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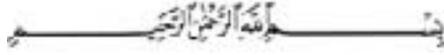
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Editorial

UNIFORMIZATION OF CULTURE AND MOLDING OF THOUGHT ARE A LIMITATION TO THE INTELLECT AND FREE WILL

Since the end of WWI, the ideas that were once conceived in the European continent from common concepts have dispersed and come into conflict. The result of that conflict was the rise of two main ideas upon which two ideologies were based: namely, capitalism, derived from the liberal thought, and communism, drawn from the socialist thought. Although these two ideologies have different foundations and dimensions, they both evolved in the Age of Enlightenment, the cultural movement that emerged in Europe in the mid 17th century. The common origin of the two ideologies might not be apparent, but it is well known to the scholars of the European thought and those interested in studying such theories that lay the foundation for systems of governance, ways of life and patterns of behavior.

Despite the fact that the conflict between capitalism and communism did not peaked until after WWII, or what is called the **Cold War**, its first manifestations were detected at the level of ideas during the interval between WWI and WWII, in the media, universities, research centers, as well as in cultural, artistic, literary and information milieus, in Europe, the United States of America, and other parts of the world, including the Arab region. Yet, the precursors of such clash were not obvious enough to actually affect the daily life of individuals and communities.

It is worth noting that the intellectual and cultural conflict emerged early in Egypt just after WWI, and that Zionism, which was introduced in the region by extremist Jews, played an important role in promoting communism in Egypt, and then in Sudan, starting from the 1920's. This promotion of communism was aimed to threaten the interests of the western capitalism in the region, fight

against the liberal thought and counter the Islamic Awakening Movement, which was seeking to flourish through schools of thought and political streams that later led to the emergence of various movements streaming from the Islamic thought.

In this environment, tension grew among ideas, and the clash heightened between communism and capitalism, in such a way as each camp used their entire means to fight against one another, promote their beliefs and publicize their culture, in an era that was all but 'cold'. This clash was indeed a form of suppression of the human will and an obstruction to peoples' freedom and creativity.

Both camps used this methodology to impose their ideas on the world and coercively extend their intellectual and cultural influence, in preparation for foisting the political system they wanted and disseminating the culture they believed in. In doing so, the two camps were running counter to the movement of history and God's law in the universe, i.e. difference and diversity within human unity.

Two authors, born and brought up in the two camps, analyzed the conflict between the ideas that capitalism and communism promoted over the period from post WWI until the 1990's. In 1951, the well-known American author George Gallup wrote an article in which he said that the United States of America tried to sell its ideas about democracy to the world. He also predicted the failure of the American plan to impose this policy on the countries of the world. In one of his articles, he said: "During the next 100 years, a war to control peoples' minds will take place; while, we, Americans, are still trying to sell our idea of democracy to the world. Russia could send hundreds of thousands of extremist Chinese to Korea without giving them any aid. I can only wonder how many millions of extremists are willing to go into this war with us today (July 1951)."

In the same vein, he insightfully added: "The greatest of military victories will never dispense us with winning the battle of principles and ideas. We need to admit that we have lost the publicity battle until now, and that the peoples under our authority are not quite satisfied with us, so we could only wonder about the other peoples whom our publicity has never reached, nor have they tried our way of living. The Congress took cognizance of this fact, and allocated USD 100 million to fund international publicity program; though, the publicity we truly need would cost us at least USD 5 billion. The mistake we have been making all these years in our publicity campaigns is that we have been continuously speaking about ourselves, and there is nothing more boring to people than hearing somebody constantly speaking about himself. All that that has heard our publicity must have eventually wondered: what about my future? Look at the

peasants in China, or workers in Italy or Iran, to whom communism promises more land and higher pay. How can we win this bid against it? We kept telling them about America: the heaven on earth. Indeed, selling ideas is the hardest business Americans have done so far.”

These are some aspects of the intellectual conflict that took place in the international arena during what was called “the cold war”, presented to us by an American thinker who foresaw the future, and whose vision proved to be correct. The other side of the picture was presented by the famous Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who had left the USSR when he said: “I left a country where everybody talks about rights, and when I arrived to the USA, I found everybody talking about the responsibilities.” He then wondered if there was a system combining both the responsibilities and the rights. This question was the beginning of the end of the communist rule in his country and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

These two views expressed by an American and a Russian authors prove that seeking persistently to impose one pattern of thought, one culture and one political system does not serve the common interests of peoples, but it rather serves the interests of despotic, racist and extremist groups that oppose the world peace. This irrational quest leads inevitably to undermine stability, compromise world peace and security and drag people into endless intellectual clashes, sectarian strife and political conflicts. This affirms that the process of **selling ideas** by both parties was like **selling the wind**: an impoverishing business, a bad deal and a destructive plan that has eventually led to the collapse of one camp and has drowned the other into serious problems, such as the major economic crisis that has shaken the American community, and its involvement in sparking unjustifiable wars in different countries, in a bid to **sell illusions** to miserable peoples.

This kind of patterning of culture and molding of thought is certainly a limitation to the mind and a restraint of the will. They spark intellectual conflict that eventually gives rise to **political tensions**, which if not eased, will lead to insurmountable crises.

The so-called “cold war” has deepened at its present new stage between more than two camps. After the collapse of the USSR, the Western camp thought that it won the battle of ideas; nevertheless, reality affirms that the international arena is witnessing a new heightened conflict among several intellectual theories. Some of these theories were developed by the super power itself, and many of the intellectual and cultural schools fighting against each other today were esta-

blished by this **superpower** which controls world politics. There is nothing weird about this. The state that has announced that it was fighting an (**intellectual war**) is the same that adopts what's called the (**constructive chaos**) policy. However, this policy had a 'boomerang' effect on this superpower and undermined its strategic interests in several parts of the world. This can clearly be seen in its confused policies.

The insistence on pressurizing peoples to accept a culture and the persistence in imposing hegemony on all fronts, so as to promote one political system stemming from a culture of one people, is an infringement of peoples' right to self-determination as regards the ideas to adopt, the cultural and social example of individual and communal life to choose, and the political system and economic program to follow to serve the national interests of sovereign states.

Furthering this policy of culture patterning and thought molding might very well undermine the vital interests of the superpower, which carries out this irrational policy that goes against the human nature and international laws, which affirm the right to difference, call for respecting the cultural and civilizational diversity, and underline the right of people to protecting their specificities and identity and holding on to their own choices.

This despotic attitude in disseminating ideas takes humanity back to the ages of injustice, coercion and domination. It is, therefore, a backward attitude that has nothing to do with the culture that seeks to edify the human being, build civilizations, and propels the free, unlimited thought.

If the American and Russian authors, cited above, could analyze the intellectual crisis that continues to heighten at various levels, a Muslim author, who holds a cultural responsibility in the Islamic world, examined the dimensions of the civilizational crisis that has affected the whole world. In his book (**Ideas for Dialogue**), Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri said: "That's the cultural and intellectual battle taking place today in an unstable world, suffering from regional and international problems at different levels, and serving as a battlefield of ideas. The superpower keeps attacking its opposing intellectual and cultural camps, which do not have the means to defend their right to existence. This superpower also keeps sparking clashes in the world while claiming to lead human societies toward freedom, democracy and progress. This fallacy is no longer believed. In fact, this highlights the importance of the role of free and impartial thinking in exposing the dimensions of this forced war, divulging the truth, refuting falsehoods and raising awareness among peoples of the true objectives of dragging

the world into what they call (**constructive chaos**), which only serve the interests of the enemies of justice and equality.”

Dr Altwaijri also underlined the Islamic world's vision of the intellectual and civilizational crisis witnessed by the world today. He said in this regard: “Thinking greatly affects the life of individuals, groups, peoples and nations. Indeed, enlightened thinking and sound judgment help counter the trends of extremism and condescension that aim to raise doubt about peoples' faiths and civilizational heritage, and seek to sever them from their culture and value systems, which constitute the essence of their being. I have no doubt that this intellectual and cultural war forced onto the world will not conquer high values and moral principles, neither shall it affect the Islamic civilization which has contributed immensely to the humanity, despite the apprehension expressed by some wise men about the current situation in the Islamic world.”

This is a clear vision of the intellectual conflict taking place today in the international arena. A vision that has proved that patterning culture and molding thought is a limitation to the human mind and a restraint of the free will.

Islam Today

MOVEMENT FOR BRINGING ISLAMIC MADHAHIB CLOSER TOGETHER: CRITICAL REVIEW AND REFLECTIONS

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri*

The 65th anniversary of the creation of the (**Society for the Rapprochement of Islamic Schools of Thought**) which gave birth to Dar al-Tarqeeb in Cairo in 1947, and the lapsing of 20 years since the creation of the (**World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought**) (WFPIST) in 1992, and nine years since the Islamic Summit adopted the **Strategy for Bringing Islamic Madhahib Closer Together** in 2003, all represent a highly opportune moment to reflect on this drive for rapprochement and its implications for the Islamic World throughout these decades, and most particularly in the current times. Behind this exercise is our desire to draw conclusions that we could analytically review to better reflect the fast-paced changes that today's world is experiencing, and most particularly the Islamic one.

When the concept of bringing Islamic schools of thought closer together first emerged in Cairo in 1947, relations between Muslims, particularly in countries with religious communities of both Sunnite and Shiite following, were deeply imbued with understanding and tolerance, two values that represented a backdrop to the co-existence that united the myriad communities and factions which made up the unified Muslim Ummah. Large swathes of the Islamic world were under foreign occupation and the world's map was undergoing profound mutations in the aftermath of World War II, one of these changes being the creation of the United Nations Organization in 1945. This turning point in history of the modern world was also marked by many other events worthy of mention if we are to appreciate the magnitude of the changes the world underwent and in light of which the concept of rapprochement saw light. One of these events was the emergence of the State of Israel on usurped Palestinian lands in 1948 and the eruption of the Arab-Israeli War in the same year, triggering profound mutations

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and grave repercussions which did nothing but worsen over the last six decades. Some of these repercussions continue to pose a threat to the edifice of the Islamic Ummah today, and most particularly in the Arab region of the Islamic world.

