays and other holy days when nicer fare is cooked, during which nights the wheat broth is served for lunch and the nicer dishes for dinner. The *waqf* deed stipulates that on those days and special nights, the dish known as *zerda* would be cooked on every one of these nights, made out of rice, honey and saffron, along with the al-Danadish which consists of rice, chickpeas and onions.

At the directive of the Ottoman Sultan Selim I, Damascus witnessed the construction of an *imaret* that became known as takiyat al-Salimiyya.

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(50) Eviliya Celebi: ***Putopis Prevodi Komentar Hazim Sabanovic***, Sarjevo, 1979, p 88.

(51) Modern time Bitola.

(52) Kalesi: ***Najstari Vakufsk Dokumenti***, p 74. Mohamed al-Arnaout: ***Tatawwur Monsahaat al-Waqf 'Abr al-Tarikh***, p. 4.

(53) Abdulah Skaljic: ***Turcismi u srpsk har vatskom jeziku***, Sarajero, 1973, p 347.

(54) Kalesi: ***Najstarii Vakkuf Dokumenti***, p. 66.

There is a rare account on this by the Damascus historian Ibn Touloun (953AH/1554AD). This *takiya*, as he described it, had "*a home for the poor people where they are given food. The house had four windows overlooking the door of the said mosque, with a special parlor for women. It has two doors, one on the east side used by the public, and an eastern one next to which there was a window of the ladies' parlor, and a western one that leads to a kitchen with three pantries. The kitchen has a large gate that opens up to the east. It had three basins, a large and a smaller one, and a third one for the washing of utensils of which there were two hundred copper ones… In addition to this kitchen, an oven was fitted to bake the bread that is distributed in this takiya. The bread used up one quintal of flour for lunch and dinner. Sixty pounds of meat were cooked every day in this takiya also for lunch and dinner. The meat was cooked in the morning with a rice soup and another part with wheat. On the eve of Friday, it was cooked with fluffy rice and with honey-sweetened rice*"[55]. In 962AH/1554AD, the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman built another building in Damascus, known as the al-Sulaymaniyah takiya which served incomers to Damascus 'fluffy rice and sour sauce'. The *takiya* changed its menu to present free meals to the poor of Damascus. The *waqf* deed stipulated that "*food would be served at noon to eight hundred poor people and again in the evening... The prepared broth is distributed every morning and evening in fifty bowls... Each bowl is given to two poor people and every person is generously given a loaf of bread.*"[56]

The *takiya* of Khaski Sultan[57]

Khaski Sultan, wife of Sultan Suleiman built at least four *imarets* in Istanbul, Makkah, al-Madinah al-Munawwarah and al-Quds. This was done as part of the contributions made by the Ottoman royal harem and concubines during

(55) Mohamed Ibn Touloun al-Salehi: **Al-Qalaid al-Jawhariyya fi Tarikh al-Salehiyya**. Authenticated by Ahmed Dahmane, Damascus, Mujamma' al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya, 1980, p. 123.

(56) Jafar al-Husseini: **Al-Takiya al-Sulaimaniyah fi Dimashq**. **Majallat al-Mujamma' al-'Ilmi al'Arabi**, issue 3, Damascus, 1956, p. 446.

(57) Wife of Sultan Suleiman (927-976H/1520-1568AD), by her real name Roxlana, known to the Ottomans as a slave girl who was aged at the time between 14 and 17 years and who became the wife of Sultan Suleiman. She died in 965AH/1558AD and was buried in the courtyard of the Sulaimaniya Mosque in Istanbul in a mausoleum carrying her name.

these times. Many charitable institutions were established and the Kizlar Agha in the Ottoman Palace was entrusted with the supervision of these endowments founded by the ladies of the harem, just as he was in charge of the waqfs of the Two Holy Mosques.[58]

Ribats, *zawiyas* and *Takiyas*:

The *ribats*, *zawiyas* and *takiyas* were the names of many establishments that played different roles in providing social care to the destitute and impoverished members of society, the ascetic poor and knowledge seekers. The meaning of the names given to these establishments differed from one age to another and one city to the other. This applies to the *ribat*[59] of which the primary purpose was to defend Islamic territories. The *ribat* used to be established on borders with the enemy as a fortification where the *mujahideens* who volunteered their life to please Allah, are stationed, true to the divine command: [***Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war to strike terror into (the heart) of the enemies.***] (*Al-Anfal*, verse 60). Muslims were dedicated to the building of fortifications in the various cities and Islamic fronts from the first century hijri.[60]

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(58) Kizlar Agha, known also as the Agha of the House of Felicity. He was the most important of the aghas in the Ottoman palace and the highest ranking agha assigned to the harem and princes in the palace. In protocol ranking within the palace, he was second to the Grand Vizier and the Sheikh of Islam. His primary task was to supervise the royal harem where the Palace ladies lived. He had under his command a number of black and white aghas. These servants were called the harem aghas because of the nature of their work. Their most important duty was the supervision of the *waqfs* of the Two Holy Mosques. Ismail Hakkiuzuncarsili: Osmanli Develtinin ay. Teskilati, Ankara, 1984.

Majida Makhlouf: ***Awqaf Nisaa Salateen al-Othmaniyyine***, p. 18.

(59) *Ribat*, a place of gathering, used also to mean a place where two parties tether their horses. The word was equally used to refer to a fort erected next to a border with the aim of defending it, and a place where the *mujahideens* are stationed. With the passage of time, the *ribat* slowly turned into a shelter for the poor and for knowledge seekers, teachers and students. Mohamed Mortada Zubaidi: ***Taj al-Arouss Men Jawaher al-Qamouss***. Vol. 5, 1st edition, Al-Matba'a al-Kayriyya, Egypt, 1306 AH, p. 141.

(60) Hussein Mu'nniss: ***Fajr al-Andalus***, Ad-Dar al-Saudiyya, Jeddah, 1405AH, p. 623.

When the Islamic State expanded and its might grew during the 4th/10th century, this was accompanied by clear progression in different aspects of life. The *ribat*'s primary function changed to become a shelter for the poor and needy. After being initially built on the frontiers to defend the lands, *ribats* were being built inside cities for the social purpose of housing and accommodation.[61]

The interest taken by Muslim rulers as they vied with each other to perform charitable actions had the greatest impact on increasing the number of *ribats* in cities, followed by princes and senior statesmen. Their interest did not limit the benefits of endowed *ribats* to men only but extended them to women. Some *ribats* were dedicated to women and provided sanctuaries that protected their rights and tended to their affairs. *Ribats* also played a role in spreading knowledge and culture. The legitimacy of the *waqf* in Islam had the most profound effect on the increase and continuity of *ribats*, as these *waqfs* constituted the main resource of income for *ribats* and were the lifeline that infused them with life, without which they would have withered and died. Some of these ribats include:

Ribat al-Zozni[62]:

This was the oldest *ribat* in Baghdad and was located opposite al-Mansour mosque on the west side of Baghdad. It was built for Abi al-Hassan Ibrahim al-Basri (died 371AH) in the area known as Dar al-Qattan[63]. Ibn al-Jawzi wrote in this regard[64]: "*I learnt that he grew old and it became strenuous for him to come to the mosque, so he built his ribat opposite al-Mansour mosque and it came to be known by the name of his friend, al-Zozni.*"

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(61) Al-Fassi: **Al'Iqd al-Thameen fi Tarikh al-Balad al-Amine**, Vol. 1. Authenticated by Mohammed Hamed al-Feqqi, 2nd edition, Beirut, al-Risala, 1406 AH/1986AD, pp. 118- 123. Ahemed Badrashini: **Awqaf al-Haramain al-Sharifayne fi al-'Asr al Mamluki**, p. 139.

(62) As-Sama'aani said that the word 'azouzni' was derived from the word Zouzoun, a quaint town between Harat and Nissapur. Abdul Hussein Mahdi al-Rehim: **Al-Khadamat al-I3amma fi Baghdad**, pp. 139, 211 and 339.

(63) Mustapha Jawad: **Al-Rubat al-Baghdadiyya**, undated, p. 224.

(64) Ibn al-Jawzi, Jamal Eddine Abul Faraj Abderrahmane al-Baghdadi: **al-Muntazim fi Tarikh al-Mulukwal Umam**, 7th edition, Dar al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyya, Hayderabad, India,1959, p. 111.

This shows that the name of the *ribat* was not a true reflection of the truth. The *ribat* was built for Abi al-Hassan al-Basri but acquired fame *ribat* of Abi al-Hassan al-Zozni, perhaps because of the similarity of names or the long standing friendship between the two men. A singular feature of this *ribat* was that it was designed to house newly weds from among the Sufis, as well as bachelors. It is narrated that the physician Abu Aballah al-Masri[65] (543AH1148AD) lived there after his marriage. The *ribat* also had a library that greatly contributed to its academic activity.