A string of subsequent events changed the face of the Islamic geographical map: the State of Pakistan came into existence in 1947, then Indonesia's independence was proclaimed in 1949, and three years prior to that (1946) Syria had won its independence and the creation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was proclaimed in the same year (1946). Under all these circumstances, relations between Muslim societies and communities were predominantly harmonious and amicable and were based on mutual respect between the followers of all Islamic Madhahib. Indeed, these societies never experienced the **sectarian conflict, tension** or **strife** as they are experienced today. This, however, does not mean that reasons for tension, conflict and distance did not exist at the time. They did indeed exist but they were tightly contained and did not manifest themselves in severe conflicts, quarrels or fierce debates as they tend to do today. These causes were more emotional in the sense that Sunnites and Shiites co-existed with each other, each according to his own beliefs and approaching the other with caution and skepticism. This status persevered, helped by the desire to know the other and the lack of factual information about the other's beliefs.

And although Sheikh Mohamed Taqi al-Qummi⁽¹⁾, the person behind the initiative of bringing Islamic Madhahib closer together, listed as among the reasons motivating his initiative the exacerbation of '**sectarian strife**', this phenomenon had certainly not reached back then the magnitude it has acquired today.

Al-Qummi wrote: "*Conditions were such in the Islamic world that **sectarian strife** between the Sunnites and the Shiites reached unprecedented levels of gravity. The atmosphere was laden with mistrust, tension, disputes and accusations. The enemies of Islam had managed to erect huge walls between Madhahib with spates of accusations exchanged between the two sides, unable to sit around the same table and listen to each other, away from backstabbing, libel and tension.*"⁽²⁾

Yet, and as it is described, this situation which prevailed in some parts of the Islamic world, remained an exception to the rule and cannot be said to have been the general state of matters. And although the anti-Islam powers which

(1) Sheikh Mohamed Taqi al-Qummi was born in Qum (Iran) in 1910 (died in an accident in 1990).

(2) Sheikh Mohamed Taqi al-Qummi, quoted in '*Malaf al Taqreeb*', a book by Mohamed Ali Azarshab, publications of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, Tehran, 1379AH.

preyed upon this religion spared no effort in kindling fires of tension and chaos among Muslims to break their ranks and enfeeble them, the cohesion of Muslim societies and the resilience of the internal front within Islamic countries prevented the fulfillment of such evil designs, contrary to what is happening in many Islamic countries today.

Notwithstanding conditions in the Islamic world late in the forties of the previous century, life within the Islamic world was predominantly marked by action on two fronts. The **first one** pertained to advancing liberation movements to complete the independence of Arab Muslim countries from European colonialism, and the **second one** engaged in building the newly-independent states on new grounds. This meant that all efforts within the Islamic world level were focused on liberating the entity and edifying the identity, pursuits that could not afford the luxury of scattering efforts, breaking Islamic ranks and engaging in artificial and futile battles, despite the fierce war waged on Islam and Muslims by international powers hostile to the Islamic Ummah.

Nonetheless, interest in the concept of rapprochement came at the right time. The choice of Cairo at the time as a launching pad for this movement translated the respect and esteem that all Muslims hold for Egypt and Al-Azhar al-Sharif which embodies Islamic culture and religious sciences, and the unity born out of one religion, one book, and one *qibla*.

The movement played a highly influential part in instilling new spirit and fervor among scholars, muftis and religious authorities and references in general. Sheikh al-Qummi said in description of the premises on which he based the call he launched from Cairo and the circumstances surrounding it: *“Upon much reflection, we came to the conclusion that this call to rapprochement should be made by a group instead of an individual who might thus put himself at grave risk, and that the call should aim for the rapprochement of existing Madhahib and not to press upon all Muslims to espouse a single madhab. Thus, the Sunnite remains a Sunnite and the Shiite remains so, but all should adhere to respecting the other's opinion as presented with the support of evidence. We also deemed that this group/movement should be representative of the four Madhahib known among the Sunnites and the two Shiite schools of thought of Imamiya and Zaydiyya, that every madhhab would be represented by knowledgeable and highly respected scholars, and that the movement be independent from politics. It should also have well defined objectives and endeavors that are motivated by a desire to learn and know so that it can stand fast in the face of opposition and gain allies through sound convincing. Thus armed with the weapons of knowledge, the*

movement can fight superstitions and alien ideas which thrive in secrecy and darkness, and at the same time be able to fight the sects and factions that stray too far from Islam and that the Sunnite consider as Shiite and the Shiite consider as Sunnite while in truth they are nothing but one of the stratagems of the war waged against Islam.”⁽³⁾

As we revisit the budding stages of the concept of rapprochement, we should mention that this initiative was first launched by the Shiite before being taken over by the Sunnites who supported it, and that the choice of al-Azhar, the bastion of Sunnite culture as a starting point was an intelligent move. In fact, when an idea was adopted by al-Azhar and launched from its precincts, it usually achieved great visibility and was welcomed, and such was the case. But the special conjuncture which subsequently arose in Egypt, and then in other Arab and Islamic countries limited the impact of this rapprochement drive which began to falter and lose steam until Dar al-Taqreeb ceased all activities and the magazine '**Risalat al-Islam**', published by the institution and the carrier of its message, was discontinued.⁽⁴⁾

Despite the clarity of the objectives which the institution set out to fulfil, and the dedication that marked the efforts of its pioneers, including Sheikh Mohamed Shaltout, Sheikh Mohamed Taqi al-Qummi, Sheikh Abdalmutaal al-Se'edi, Sheikh Mohamed Mohamed al-Madani, Sheikh Abdelmageed Salim, Sheikh Mohamed Jawad Maghniyya and Mohamed Allouba Basha, failure was the destiny of all these praiseworthy efforts made at different levels. Although these outstanding efforts did bear some fruits, the results would have been much more rewarding were it not for the challenges and obstacles that stood in their way as the Islamic world embarked on a new era of its modern history. Attention and preoccupations were shifted to many other issues that did not include the concern of bringing Islamic Madhahib closer together.

However, new conditions emerged early in the 15th century AH and many developments unfolded in the Islamic world from late in the Sixties of the previous century, particularly the criminal fire set to the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque, provoking the emergency convening of the 1st Islamic Summit in September 1969. These developments and new conditions led to a revival of interest in the concept of the rapprochement of Islamic Madhahib. The Islamic Educational, Scientific

(3) Ibid, p. 7.

(4) The first issue of this magazine was published in Rabia I 1368AH, and the sixtieth and last issue was published in Ramadan 1382AH.

and Cultural Organization -ISESCO- which was created in 1982 was the first to rekindle this interest when it provided for a special program for bringing Islamic Madhahib closer together in the cultural programs of its first action plan adopted by the General Conference. I had the great honour of participating in the implementation of this program in my capacity as Assistant Director General for culture from 1985 to 1991, then as Director General of the Organisation to date. The first meeting that ISESCO held in its endeavour to bring Islamic Madhahib closer together took place in Rabat in September 1991.

Working for many years with select groups of scholars, muftis and religious authorities from the Islamic Ummah, we endeavoured to give shape to, develop and broaden the scope of the concept of rapprochement. Once the concept reached maturity, it was submitted by ISESCO to the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Islamic Cooperation Organization for adoption, then presented to the 10th Islamic Summit meeting held in Malaysia in 2003. It became necessary to create mechanisms for the implementation of this new strategy, hence our attention at ISESCO was turned to studying the draft on these mechanisms at an experts meeting held in Damascus in January 2006 and at which the rules of procedure of the Supreme Consultative Council for Bringing Muslim Madhahib Closer Together were adopted. This council is made up of an elite of scholars from all Islamic schools of thought and convenes at the invitation of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and at its permanent headquarters.⁽⁵⁾

The creation of the **World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought** in 1992 gave a boost to joint Islamic action in this crucial field and consolidated Islamic unity. In turn, the World Forum issued the draft Islamic Unity Charter which was adopted at the 21st session of this Council, held in 2008.

The **Islamic Unity Charter** starts by identifying the hindrances to rapprochement and unity, namely fanaticism, extremism, *takfir*, escalating conflict to matters of belief and disbelief, blaming the other for the discourse he uses while the other rejects this blame, irrational argumentation, denigration of sanctities, imposing a given *madhab* on the others, engaging in provocative actions that trigger fitna and such actions.

In addition to these obstacles to unity mentioned in the Islamic Unity Charter, we can add others of which the danger is no lesser on the unity of the

(5) The **Supreme Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Strategy for Bringing Muslim Madhahib close Together** convened in four meetings: the first in 2007, the second in 2008, the third in 2011 and the fourth in 2012.

Ummah. These include the **failure of school curricula to spread the culture of respect, coexistence and mutual affection among Muslims, falsifying facts of history and interpreting its events according to a narrow sectarian or factional vision, disrespecting the Prophet's (PBUH) companions and wives and belittling them in ways that verge on affront totally disregarding the Quranic verses revealed in their regard with Allah's blessings conferred on them. Such affront had never been witnessed in the golden era of Islam and was never before directed at the Prophet's household members, may Allah bless them. Other obstacles include the silence observed in the face of such extremism and fanaticism out of regard for one or the other madhhab's followers or out of a desire to win their favour and exploit them for purposes far from innocent. Add to this the deteriorating levels of Arabic language learning and mastery which have fallen to such abysmal levels as to prevent many from referring to the major sources of Islamic history and culture to acquire firsthand knowledge of the principles of the faith and of historical facts. Other factors are the influence of policies dictated by foreign powers with vested interests in breaking the ranks of Muslims, giving precedence to transient sectarian, ethnic or political interests at the expense of the greater good of Islam, and the failure of scholars from various backgrounds to discharge the responsibility that falls to them in terms of furthering rapprochement, shedding light on the true facts of our tolerant faith, exposing falsehoods and refuting accusations.**⁽⁶⁾

These were in brief the causes that invalidated rapprochement endeavours since their first stirrings late in the forties of the previous century and to date. These obstacles have acquired such magnitude that they threaten all sincere efforts made at many levels by parties wishing to bring Islamic Madhabs closer together, at the forefront of which is the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations and the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought.