One particular feature noted with some *ribats* in Baghdad, including this *ribat*, was the inviolability and esteem they had in the eyes of the State. In 560AH/1165AD[66], Fakhr Addawla Ibn al-Muttalib sought refuge in this *ribat* for several days because of a conflict that opposed him to the caliph al-Mustajid (555-565AH/1160-1170AD). During his time inside the *ribat*, no measure or sanction could be executed against him, until the conflict was resolved.[67]

Ribat Al-Baghdadiya[68]:

This *ribat* was buit by the venerable lady Tizkar Bey Khatun, daughter of Sultan Al-Dhahir Bebars, in 684AH/1285AD inside Darb al-Asfar towards the Khanqah of Baybars at Jashnakir in Cairo. She dedicated it to the good Sheikha Zainab Bent Abi al-Barakaat, known as Bint al-Baghdadiya. She housed her in this *ribat* along with a group of good women who helped her in its administration. She was an ascetic Sufi who renounced the world and preached to women to enlighten them. Subsequently, every shiekha who took over this *ribat* was called al-Baghdadiya. This *ribat* was fully operational in the

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(65) Ibn al-Dabithi, Abu Adallah Mohamed Ibn Said: **Dhailu Tarikh Madinat as-Salam Baghdad**, authenticated by Bachar Maarouf, Dar Essalam, Baghdad, 1974.

(66) Ibn al-Jawzi: *Al-Muntazim*, vol 10, p. 210.

(67) Abdul Hussein Mahdi al-Rehim: **Al-Khadamat al-'Amma fi Baghdad**, pp. 339-340.

(68) This *ribat* was destroyed and its land was taken over by people. Only two old interlocking domes remain standing, one known as the zawiya of Sheikh Othman al-Sotouhi in Darb al-Asfar. Abu al-Mahasin: **Al-Nujoom al-Zahira**, vol. 12, p. 142. Ali Mubarak: **Al-Khutat al-Tawfiqiyya**, vol. 6, p. 153. Al-Maqrizi: **Al-Mawa'izwa al-I'tibar bi Zikr al-Khutat wal Athar**, vol. 4, authenticated by Ayman Fouad Sayed, Al-Furqan Institution for Islamic Heritage, London, 2003, p. 795.

lifetime of Al-Maqirizi, at which time it was headed by one of the mentors "*the honorable sheikha, mistress of the ladies of her times Oum Zainab Fatima Bint Abbas al-Baghdadiya who was past the age of eighty when she died. She was a well-versed scholar, an ascetic and a devout worshipper. She had extraordinary charisma and impact on souls.*"[69]

This *ribat* was dedicated to divorced women until they remarried, to abandoned wives until their husbands took them back in, as a measure to protect them against deviation. The *ribat* was renowned for its strict discipline and utmost restraint, the preservation of morals and firm dedication to worship.

Ribat Baybars-Jashnakir:

This *ribat* was established by the Sultan Baybars-Jashnakir in 709AH/1309AD and linked to the Khanqah that still exists in Darb al-Asfar in al-Gamaliyya, Cairo. The *waqf* deed of Bebars indicated that he built a compound comprised of a Khanqah, the dome and the *ribat* on part of property dedicated to the Fatimid ministry. The deed also states that the *ribat* buildings are remnants of the ministry's seat. It consists of a wide hall at the center of which there is a large aeration shaft adjacent to a wide seating area. Before these there is a large hall in addition to dependencies that are toilets, a well and a fountain. The document reads: "*the big old hall and the quarters in front of it and the lounge next to it were dedicated by the waqif, may Allah sustain him and double his reward, as a ribat.*"

This *ribat* provided shelter to those in need and those experiencing hard times. It had a special system described in detail by the *waqif* in his deed. It provided full accommodation to thirty single persons and made provision for seventy others with families to visit the *ribat* in daytime and return to their homes and families at the end of the day but they all enjoyed the same privileges in terms of food. In fact, every person in the *ribat* was given a meat dish and three loaves of bread every day, as well as some sweet treats.

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(69) Al-Maqrizi: ***Al-Mawa'izwa al-I'tibar bi Zikr al-Khutat wal Athar***, vol. 4, pp. 780-795, authenticated by Ayman Fouad Sayed, Al-Furqan Institution for Islamic Heritage, London, 2003.