One of the means of supporting the cultural unity of Muslims is to implement the strategies devised by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the fields of education, culture, sciences, technology and innovation, higher education, bringing Muslim Madhahib closer together, and cultural takaful. These are official documents that benefit from the collective consensus and goodwill of the entire Islamic Ummah and that provide a framework for joint Islamic action in these vital fields.

(6) Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri: *On the Civilizational Edification of the Islamic World*, Vol. 10, ISESCO Publication, 2008, Rabat.

Islamic unity is a religious obligation and one of life's necessities. It is a lofty goal that all Muslims should endeavour to fulfil in all dedication. This unity occurs at various levels the most important of which, in realistic terms, is **cultural unity of which the strongest foundation is unity of faith, spiritual unity and unity of interests.**

If religion does not incite us to tear each other apart and fight each other but enjoins us instead to seek unity and brotherliness, and if reason and interests do not urge us to seek disunity but the opposite through solidarity and concord, why do we engage in the opposite of what religion, reason and interests dictate?

Unity, solidarity and cooperation are key elements in the societal and collective facet of the human personality. They are equally vital for the sound shaping of the other components of man's nature - whether individual or collective - and for the balance and righteousness of the human personality, and subsequently, of society. These are the components of Islamic unity and the sine qua non conditions for the cohesion of Islamic society and its steadfastness in the face of the proponents of division stoke the fires of sectarian strife.

All elements and positive contributions recorded in the history of Islam support and encourage the unity of Islam because they have as their referential framework Islam and its value system. It was Islam that unified their tribes and peoples, that consecrated their equality and brotherly ties and transformed all the inconveniences of discrimination into advantages that urge for equality, brotherliness and solidarity. All mankind are equal and their diversity as peoples and tribes is more reason for acquaintance and complementarity. The diversity of tongues and hues is one manifestation of Allah's miraculous creation and the wonders of His creativity in the perfect fashioning of Man, and none of these should be construed as an instrument for racial supremacy, strife or enmity.⁽⁷⁾

As a term, rapprochement refers to bringing divergent viewpoints closer together, whether these affected people in their livelihoods and affiliations or in their perspective on some *fiqh* issues and their difference as to their rules. **The rapprochement we endeavour to bring about is one that aspires to consolidate the concept of a unified Islamic brotherhood after this unity was shot to smithereens by the factors that ultimately divided the Islamic Ummah.**⁽⁸⁾

(7) *Will and Existential Crisis of the Muslim: the Absent Dimension in the Ummah's Reform Project*, Dr Abdelhamid Abu Suleiman, quoted from the *Civilizational Edifice of the Islamic World*, Vol 10, Dr Abdulaziz Othmane Altwaijri.

(8) *Islamic General Encyclopedia*, page 408, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, 2001.

For this reason, one of the most effective means of reinforcing the edifice of the Islamic Ummah and reforming its ranks is bringing Muslim Madhahib closer together by unifying their discourse and harmonising opinions on the methods of proof, on laying down *fiqh* rules, drawing the benchmarks of the path leading to such rapprochement and devising the implementation mechanisms likely to translate it into a reality. Rapprochement is not a coercive or artificial process, nor is it a political movement of which the aim is to conceal a weakness or shortcoming by way of misleading the other party. It is instead an authentic process dictated by many facts of reality.⁽⁹⁾

What should be beyond the shadow of doubt is that under no circumstances should rapprochement mean that the followers of a given doctrine should give up their convictions and beliefs as no rational person would advocate this. What is meant by rapprochement is the ardent endeavour to bridge, through agreement and concord, the gap in the perception of historical facts and the division that arose from such events, in such a way that this conflict does not spawn differences of opinion that jeopardize the ties of brotherliness between believers.

Achieving total harmony in matters of faith and *fiqh* is not a must at the current juncture nor are there indications it could occur any time soon. Instead, what is required at present is to close ranks in an attempt to halt the fanaticism and radicalism that are feeding the fires of sectarian strife and tearing apart people who share the same *qibla* and that is escalating in many parts of the Islamic world.

The challenge facing us today and which we should confront through wisdom but with a spirit of Islamic solidarity is the collective endeavour to come to agreement on what should not be the subject of disagreement. We should believe in Allah (SWT), in His Prophet (PBUH), that the Quran which Muslims hold in their hands today is the true word of Allah, delivered by the true angel straight to the heart of Mohamed Ibn Abdullah (PBUH), that this book is the one word that binds all Muslims together, the source of all power, immunity and steadfastness of the Islamic Ummah, the safety against straying from the straight path and the salvation from division at all levels. One of the essentials of faith in the Quran is following its teachings in dealing with Muslims, past and present, from an angle of brotherliness and compassion and refraining from harming them, particularly the Muhajireen and the Ansars whom Allah was pleased with and who were

(9) *Bringing Islamic Madhahib Closer Together*, part I, page 4. Proceedings of the conference organized by ISESCO on the issue (Rabat, 16-18 September 1991). Second edition, Dar at-Taqrīb Baina alMadzhaahib al Islamiyah, Beirut, 2003.

equally pleased with Allah, and to avoid declaring as apostates fellow Muslims on grounds of a narrow-minded doctrinal or sectarian vision.

Dr Sheikh Ahmed al-Waiili writes in his book 'The Identity of Sectarianism: 'We know that the principles which determine a person's affiliation to Islam are those set by the Prophet himself and as quoted in Sahih al-Bukhari reporting that Anas said: "*The Propeht (PBUH) said: 'Whoever says his prayers as we say our prayers and faces the Qiblah and eats the animal slaughtered by us, he is a Muslim and for him is the covenant of God and His Messenger, so do not look lightly on the covenant of God'*". Al-Bukhari also reported that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, asked the prophet (PBUH) on the day of the battle of Khaybar: "*What will I fight people for? The Prophet (PBUH) responded: 'Fight until they profess that there is no God but Allah and that Mohamed is His Prophet. If they so do, their lives shall be safe from you.'* Imam Jaafar Ibn Mohamed as-Sadeq said: "*Islam is to profess that there is no God but Allah and to believe in the Prophet. On such basis lives were spared and marriages and inheritances organised and around it the community of men came together.' The attribute of Muslim is confirmed when a person professes the two shahadas, whether he believed that the imamat was prescribed by Allah and therefore was a divine right, of by Shura and is therefore an attribute of the community which confers it on whom it deems fit.*"⁽¹⁰⁾

At this stage, we wish to stress one fact: **Muslims of all doctrines should reach consensus on a definite form of cooperation based on affection, on shunning fanaticism, on rising above name-calling and on eschewing mistrust.** Such common ground would free the mind to ponder in all quietude and liberty and seek the truth away from any trouble or confusion. The Sunnite would thus not be deprived from the benefit of the opinion of his Chiaa brother, nor would the Chiaa be deprived the benefit of his Sunnite brother's perspective as long as all opinion spring from the same source.⁽¹¹⁾

Sheikh Mohamed Hussein Aal Kahsef al-Ghitaa says: "*It is impossible to remove divergence of opinion in Islamic schools of thought and bring them all together within one school because it is the innate nature of mankind to differ in opinion. The Creator of humanity (SWT) says in the Quranic chapter of Hud [But*

(10) Dr Sheikh Ahmed al-Waiili: *The Identity of Sectarianism*, pp. 57-58, Dar al-Safwa, Beirut, 1994.

(11) Sheikh Mohamed Shaltout, former imam of al-Azhar al-Sharif, from an interview published in the Iranian magazine '*Ital'aat*', quoted in the book '*Call to Rapprochement: Timeline and Documents*', page 219 and onwards, Egyptian Ministry of Waqfs, Cairo, 1991.

they will not cease to dispute, except those on whom thy Lord hath bestowed His Mercy". It is therefore a futile exercise but to seek to uproot sectarian differences. The most one can hope to achieve is to remove any factors that make of this difference grounds for enmity, and ensure that brotherliness and rapprochement take the place of divergence and clashing. After all, Muslims, no matter how divergent their opinions may be, all come together in agreement on the two shahadas. And whoever professes these two shahadas has embraced Islam as his religion and therefore secured the inviolability of his soul, property and honour. The Muslim is the brother of another Muslim."⁽¹²⁾

What remains possible and feasible in any scenario are the serious, dedicated and constructive endeavours to halt the increasingly dangerous sectarian strife that is putting at grave risk Muslim societies in many parts of the Islamic world.

The above is the opinion of a prominent scholar whose name is a major Shiite reference. He expressed it when a collective action was taken to bringing Muslim Madhahib closer together and it remains a valid opinion that we should revisit after the many decades that lapsed and during which all endeavours made to this end failed to bury the hatchet of sectarian strife, despite the fact that a more positive civilizational awareness of the concept of rapprochement has grown and spread widely. Such conclusion should motivate us to engage in self-review before embarking on another round of joint Islamic action to bring Islamic Madhahib closer, provided that bringing closer Islamic Madhahib that flow from one and the same source is actually and realistically possible.

The general conditions experienced by the Islamic Ummah at this delicate juncture **require the full implementation of the Strategy for Bringing Muslim Madhahib Closer together, as adopted by the Islamic Summit**, with the help of the Supreme Consultative Council. We exhort all religious leaderships and references to rally around this Strategy and to accomplish the missions entrusted to them within their societies and thus become part of the support system of Islamic joint action in this vital field. They are called upon to participate in fending off the dangers besieging the Islamic Ummah and resulting from a sectarianism that serves shady political interests which run counter to the lofty objectives that bring all Muslims together and that they advocate everywhere.

(12) Sheikh Mohamedal-Hussein Aal Kachef al-Ghitaa: *Risalat al-Islam* magazine, issue 7, page 268, quoted in 'Thoughts for Dialogue', Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Dar al-Chorouq, Cairo, 2006.

We cannot stress enough that rapprochement, as one means towards co-existence and solidarity within a framework of Islamic brotherly ties uniting all components of the Ummah, may be approached from the angle of the dialogue. ISESCO is striving to spread the culture of dialogue and consolidate its role in achieving the co-existence of cultures and civilizations and religions. **We may consider rapprochement as a form of Inter-Islamic dialogue** which is doubtlessly more of a priority and worthier of attention than any other dialogue outside the Islamic sphere.

Islamic-Islamic dialogue is a lofty form of dialogue which has become today's language in view of the importance it has acquired. Endeavouring to bring Islamic Madhahib closer together is one form of Islamic-Islamic dialogue and that is the ultimate goal of this dialogue within the greater House of Islam and we should all strive to make it one of the axes of joint Islamic action at all levels. For many Muslim schools of thought and doctrines, the divergence of opinion does not affect the sources and principles of religion about which there is general consensus and the violation of which would be considered as heresy. Therefore, dialogue within these limits is acceptable and even a desired and healthy manifestation in addition to being the duty for the Ummah's scholars and jurists since the objective behind it is to unify ranks, the essence itself of rapprochement.

Intra-Islamic dialogue aims to bring factions closer together and study the causes of their division by addressing these conflicts calmly and far from any external or sectarian tension factors until the truth is brought to light and many causes of division and dissension among the followers of the same religion, the same prophet and the same book, are removed. Should we manage to do this, it will be possible to bridge the divide between Muslims and bring them to the awareness that there is a difference between the faith which must be adhered to, and intellectual knowledge about which divergences may exist, without for that matter affecting the faith.⁽¹³⁾

Our tolerant religion calls for removing all causes of division and strife and for adhering to the way of Allah, and that is what is enjoined in the verse: [***And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves,***]⁽¹⁴⁾ and [***fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart***

(13) First communiqué of the Forum for Proximity of Religious Schools of Thought, *Risalat al-Islam* magazine, issue No. 1.

(14) *Al-Imrane*, 103.

and your power depart,]⁽¹⁵⁾ and in the prophet's saying: “*Do not revert back to apostasy after me, killing each other.*”⁽¹⁶⁾ We have acted against all these texts, we broke away from each other and failed, we fought each other and we continue to fight in the name of religion because we chose the path of dissension and each one of us chose to defend his way and incur the enmity of his fellow Muslims for that, claiming the defence of the faith whereas he is failing that very same faith by breaking the ranks of Muslims.⁽¹⁷⁾ It is high time we took a qualitative leap in our drive to bring Islamic Madhahib closer together by rejecting any radical position that declares a Muslim as apostate and categorises him through a narrow sectarian vision. It is high time we purged our school curricula, religious discourses, our multitude of television channels and websites, especially those attributed to major sources and prominent sources, from defamatory words, denigration and belittling the Ummah's symbols and worthy ancestors. Our action must be coordinated, motivated by nothing other than the love of Allah, and free from pretence, and we must leave the conflicts of the ancient past to Allah to judge through His justice and mercy, instead of digging them up, stirring up negative emotions and prolonging the lifespan of divergence and conflict.

This is the path through which we can deserve and obtain the Almighty's benediction, the unity of our Ummah and the harmony of its various components within the boundaries of the one Ummah about whom Allah said: [*Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah,*]⁽¹⁸⁾ and [*For the scum disappears like froth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on the earth.*]⁽¹⁹⁾

May Allah guide the steps of every dedicated and sincere Muslim who strives to protect his religion and his Ummah and works for their greater good here and in the hereafter, and may Allah's peace and prayers be upon our prophet Mohamed, his kin and kith and all who followed his guidance. Praise be to the Lord of the worlds.

(15) *Al-Anfal*, 46.

(16) Narrated by al-Bukahri.

(17) Sheikh Rachid Reda: *Tafsir al-Manar*, Vol. 2, page 252 in interpretation of the verse: [*Enter into Islam whole-heartedly; and follow not the footsteps of the evil one; for he is to you an avowed enemy.*]

(18) *Al-Imrane*, 110.

(19) *Al-Ra'd*, 17.

ATTRIBUTES AND SHINING EXAMPLES OF ISLAMIC MODERATION AND RENEWAL

Dr Yussuf al-Qaradawi*

To ensure that those who know little nor understand Islam's middle stance and Islamic renewal do not claim such a thesis as theirs, to guarantee that the ineligible and the unqualified do not pontificate about this movement, nor anyone who claims the right to write unguided by any knowledge or enlightening reference, I took it upon myself to provide the Muslim reader with pointers or guidelines that define the intellectual and religious fundamentals of this movement to serve as benchmarks that provide guidance to those who seek it and light up the path before them: [*Is then one who walks headlong, with his face groveling, better guided,- or one who walks evenly on a Straight Way?*] (*al-Mulk*, 22) It is of paramount importance that we allow not the principles of moderation and renewal to remain loose, vague and undefined, open to interpretation by anyone wishing to do so, and to be claimed by any party that sees what it advocates as the so much preached and trumpeted moderateness.

A while ago, I briefly put together twenty attributes to define the concept of the middle stance. I distributed these to the Constitutive Assembly of the World Federation of Muslim Scholars which convened in London in July 2004. One of my fellow scholars asked if he could present these parameters and I responded that the person best suited to explain them would be the one who drew them up and that the task of explaining, providing evidence and affirming them fell to me. Although these principles were explained in many of my books, they remain scattered and need to be put together, ordered and evidenced, linking the parts to the whole and the particular to the general to provide the reader with a clear view that is free of any ambiguity or confusion.

I pondered these twenty guidelines - as would any researcher bent on improving what he wrote to be the closest possible to perfection in concept, presentation and style. I reformulated and sequenced them, adding more detail and finally coming up with thirty attributes which I then summarized to facilitate their memorization by anyone wishing to do so.

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I published them in a first format at the Kuwaiti Centre for Moderation then gave thought to a more careful review, which resulted in a complete reshuffle, particularly after I introduced the concept of renewal. Our Centre thus changed its name to al-Qaradawi Centre for Islamic Moderation and Renewal.⁽¹⁾ I added and explained, changed and improved, and I ordered these guidelines as mentioned earlier till they formed an entirely new book, praise be to Allah. My intent was to explain the path of moderation to the students studying it and to those seeking to apply it, clarify its features and delineate its components and features in the form of undisputed 'attributes' that can serve as reference in settling any divergence of opinions.

And here are the renewed moderation features in their new form. I pray to Allah for success in explaining them in the manner closest to my heart. I will present hereunder these thirty parameters in title form only, then I will proceed to address each and every one of them, and may Allah grant me success in this endeavour.

The thirty attributes of renewed moderation approach or trend are:

1. A fully integrated knowledge and balanced understanding of Islam.
2. Belief in the referential nature of the Quran and the Sunnah.
3. Basing religion on faith and monotheism.
4. Seeking closeness to Allah alone through apparent and private acts of worship.
5. Elevating the soul with lofty morals.
6. Spreading the word of Allah, preaching goodness and warning against misdeeds.
7. Fostering human and social values.
8. Respecting reason along with revelation.
9. Reviving religion from the inside and proper *ijtihad* by qualified people.
10. Invitation to a new *fiqh*.
11. Fairness to and honoring of women and preserving their innate nature.
12. Care and expansion of the family.
13. Creating an integrated virtuous society.
14. Faith in the existence of the Islamic Ummah, its unity and loyalty to it.
15. Creating a justice-based State that carries the banner of *daa'wa*.

(1) Created in 2008 at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Doha.

16. Refraining from excommunicating people and declaring them as miscreants.
17. Strengthening the Ummah's economy and erecting it on Islamic pillars.
18. Belief in the importance of plurality, mutual acquaintance and tolerance.
19. Creating a knowledge and faith-based civilization.
20. Promoting arts and harnessing them to serve the Ummah's mission.
21. Peopling the earth, achieving development and protecting the environment.
22. Peace with the non-violent and jihad against the aggressors.
23. Care and attention to Islamic minorities aboard.
24. Protecting the rights of religious minorities in Islamic societies.
25. Adopting the principle of ease in fatwa and daa'wa endeavors.
26. Observing the Sunnah of gradualism and all other divine ways.
27. Striking a balance between constants and variables.
28. Placing obligations within their legal contexts (*fiqh* of priorities).
29. Obligation of reform and change.
30. Harnessing our rich legacy of science, arts and literature.

Shedding light on the parameters and traits of renewed moderation:

The movement for moderateness and renewal relies on a set of principles and fundamentals in its understanding of Islam and in its presentation of the precepts and concepts that are specific to this religion and that at the same time define it, confer distinction on it, embody its essence, shed light on its objectives and clarity on its method, and outline its characteristics. These we have detailed in the thirty principles mentioned above and we will now shed light on each of these attributes to give the reader a clear and generous idea, free from any boring exaggeration or any brevity that may undermine their significance.

1- A fully integrated knowledge and balanced understanding of Islam:

This is the fully integrated knowledge and balanced understanding of Islam as it was revealed by Allah to the Prophet and as embodied by two of its main attributes:

First: The generality and comprehensiveness of Islam as a faith and a way of life, as knowledge and actions, as rites and transactions, as culture and morals, as justice and power, as a mission and a state, as a creed for this world and the

otherworld, and as a civilization and an Ummah. This implies the rejection of any call to dissociate its teachings from its precepts as claim those who seek an Islam that is morals without rites or rites without morals, a faith but not a law, a marriage without the option of divorce, peace- or- submission without jihad, justice without power, a religion that shuns worldly life, or mission without a state. Such concessions are categorically rejected by Islam itself as the Quran says: [***And this (He commands): Judge thou between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they beguile thee from any of that (teaching) which Allah hath sent down to thee.***] (*Al-Maida*, 49) This Islam is presented as the religion of the entire humanity and of the universe since the dawn of time, and as the mission of life in its entirety.