Zawiyas (sanctuaries):

The *zawiyas* were created to operate as independent facilities. Each had a prayer hall or mosque, accommodation quarters and other dependencies. It was a home to the most esteemed and renowned sheikhs who held study circles for their students, most of whom were poor, as well as to passersby. The sheikh of the *zawiya* preached and provided counsel to those who patronized the *zawiya* or resided in it.[70]

Some *zawiyas* were closer to *ribats* in that they were not associated with a single person. They were a shelter for the poor who did not have to follow a specific doctrine as long as they performed their worship rites regularly. The poor found shelter and food in these sanctuaries. One of these was erected by Zain Eddine al-Khouroujinear the Citadel in Cairo, and he founded some *waqfs* to serve it and appointed an *imam* and a servant in it. He set it to permanently provide food for the poor who lived nearby and those who visited the *zawiya*. His deed document read: "*The proceeds of the zawiya shall go to the resident poor, those living in the vicinity and the frequent visitors among the worshippers during the lifetime of the waqf, and other Muslims in Rmila towards al-Sultani square near the Citadel… A knowledgeable imam from a good background and of good repute, regardless of his doctrine, is to officiate at the set prayer times and lead the neighboring poor and anyone present with them during those prayers. This Imam would be in charge of the designated Quran reading sessions, tend to the zawiya's interests and manage its stocks. He would pay the administrator fifty dirhams every month. The manager would also put in place a doorman from among the poor wherever they may be and appoint a doorman to serve the poor, the needy, the visitors and the residents, and pay him fifty dirhams. He would disburse ten dirhams every day to buy the neighboring poor food or any amount that would provide them with sustenance in the form of lunch and dinner and as time dictates.*"[71]

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(70) Said Achour: ***Al-Mujatama' fil al-'Asr al-Mamluki***, 1962, p. 169.

(71) *Waqf* deed No. 69 by Zine Eddine Abdelkader al-Ansari al-Khazraji. Mohamed Seif Nasr Abu al-Futouh: ***Monshaat al Ri'aya al-Ijtima'iyya bil Qahria hatta Nehayat al-'Asr al-Mamluki***. PhD thesis, Suhag Faculty of Letters, University of Assiut, 1980, pp. 375-376.

Some *zawiyas* were also created to tend the poor among certain categories of foreigners who came to Cairo, such as the non-Arabic speaking Ethiopians and others. Al-Tawashi Bilal al-Faraji created a *zawiya* that was known as the servants' *zawiya* and declared as a *waqf* benefitting the Ethiopian servants and soldiers, dedicated to cater to their needs.[72]

Historian Al-Maqrizi indicated that Sultan al-Nasser Mohammed established a *zawiya* for Sheikh Taqie Eddine Rajab Ibn Ashirk al-A'jami[73] under the Citadel in Cairo, set *waqfs* to serve it and it became a shelter for poor non-arabs[74]. This *zawiya* is still in existence and most of its buildings have been renovated, in Darb al-Labbana which forks out from Sikket al-Mahgar under the Citadel in Cairo. It is known as Takiyat al-Agami or Takiyat Sheikh Mohammed al-Bostamy, one of its former sheikhs who passed away in Ramadan of 905AH/1500AD. This *zawiya* was originally created by Sultan al-Mansour Hussam Eddine Lajine for Sheikh Taqie Eddine Rajab al-Ajami in Safar of 697AH/1297AD. Then Sultan al-Nasser Mohammed Ibn Qalawun expanded the prayer hall of the *zawiya* in 726AH/1326AD. Then it was renovated by Sultan al-Dhaher Abu Sa'id Jaqmaq in 847AH/1443 AD.[75]

Takiyas[76]:

During the reign of Muhammad Ali's dynasty in Egypt (1805-1952), many *takiyas* specialized in caring for those who had no source of income or were unable to work, elderly devotees, widows who could not seek a living, as

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(72) This *zawiya* was located between Bab al-Futouh and al-Husseniyya outside Bab Ennasr. Al-Maqrizi: ***Al-Mawa'iz wa al-I'tibar bi Dhikr al-Khutat wal Athar***, vol. 4, authenticated by Ayman Fouad Sayed. Al-Furqan Institution for Islamic Heritage, London, 2003, p. 811. Mohamed Seif Nasr Abu al-Futouh: ***Monshaat al Ri'aya al-Ijtima'iyya bil Qahria***, p. 376.