The second attribute is a balanced combination of opposites that many consider as contradictory or impossible to bring together. This applies to spirituality and materialism, divinity and humanity, intellect and spirit, idealism and realism, individualism and collectivism, the light of reason and the light of inspiration, the netherworld and the other world, what is man's privilege and what is God's prerogative, the privilege of creativity, as well as material and economic creativity and spiritual and moral loftiness. This fine balance guarantees that every component enjoys what is due to it, with no exaggeration or dearth and that no side prevail over the other, or others: [***In order that ye may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance.***] (*Al-Rahman*, 8-9) This also ensures that the proper attention is given to worship, culture, sports, arts, and sciences since worship nourishes the spirit, culture nurtures the mind, sports nurture the body, arts nourish the soul, and science feeds life.⁽²⁾

2- Belief in the referential nature of the Quran and the Sunnah:

To have faith in the referential nature of the Noble Quran and the honorable Sunnah, in providing guidance to the Muslims' life as individuals, family, community and Ummah, all of whom derive from these two infallible sources their beliefs, rites, concepts, values, guidelines, traditions, rules and systems.

The Quran is the sum of Allah's words and the Sunnah stands for the discourse of His prophet. No faith is complete, nor can the Islam of a person be accepted unless he believes in both. Allah (SWT) said: [***The answer of the Believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that He may***

(2) See our book *Generality of Islam*, published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo, and by al-Rissala Institution in Beirut, as well as the attribute of *generality* as addressed in our book *Main Attributes of Islam*.

judge between them, is no other than this: they say, "We hear and we obey": it is such as these that will attain felicity,] (Al-Nur, 51) and: *[It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger to have any option about their decision: if any one disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong Path.]* (Al-Ahzab, 36) Those who deny the Sunnah and label themselves as Quranists are in fact the first to contradict the stipulations of the Quran which ordained obedience to Allah and to His Prophet: *[Then let those beware who withstand the Messenger's order, lest some trial befall them, or a grievous penalty be inflicted on them.]* (Al-Nur, 63).

Other reference sources such as the rules formulated through consensus, comparison, appreciation, improvement and other fiqh processes acquire their legitimacy from the Quran and the Sunnah. Partial texts must be understood in light of the global guiding principles of Islam and the Charia, and these two sources cannot serve as evidence against one another, nor can the partial obviate the need for the whole or the latter suffice to the exclusion of the partial. Caution should also be applied in the case of literal interpretations on the one hand and misinterpretations on the other, as well as in following what is ambiguous and disregarding what is clear.⁽³⁾

3- Basing religion on faith and monotheism:

Basing sound religion on the concepts of belief in Allah, in his angels, books, messengers, in the Day of Judgment, and destiny with its good and bad parts, these are the pillars of faith and the foundations of good deeds, focusing on the concept of monotheism and on the prophecy of Mohamed who sealed the sequence of messengers and prophets.

Focusing on the truth of monotheism as represented in the Quran in three components:

That there can be no God other than Allah, Lord of all, Creator of all creatures and the Benefactor to all: *[Say: "Shall I seek for (my) Cherisher other than Allah, when He is the Cherisher of all things (that exist)?]* (Al-Anam, 164)

To show allegiance to none other than Allah, worshipped alone to the exclusion of all others: *[Say: "Shall I take for my protector any other than Allah, the Maker of the heavens and the earth?]* (Al-Anam, 14)

(3) See our book *Supreme Reference of the Quran and the Sunnah in Islam*, published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo, and al-Rissala Institution in Beirut. Consult also our books *How to deal with the Holy Quran* and *How to deal with the Prophet's Sunnah*, published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo.

To accept nothing but Allah's rule, obey His orders and respect His injunctions: [*Say: "Shall I seek for judge other than Allah. - when He it is Who hath sent unto you the Book, explained in detail.*] (*Al-Anam*, 114)

Thus, all the meanings of monotheism come together, the monotheism of divinity, the oneness of the Master and Ruler, and such should be the belief in Allah (SWT): [*Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, the King (or Ruler) of Mankind, the Allah (for judge) of Mankind.*] (*Al-Nas*, s 1-3)

With this unadulterated belief in monotheism, man is freed from subjugation to man and to anything other than Allah. For such reasons, our Prophet (PBUH) concluded all his letters to Christian kings with this verse: [*Say: "O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah. that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah.*] (*Al-Imrane*, 64)

A Muslim's faith is only whole if he believes in every book revealed and in every messenger sent to mankind. Allah (SWT) says: [*The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles. We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His apostles.*] (*Al-Baqara*, 285)

Thus the Muslim evolves within the realm of all prophets since Adam and Noah and until Mohamed, their seal and heir, who emulates all their virtues just as Allah (SWT) urged him to: [*Those were the (prophets) who received Allah's guidance: copy the guidance they received.*] (*Al-An'am*, 90) Faith in Islam impacts directly on the life of the individual and on society and should therefore be nurtured, protected and disseminated.⁽⁴⁾

4- Seeking closeness to Allah alone through visible and private acts of worship:

Seeking closeness to the Almighty by worshipping Him alone, observing His rites, accomplishing the duties He assigned, constantly evoking His name, filling the heart with love of Allah, standing in awe of His might and observing His injunctions, all of which are signs of spirituality, and focusing all attention on the worship of Allah, this being the purpose for which Man was created [*I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me,*] (*Al-Zariat*, 51) and

(4) See our books *Faith and Life, The Existence of Allah, The Truth of Monotheism, Faith in Destiny*, all published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo, and al-Risala Institution in Beirut.

directing these acts of worship to Allah alone. Such acts take shape in the four main rites: praying, *zakat*, fasting and performing the ritual pilgrimage to Mekkah, which are the Muslim's prescribed rites. Other forms of worship are voluntary and encouraged such as reciting the Quran, praying and seeking Allah's forgiveness. A Muslim can make his entire life an act of worship by turning all that is lawful into means to achieve closeness with Allah and well-intentioned rituals.

Added to this are such private rites as purity of soul and devotion to Allah, love and fear of Allah, obedience to him, contentedness with Allah, hope for His mercy, fear of His wrath, gratefulness for His bestowed blessings, fortitude in the face of His trials, pondering His creation, invoking the Day of Reckoning meets Allah, engaging in self-criticism, fighting Satan's temptations, rising above worldly life and harkening for the Afterlife. These are the foundations of the true Sunni Sufism which is based on 'sincerity in the presence of the Lord and righteousness with other creatures', referred to by the scholar al-Nadawi⁽⁵⁾ as: "godliness but not monasticism". It is crucial that we foster these divine notions through daa'wa, education, culture and information.

We reject the position of those who deny Sufism is its entirety, including its vanguard ways and tried and true experiences and valuable advice on religious education. Equally rejected is the position of those who embrace it indiscriminately, including those of its aspects that verge on idolatry, ritual heresy, errors in education without analyzing or evaluating them.⁽⁶⁾

5- Elevating the soul with lofty morals:

Elevating and purifying the soul by struggling against its weaknesses and exercising its abilities until piety triumphs over the call to debauchery. Allah (SWT) said in this regard: [*By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right; - truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it!*] (*Al-Shams*, 7-10) Allah also said: [*And those who strive in Our (cause), - We will certainly guide them to our Paths: For verily Allah is with those who do right.*] (*Al-Ankabout*, 69)

(5) Abu al-Hassan Ali al-Nadawi al-Hassani (1914-1999), President of the Forum of Muslim Scholars in Lucknow, India.

(6) See our book *Rites of Worship in Islam*, published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo. Also consult the series titled *The Fiqh of Actions*, or *The Path to Allah*. Other articles in this series include: *Divine Life and Science, Intention and Sincerity, Reliance on Allah, Repentance, Asceticism and Piety, Accountability*, published by Maktabat Wahba and al-Rissala Foundation.

A soul rises to morally higher planes by focusing on the moral values and virtues that Islam promoted and made part and parcel of the act of faith and the sign of a profoundly anchored belief and the fruit of the rites prescribed by Allah. The noble hadith says: “*I was only sent to perfect honorable morals*”⁽⁷⁾ and in another version *‘the best of ethics.’*⁽⁸⁾ To disregard such virtues is tantamount to hypocrisy whether these virtues were individual such as honesty, trustworthiness, respect of promise, fairness in conflict, humbleness and modesty, generosity, courage, virtue, or social morals such as justice and charity, loving care of parents, maintaining good ties with relatives and neighbors, showing mercy towards the weak, joining hands in good actions and virtue, remaining loyal to the community, giving their due in charity to family, the poor and the passersby, and finding the middle stance between money squandering and miserliness.

We equally reject the position of those who believe that rituals are what matters the most, even if they fail to influence their behavior or morals, as well as those who think that morals are the essence even if they do not accomplish the duties set out by Allah.⁽⁹⁾ Morals in Islam have their own features and attributes that distinguish them from other man-created values and the morals of other religions such as generality, balance, realism, appealing to man's innate nature and to reason, and many others.

6- Spreading the word of Allah, preaching goodness and warning against misdeeds:

One of these key attributes is the affirmation of the obligation to invite to the way of Allah, provide religious advice, preach goodness and warn against misdeeds, as well as mutual encouragement to adhere to righteousness and show fortitude. This implies that the Muslim does not limit his efforts at improvement to himself but endeavors to help others achieve the same goal, starting with his family and children, as the Holy Quran says: [*O ye who believe! save yourselves and your families from a Fire,*] (*Al-Tahrim*, 6) to society as a whole, then to the

(7) Narrated by Ahmed in *al-Musnad* (8952) and declared by scholars as sound and correct which points to a strong chain of narration, al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad* (1/104), al-Bayhaqi in *al-Shu'aab*, (10/191) and in al-Kubra, *Kitab al-Shahadat* (10/191) authenticated by al-Albani in *Sahih al-Jamii al-Sagheer* (2349) as reported by Abu Hurayra.

(8) Narrated by al-Hakim in *Histories of Former Prophets and Messengers* (2/613) and declared it as correct as per the conditions of Muslim but both did attribute it. In agreement with this opinion were al-Dhahabi, al-Baihaqi in *al-Kubra* in *Kitab al-Shahadat* (10/191), authenticated by al-Albani in *al-Silsila al-Sahihah* (45), on the authority of Abu Hurayra.

(9) See the chapter on *Morals* in our book *An Introduction to Understanding Islam*.

entire world so that all mankind can bask in the benediction of Allah: [***We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.***] (*Al-Anbiaa*, 107)

Allah (SWT) described the community of Muslims in the following terms: [***The Believers, men and women, are protectors of one another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil***] (*Al-Tawba*, 71), a community that is the farthest possible removed from the hypocrites whom Allah described as: [***The Hypocrites, men and women, (have an understanding) with each other: They enjoin evil, and forbid what is just, and are close with their hands.***] (*Al-Tawba*, 67)

Thus, every Muslim becomes an addressee in Allah's injunctions: [***Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious***] (*Al-Nahl*, 125), and: [***Say thou: "This is my way: I do invite unto Allah, - on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes, - I and whoever follows me.***] (*Youssef*, 108)

The Islamic Ummah, just like the individual Muslim, is under obligation to invite to the way of Allah, as the Almighty (SWT) said: [***Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong,***] (*Al-Imrane*, 104) and: [***Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.***] (*Al-Imrane*, 110)

In the Quran, Allah (SWT) disparaged Israel in the verse reading: [***Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israel who rejected Faith, by the tongue of David and of Jesus the son of Mary: because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses. Nor did they (usually) forbid one another the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did.***] (*Al-Maida*, 78-79)

The Islamic Ummah is bound - in solidarity - to spread the call to Islam to humanity at large, using today's means and channels and until all arguments are exhausted.⁽¹⁰⁾

7- Fostering human and social values:

Promoting the human and social values and principles that many Muslims have come to neglect and that some have come to perceive as western principles and values when they are in fact primarily Islamic ones. These values include

(10) See our book *The Islamic Discourse in the Age of Globalization*, published by Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo.

justice in the judiciary field and in politics and economics, *Shura* (mutual consultation) in society and in judgment, freedom, dignity and human rights, particularly the rights of vulnerable categories, the poor, orphans and the way-farers, civil, religious and political freedom which is a sine qua non condition for the prosperity of society, and equality and justice towards all citizens, which is a condition for the proper application of Charia. People exercise the right to freely choose and no person may be unjustly undermined, imprisoned for no crime, punished without fair judgment, brought to a trial that does not meet all requirements, deprived of his natural right to vote or run for elections on no grounds, nor repressed or harmed in any other manner.

We need to create associations, clubs and civil, educational, social and cultural organizations dedicated to promoting civism and elevating society until this society achieves great advancement and frees itself from the clutches of backwardness, thus acquiring the capacity to serve itself, the boarder Ummah and all of humanity.

The foundation of all of the above is faith in man as a creature honored by Allah and designated by the Almighty as His vicegerent on earth, respect for man's innate nature, the freedom he was born with, the acknowledgement of the human rights that Islam considered as duties and obligations towards the others, and striking the balance between man's rights and his obligations.

8- Respecting reason along with revelation:

This involves respecting the mind and its processes, calling for reflection on the manifestations of Allah's creation as it is embodied in souls and in the heavens, the revealed verses as they are laid out in the Quran, creating a reason-based mentality that rejects myths and only accepts what can be substantiated with evidence, that is the mindset that the Quran and its teachings shaped. This goes through fighting stagnation and the blind imitation of forefathers, masters, rulers or the majority, considering the mind as the core of knowledge transmission and of the confirmation of revelation, the mind being the addressee of *Charia* rules and the capable instrument in understanding religion and earthly life. It also involves reiterating the negation of any contradiction between the proper transmission of knowledge and evident reason, or between divine revelation and the human mind, the two being sources of enlightenment that complement each other. Should the mind be at odds with revelation then the one confirmed beyond doubt takes precedence over that which remains uncertain, and if both were uncertain, then revelation should supersede until the rational is either confirmed or falls away. We reject the position of those who negate the mind in the name of

Charia, or those who give precedence to the mind over revelation and in the name of reason seek to alter the words of Allah.⁽¹¹⁾

9. Reviving religion from the inside and proper *ijtihad* by qualified people:

Regenerating religion from the inside refers to a renewed understanding of Islam, reinvigorated faith in it and adherence to its precepts, a renewed call to it, refreshing minds and thoughts, reviving hearts and sentiments and boosting willpower and determination. The noble prophet gave legitimacy to the act of revitalizing the faith when he said: “*Verily, Allah sends for this Ummah (nation) at the head of every hundred years the one who reforms for it the matters of its religion.*”⁽¹²⁾ This renewal or reform extends to the aspects of knowledge and thought as well as to those of behavior and actions.

One of the most salient features of revitalizing the faith is giving a new lease of life to *ijtihad* without which the Charia cannot exist, whether this *ijtihad* is an exercise in novelty or in selectiveness, a partial or global exercise, an individual or a collective initiative. It must be conducted by those most qualified to engage in it and meet all its known academic and ethical conditions. Furthermore, it must be applied in the right places, i.e. on matters other than what is indisputable and symbolizes the Ummah's religious, intellectual, emotional and actual unity and which are few in number but of crucial importance since they embody indisputable constants.

The slogan of moderateness calls for a disciplined renewal, and for an exact contemporary *ijtihad* that pursues clear objectives and programs. This *ijtihad* rejects the position of those who close the door against any innovative jurisprudence and preach a blind imitation of former scholars. It also rejects the stance of those who open wide the door of *ijtihad* to all and asunder and apply no constraints or limitations, those mocked by the author Mostafa Sadeq al-Rafii when he said that they wanted to renew faith, language, the sun and the moon!⁽¹³⁾

(11) See our book *Reason and Science in the Quran*, published by Maktabat Wahba and by al-Rissala Institution, the chapter on *Precedence of Mind over Law* from our two books *The Supreme Reference* and *Our Culture between Openness and Alienation*, published by Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo.

(12) Previous reference.

(13) See the chapter on *Renewal in light of the Sunnah* in our book *For a Responsible Renaissance Reviving Religion and Advancing Worldly Life*, published by Maktabat Wahba and by al-Rissala Institution, and our books *Ijtihad between Restraint and Abandon*, and *Our Culture between Openness and Alienation*, published by Dar al Shorouq, Cairo.

10- Invitation to a new *fiqh*:

For religion to be truly renewed and revitalized -as described in the Prophet's *hadith*, emphasis should be laid on the invitation to renew the *fiqh* of the Quran and the Sunnah and pertains to the *fiqh* of the universe and that of religion. Allah (SWT) says about the *fiqh* of the universe: [*It is He Who hath produced you from a single person: here is a place of sojourn and a place of departure: We detail Our signs for people who understand.*] (*Al-An'am*, 98) On the *fiqh* of religion, the Almighty says: [*If a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them,- that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil),*] (*Al-Tawba*, 122) and also: “Whoever Allah wishes well, He gives knowledge of religion.”⁽¹⁴⁾

The *fiqh* of the Quran is more precise and profound than mere knowledge of the verses and of religion. The term *fiqh* itself intimates knowledge of the inner aspects of a matter and grasping its ultimate gist and priorities such as the *fiqh* of difference or convergence, the *fiqh* of civilization, the *fiqh* of reform, and the *fiqh* of reality.⁽¹⁵⁾ It is the duty of today's scholars to take stock, each according to his abilities, of all these forms of *ijtihad*. This way, should they be called upon to preach, they would be highly knowledgeable, and if they are to issue fatwas they would be well enlightened, and should they rule on a matter they would be taking an informed decision.

11- Fairness to and honoring of women and preserving their innate nature:

It is necessary to underscore the rights, status and honor that Islam has bestowed on the woman: as a human being, a female, a daughter, a wife, a mother and a member of society, to free her from the remnants of the Islamic world's age of backwardness and regression which deprived her of many of her rights, even a right as simple as to pray at the mosque, to choose a husband, and to be protected against the invasive Western civilization which has stripped the woman of her innate nature and disregarded her feminism and turned her into a blind and ardent follower of her Western counterpart. Critics and reformers often harangue

(14) Ibid.

(15) See our books *Priorities of the Islamic Movement*, *The Islamic Awakening: between Legitimate Divergence and Negative Excellence*, *Revival: From Adolescence to Adulthood*, and *Studies in the Fiqh of Islamic Law Objectives*, published by Maktabat Wahba and al-Rissala Institution.

the crime that the Western civilization has committed against the femininity of the woman, against human nature and against both man and woman.

We refuse the mentality of the radicals who wish to imprison the woman behind walls and deprive her of the right to study and work and to participate in social and political life, as Allah said: [***The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another.***] (*Al-Tawba*, 71) We also reject the position of those who seek to obliterate differences between males and females, a concept that runs counter to the nature of man and of the entire universe which is founded on the principle of duality: [***And of every thing We have created pairs: That ye may receive instruction,***] (*Al-Zariyat*, 49) and certainly not on that of 'sameness' that the West seeks to entrench today. Life can only continue with a tandem of two genders and not two players of the same gender.

Allah annihilated Lot's people when they strayed far from their innate nature and God's injunctions and committed a sin that had never been witnessed before in the history of mankind. Allah destroyed their village with hailstones: [***Marked as from thy Lord: Nor are they ever far from those who do wrong!***] (*Hud*, 83)⁽¹⁶⁾

We wish to see the woman perform her duties, enjoy her rights, accomplish her mission in life side by side with the man. Society cannot fly with one wing, and the hadith asserts that “*Women are the twin halves of men*”.⁽¹⁷⁾

12- Care and expansion of the family:

Since the family is the mainstay of a sound society, it is important to bestow great attention and care on it and erect it on sound Islamic foundations that include the choice of a good spouse, the propriety of meetings between betrothed parties, avoiding money squandering on dowries and other forms of social pretense and building married life on the bases of serenity, empathy and compassion mentioned in the Quran. Other aspects include the preservation of the rights of a spouse over the other, their right to a conjugal life that is based on affection,

(16) See our article on *Status of the Woman in Islamic Life* from the series of articles titled *Tarsheed al-Sahwa*. Cf. ***Emancipating Women during Islam's First Era*** by Abdelhalim Abu Shaqqa, Dar al-Qalam lil Nashr wal Tawzii', Kuwait, 1st edition, 1990.