(73) He was a highly respected sheikh among the State's princes. He lived in this *zawiya* until his death on Saturday 8 Rajab 714 AH. Al-Maqrizi: ***Al-Khutat***, vol 4, p. 811.

(74) Al-Maqrizi: ***al-Khutat***, vol 4, pp. 811-812.

(75) Al-Maqrizi: ***Al-Sulook fi Ma'rifat Doual al-Mulook***, vol. 2, p. 141.

(76) *Takiya* is a Sufi khanqah and the abode of dervishes where the disciples evolve through the stages of elevation and weaning from worldy matters. The *takiya* replaced the *khanqah* as a home for the Sufis under the Mamluke reign. For more information, see 'Assem Rizq: ***Mu'jam Mostalahat al-Imara wal Funun al-Islamiyya***, Maktabat Madbouli, 2000, pp. 57-58.

well the poor Sufis and dervishes, as well the strangers and travellers who found no shelter in the lands they cross, especially if they are on their way to the Holy lands to perform the Hajj. Some *takiyas* were dedicated to housing students of Al-Azhar al-Sharif, the most famous among these was takiyat Muhammad Beik Abi al-Dhahab.[77]

Abdel Rahman Katakhda had established a *takiya* for poor elderly women from his *waqfs* that was renovated by Ratib Pasha in the second half of the 19th century. The Waqf Authority also created a *takiya* for the poor in Alexandria early in the last decade of the 19th century. It had 120 beds divided over two sections, one for men and the other for women, each of which was divided into sections (young, adult, widowed and virgins, each with its separate section). The criteria for residency in this *takiya* was "absolute inability to make a livelihood and the absence of infectious diseases."[78]

Ahmed Pasha Al-Minshawy was one of the most renowned wealthy men who took interest in the creation of *takiyas* and dedicated *waqfs* to them during the times of Muhammad Ali's dynasty. One of these was a *takiya* he built in Tanta for «elderly women and orphans» to serve as their home and provide lodgings to caravans and Muslim passersby, especially those coming to Tanta from Turkey, Morocco and other countries, on their way to perform Hajj[79].

Since the 19th century, hospices have been on the rise and replacing *takiyas* as a more efficient and better organized social welfare institution[80]. Hospices tend to the categories of senior people and orphaned children in particular. This includes the portion of revenue generated by his *waqf*, created in 1920 and that Sayyed Bek Abdelmuta'aal disbursed to build an orphanage in Samannoud (Egypt) that could accommodate 50 orphaned students who

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(77) Ibrahim al-Bayyoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyassa fi Misr***, p. 307.

(78) Ibrahim al-Bayyoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyassa fi Misr***, p. 311.

(79) *Waqf* deed of Ahmed Pasha al-Minshawy, p. 47.

(80) The deterioration of *takiyas* was owed to the rigidity of their system and their lack of development. This matter was debated at the Egyptian Consultation Council: Secretariat of the Consultation Council, session 31 held on 19 June 1936. Ibrahim al-Bayyoumi Ghanem: ***Al-Awqaf wal Siyassa fi Misr***, p. 311.

received a suitable education and training in a trade[81]. A school for vocational training was subsequently attached to the orphanage.

In 1927, Jalila Tosoun built an institution for orphaned girls and founded a *waqf* of 138 acres to serve this orphanage. She stipulated that the orphanage would provide care to 15 to 20 orphaned girls chosen according to the terms she set, the most important of which was for the girls "*not to have a provider to raise them, and the orphaned girl who lost her parents has precedence over the one who still has one of them. The curriculum applied within the orphanage included learning writing and reading, memorizing at least two juz'u of the Qur'an, learning reading from the Holy Quran, the principles of computation, and the art of housekeeping, particularly cooking, sewing, embroidery, musical education, and the songs, poems and tunes suitable for girls*"[82].

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(81) *Waqf* deed of Sayyed Bek Abdelmuta'aal, drawn up on 11 Safar 1339-23 October 1920. Ibrahim al-Bayyoumi Ghanem: **Al-Awqaf wal Siyassa fi Misr**, p. 313.

(82) *Waqf* deed of Jalila Tosoun dated 17 May 1927 and drawn up before the Religious Court of al-Giza. Records of the Ministry of waqfs. Register No. 138, series 4740. Ibrahim al-Bayyoumi Ghanem: **Al-Awqaf wal Siyassa fi Misr**, p. 313.