(17) This *hadith*, narrated by Ahmed in ***al-Musnad*** (26195), was described by scholars as having a weak chain of narration in view of the untrustworthiness of Abdallah, son of Omar al-Omari. The *hadith* is also reported by Abu Dawoud in ***al-Tahara*** (236), al-Tirmidi in ***al-Tahara*** (113), Abu Ya'ala in ***al-Musnad*** (5/149), al-Baihaqi in ***al-Kubra*** (1/268), and authenticated by al-Albani in ***Saheeh al-Jamii*** (1983) on the authority of Aisha.

where restraint and patience are exercised when negative feelings arise against the partner, where arbitration is sought in cases of conflict to prevent recourse to divorce except when utterly unavoidable, and the legalization of polygamy takes place in full respect of the rules governing it and with no abuse or prohibitions. It also includes belief in the extended family which includes parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins, and guaranteeing their right to good treatment and strong family ties and, if the need arises, to financial assistance: [*Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good- to parents, kinsfolk,*] (*Al-Nisaa*, 36) and [*But kindred by blood have prior rights against each other in the Book of Allah.*] (*Al-Anfal*, 75)

Islam supported the extended family system with a set of laws and rules that govern inheritance, wills, alimony and compensation so that the family remains closely-knit and cohesive both in times of prosperity and in the face of adversity.⁽¹⁸⁾

13- Creating an integrated virtuous society:

Islam strives to create a sound family institution and from there a sound society founded on the brotherliness, takaful and mutual compassion of its members, where the rich shoulder the burden of the poor, and the strong lend a hand to the weak, all in harmonious solidarity. This society resembles in its harmony one family, in its cohesion a single body, and in its solidarity the edifice of which one part bolsters the rest, true to the principle of material, moral and protective takaful, a society of which the male and female components are, as Allah said, [*The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise.*] (*Al-Tawba*, 71)

This is a society that honors its orphans and widows, displays compassion towards the needy and where fortitude and mercy are preached, true to Allah's words: [*But he hath made no haste on the path that is steep, and what will explain to thee the path that is steep?- (It is:) freeing the bondman; or the giving of food in a day of privation, to the orphan with claims of relationship, or to the indigent (down) in the dust. Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin patience, (constancy, and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion.*] (*Al-Balad*, 11-17) This society is the total opposite of the pre-

(18) See our *fatwas* on the woman and family in our book *Modern Fatwas* in its four volumes, our book *The Status of Women* published in the series *Tarsheed al-Sahwa*.

Islamic society that Allah (SWT) described in these terms: [*Nor do ye encourage one another to feed the poor!- And ye devour inheritance - all with greed, And ye love wealth with inordinate love!*] (*Al-Fajr*, 18-20)

In fact, this society resembles the one created by the Muhajireen and the Ansar whom Allah praised in the verse: [*(Some part is due) to the indigent Muhajirs, those who were expelled from their homes and their property, while seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure, and aiding Allah and His Messenger. such are indeed the sincere ones. But those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith,- show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,- they are the ones that achieve prosperity.*] (*Al-Hashr*, 8-9)⁽¹⁹⁾

14- Faith in the existence and unity of the Islamic Ummah and loyalty to it:

Faith in the everlasting existence of the Islamic Ummah and in its mission, Muslims being the carriers of the seal of all divine religions: [*Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.*] (*Al-Imrane*, 110) Belief in the obligatory nature of its unity, in the brotherhood of faith despite differences in schools of thought as Allah (SWT) said: [*And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you),*] (*Al-Imrane*, 103) and [*Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs,*] (*Al-Imrane*, 105) and considering Muslims wherever they may be as one nation: “*The lowliest of them can guarantee their protection and they are one hand against others*”⁽²⁰⁾. Allah (SWT) said: [*Verily, this brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood,*] (*Al-Anbiaa*, 92) brought together by the unity of faith, of *qibla*, *Charia*, morals and unity of destiny.

We need to consider the various groups as part of one Ummah, those on the right path as well as those who have strayed, as long as they pray towards the

(19) See the chapter on “*Shaping the righteous society*” in our book “*An introduction to Islam*”, and also our book “*Traits of the Muslim Society*”, published by Maktabat Wahba.

(20) This *hadith*, narrated by Ahmed in *al-Musnad* (6692) was reported as correct denoting a good chain of narration. Also reported by Ibn Dawoud in *al-Jihad* (2751), Ibn Abu SHiba in *al-Diyyat* (28547), al-Baihaqi in *al-Kubra* (chapter on war spoils - 3335/6), and authenticated by al-Albani in *Sahih Ibn Dawoud* (2390) on the authority of Abdallah Ibn Amr Ibn al-'Aas.

same qibla, believe in the Holy Quran as the safeguarded book to which nothing was added or subtracted, and in the noble Sunnah of the prophet as a means of explaining the Quran. We should strive to bring these parties closer together so that they can join hands in that over which they agree and engage in dialogue, in a show of tolerance, over their points of divergence, but still stand as one front on major causes. We need to reiterate the principle of loyalty to the Ummah in the sense of espousing and championing its causes, ensure that this act of allegiance goes to no other nation, and give precedence to loyalty to the Ummah over loyalty to the school of thought or to the doctrine.⁽²¹⁾

The movement for the middle stance endeavors to bring together all role-players, groups and movements championing the cause of Islam and the awakening of its Ummah as one unified block heading in the same direction. Yet, it is not essential, in fact it may not even be beneficial, to bring all of these parties within one movement or grouping as this entails a synergy of objectives, a unity of programs and a harmony of leadership that are quasi impossible to achieve. It is largely sufficient to have a reasonable degree of understanding and coordination, and for all to stand as one on matters of destiny, to stand hand in hand against the enemies of the Ummah and of its religion, particularly at times of crises. Disasters do tend to bring together those afflicted and crises unify opponents and bring closer divergent parties. Difference among role-players is not harmful as long as it is diversity-based and not clash-based, and if this multiplicity reflects a myriad of specialties and not a conflict.

15- Creating a justice-based State that carries the banner of *daa'wa*:

One of the concerns of the middle stance movement is the creation of a 'righteous state' that leads the Ummah towards justice and prosperity, applies God-decreed justice on earth, refers to the words of Allah in dealing out judgment and retribution - thus treating all people as equal -, invites unto Allah, fights evil, promotes goodness and warns against misdeeds, protects rights and hounds injustices until it becomes worthy of Allah's benediction and of vice-regency on earth. Allah (SWT) said: [*Allah will certainly aid those who aid his (cause); - for verily Allah is full of Strength, Exalted in Might, (able to enforce His Will). (They are) those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong.*] (*Al-Haj*, 40-41)

(21) See our book *The Islamic Ummah: Reality not Illusion* published by Maktabat Wahba, and the chapter titled *Creating the Righteous Ummah* in our book *An Introduction to Islam*.

The Islamic *Charia* has provided for the election of the just ruler through choice and allegiance, and set conditions for him, tasked him with duties and granted him rights. The imam is a symbol of the state.

It is important to respect the right of people - and even their duty - to choose their leader among the strong and trustworthy, one whose knowledge of religion makes trustworthy, and to not impose a parody of their will or a ruler who would govern them against their will.

Once the people choose a ruler, becomes entitled to their help, advice and obedience in everything that is not a sin. They have the right to question and hold him accountable, draw his attention when he errs, guide him back to the right path if he strays, and peacefully depose him if he exceeds the limits of justice. The ruling system is based on justice and Shura and the safeguarding of rights, adherence to the tenets of the *Charia* and all that was revealed in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. It draws benefits from democratic systems, mechanisms and means of supporting peoples, delineating the boundaries of power without espousing too closely the philosophies in and behind it - such as giving free rein to individual freedoms at the expense of moral values and *Sharia* rules. Thus we benefit from the best that democracy has to offer and avoid its pitfalls.⁽²²⁾

16- Refraining from excommunicating people and declaring them as miscreants:

One of the key factors in preserving the unity of the Ummah and the brotherly ties of its members is to view in a positive light all those who professed the two shahadas, prayed towards the qibla and did not commit any action in irrevocable contradiction with the faith. The rationale behind this is the effort to steer the Muslims, as much as possible, toward reform and strive to avoid excommunicating other people and declaring them as miscreants, worst of all when these two actions are founded on interpretation only. Embracing Islam is to profess that there is no God but Allah and that Mohamed is His messenger. Nothing can be used as grounds to banish a Muslim from the faith except if he reneges on that which brought him into this faith initially. What is certain cannot be negated with doubts.

Excommunication is a religious sin, a scholastic sin and a political sin that no Muslim should succumb to in view of its dire repercussions, including the

(22) See our books *Religion and Politics* and *Fiqh of Governance in Islam*, both published by Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo.

physical or spiritual (or both) banishment from the community of Muslims. Therefore, great caution should be exercised against this trap unless there is strong evidence to dispel any doubts, such as contesting the categorical facts of the Quran, contradicting essential and commonly known facts of the religion, the explicit offense of Allah and His messenger, as the *hadith* says: "...unless you see explicit *kufir* of which you have clear proof from Allah."⁽²³⁾ Anything else that is open to interpretation and any reasonable doubt is interpreted in favor of the person accused of apostasy.⁽²⁴⁾ However, this does not mean that we should lightly treat those who truly deserve to be declared as apostates. It is our duty to banish from the Ummah those who do not deserve to be part of it if there is evidence to support that, and ensure that the renegades and those who denigrate and violate the sanctity of the Ummah's faith are no longer allowed to be part of it when they are in truth its enemies.

17- Strengthening the Ummah's economy and erecting it on Islamic pillars:

This pertains to the reinforcement of a fully integrated economy thanks to knowledge and experience, faith and morals and will ensure that the Ummah becomes economically, civilly and militarily self-sufficient and a world-class economic block that has its own particularities and components, and an economy built on Charia laws and principles while respecting its various elements and specificity. The Islamic Ummah's economy has a divine foundation in the sense that it is based on the principle of man's vice-regency over Allah's property. It is also a human economy since man is its end and its means, and it is an ethics-based economy that remains closely associated with morals at each of its steps, recognizes individual property but lays rules and regulations to curb its tyranny. It is also a cooperative economy that is not built around one social class but invites the cooperation of all classes for the greater good of the Ummah, ensuring its openness onto the rest of the world and benefiting from the best it can offer. We must encourage the creation of Islamic banks and financial institutions, entrench their legal and conceptual foundations and free them from bureaucracy and formality. We must endeavor to develop them and improve their role so that

(23) Agreed upon, narrated by al-Bukahri in *al-Fitan* (7056-7055) and Muslim in *al-Imara* (Governance (1709) on the authority of Ubada in Samet.

(24) See our article *Escalating Phenomenon of Excommunication*, published by Maktabat Wahba, and our book *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism* published as part of *Kitab al-Ummah* in Qatar, Dar al-Shorouq and many others, as well as my book on excommunication currently being printed.

they can play their part in contributing to the development of Islamic societies, rescuing world economy from the plagues of interests and monopolies, the iniquities of injustice, and the fraudulent transactions that propelled the world into the current financial and economic crises endured today

We need to apply scientific planning and build in practical terms an outstanding world-class Islamic economy that empowers the weak without weakening the strong, enriches the poor without impoverishing the rich, that is not based on interest building and monopolies and that enhances production, rationalizes consumption, regulates transactions, ensures justice in wealth distribution, and preserves the moderation of the Islamic economic system so that it neither espouses the capitalist regime where the individual takes precedence over society, nor the communism where the interests of society undermine those of the individual. It is an economy that observes morality in its production, consumption, dealings and distribution. It teaches the Muslim to acquire money by lawful means only and to spend it exclusively on legitimate pursuits, and to not withhold it where it is requested.

Some of the salient traits of Islamic economy are:

1. The obligation of giving *Zakat*, this being one of the five pillars of Islam. It is a symbol of social solidarity and one but not the only right of others to the Muslim's money. It is an obligation safely guarded by the individual's faith, the conscience of society and the prerogative of the state.
2. Prohibiting usury and interest, considered one of the seven cardinal sins, is a symbol of the fight against social injustice. The Prophet (PBUH) cursed 'the one who eats (takes) *riba* (usury), the one who records it, and those who witness. They are all equal in this sin.'⁽²⁵⁾ in an attempt to bar all roads before usury.
3. Islamic economy bases its transactions on principles and rules that provide for and guarantee protection against the serious crises that could carry the seeds of a total annihilation.⁽²⁶⁾

(25) Narrated by Muslim in *al-Musaqat* (4177), and by Ahmed (14302) on the authority of Jaber, may Allah be pleased with him.

(26) See our books *Role of Morals in Islamic Economics*, published by Maktabat Wahba, *Zakat and its Impact in Resolving Economic Problems*, *Bank Interests are the Prohibited Usury*, *How Islam Addressed Poverty*, *Charia Principles in Money Matters*, and *Rules and Regulations of the Fiqh of Transactions*.

18- Belief in the importance of plurality, mutual acquaintance and tolerance:

This pertains to believing that mankind are one family that belongs, by virtue of its creation, to one God, and in terms of genealogy to one man and should therefore seek mutual acquaintance instead of turning their backs to each other. Allah (SWT) says in the Quran: [*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,*] (*Al-Hujurat*, 13) and [*O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women.*] (*Al-Nisaa*, 1) Of equal importance is the need to reiterate faith in religious, ethnic, linguistic, civilizational (or cultural) and political plurality.

There is no disputing that Allah (SWT) is One and Only: [*Say: He is Allah, the One and Only*] (*Al-Ikhlās*, 1). Anything other than the divine entity is plural, founded on the principle of the duality as Allah affirmed: [*And of every thing We have created pairs: That ye may receive instruction*] (*Al-Zariyat*, 49).

It has therefore become essential that civilizations and cultures co-exist, enrich each other, interact and feed off each other, with no alienation or sense of superiority based on race, color, power or wealth. Today, it is of paramount importance to create the conditions conducive to a positive dialogue between the followers of religions and to cooperate in mutually beneficial matters, presenting a unified front in the face of those who negate religion, violate human dignity and rights, and promote a total renunciation of all virtues and qualities. We need to foster values of faith and morality, and anchor the spirit of tolerance that Islam has been advocating and which has marked it throughout its history.

19- Creating a knowledge and faith-based civilization:

One of the aspirations of the Islamic movement for the middle stance is to create an exceptional civilization that is much need by the entire world, a divine as well as human and universal morality-based civilization that marries science and faith and matter and soul and strikes the balance between mind and heart, touches the earth and the heavens, ensures equity between the individual and society and gives precedence to justice over power.

Whether in the Quran or the noble Sunnah, Allah extols the value of learning and knowledge and grants an elevated status to all men of knowledge: [*Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?*] (*Al-Zumar*, 9) Knowledge

is everything that reveals the truth of matters to people in any field, whether religious, material, human or natural, as long as the objective behind it is to ensure the wellbeing and happiness of Man.

Our scholars have decided that excellence in natural and mathematical sciences is a collective duty. If the Ummah lacks the sufficient number of scholars in any given field to cater to its needs, then the entire Ummah is guilty of the sin of this failing.

The Ummah should also have its own schools of thought to study human sciences in light of its own philosophy on existence, knowledge and values and its comprehensive perspective on Allah, humanity, the universe and life. This way, we can have our own Islamic school of thought on sociology, psychology, education and so on so forth, to counterbalance all the existing liberal and Marxist schools.

It is important that we spare no effort in extolling the historical and civilizational achievements of our Ummah before which the world stood in awe, such as the Islamic conquests made in record time and that represented the salvation of many peoples from their colonizers and were never aimed at their subjugation or exploitation. We need to extol the greatness of the civilization that our Ummah edified compared to previous and subsequent civilizations, thanks to its complementarity, balance and adherence to the middle stance⁽²⁷⁾, a civilization that combined realism with idealism, material progress and moral loftiness, and balanced the inspiration of revelation with the brilliance of reason.

Shaping this civilization required the combined efforts of men from myriad religions, ethnicities and countries and for whom the Islamic civilization reserved an open-armed welcome. For more than eight centuries, this civilization taught the world and spread the light of knowledge. Europe derived its experimental and deduction-based approach from this civilization, learning from Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rochd and others from the Eastern realms and from Andalusia, inspired by Muslims even as it clashed with them in the Crusade Wars.⁽²⁸⁾

We cannot claim that our history and the civilization of our Ummah is innocent of missteps but it remains the least laden with errors of all other

(27) See our research paper on Religious and Linguistic Multiplicity, our book *Our culture between Openness and Alienation* as well as the article titled *The Culture of Tolerance*.

(28) See our book *Islam, the Civilization of the Future*, our paper *Civilizational Landmarks of our Ummah*, published as part of the series *Tarseed al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya* published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo.

histories, nor do we tolerate that our history be distorted, especially the first three centuries which represent the era of its many centuries most praised by the Prophet (PBUH).⁽²⁹⁾ It is the duty of this Ummah to weave a link between its glorious past and an equally if not more glorious present, and not to be content with singing the praises of this past and eulogizing its apogee. Instead, our duty is to derive inspiration from the past, elevate the present and look forward to the future.

20- Promoting arts and harnessing them to serve the Ummah's mission:

Some people may raise an eyebrow at this guideline because they have come to believe that religion is the antithesis of art, and that is far from true. The essence of art is the appreciation of beauty and expressing this beauty in an aesthetical way and Islam stimulates this sentiment in the Muslim and teaches him to perceive the beauty intrinsic to the whole universe, extraordinary divine paintings drawn by the hand of the ultimate Creator [*He Who has made everything which He has created most good,*] (*Al-Sajda*, 7) [*(such is) the artistry of Allah, who disposes of all things in perfect order,*] (*Al-Naml*, 88) and [*No want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of Allah.*] (*Al-Mulk*, 3)

Whoever ponders the Quran will realize that it continually draws attention and alerts the mind to the inherent beauty of the universe's components, the heavens: [*Do they not look at the sky above them? - How We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it?*] (*Qaf*, 6), and [*And produced therein every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs) -,*] (*Qaf*, 7), the earth: [*with it We cause to grow well-planted orchards full of beauty of delight*] (*Al-Naml*, 60), the animals of whom the Quran praised livestock and the services they provide to mankind: [*And ye have a sense of pride and beauty in them as ye drive them home in the evening, and as ye lead them forth to pasture in the morning,*] (*Al-Nahl*, 6) and mankind: [*and made your shapes beautiful,*] (*Al-Taghabun*, 3) and [*We have indeed created man in the best of moulds.*] (*Al-Tin*, 4) The Prophet says: “Allah is beautiful and loves beauty.”⁽³⁰⁾

The Quran itself is a literary, artistic and aesthetic miracle that Arabs listened to even when they were polytheists and said: “*It is highly agreeable and appealing*”⁽³¹⁾. It is recited in the most melodious voices which only enhances its

(29) See our book *Our Slandered History*, Dar al-Shorouq.

(30) Narrated by Muslim in *al-Iman* (91), by Ahmed in *al-Musnad* (3789), al-Tirmidi in *al-Bir wal Sila* (1999), on the authority of Ibn Mas'oud.

(31) Narrated by al-Hakim in *al-Mustadrak* (2/551), al-baihaqi in *al-Iman* (1/284), on the authority of Ibn al-Abbas, may Allah be pleased with father and son.

beauty, as the noble *hadith* said: “*Embellish the Quran with your voices for the voice only adds to the beauty of the Quran.*”⁽³²⁾

Thus, Islam welcomed lofty arts in all their audio, visual and manufactured forms and set conditions and guidelines to ensure that this art does not promote, support or become the expression of idolatry that prevailed in many civilizations preceding the rise of Islam. Islamic art is supposed to invite to monotheism and embody it in all its forms and shapes.

We need to take art out of the contexts where it is used as a stimulant of primal instincts and an invitation to either blatant or covert immorality. It is indeed our duty to harness art in bettering the self, raising man to loftier planes and urging him to adhere to piety and compassion towards other creatures: [*For Allah is with those who restrain themselves, and those who do good.*] (*Al-Nahl*, 128)

Islam supports arts and raises them to a high level. During the Islamic civilization's golden age, the arts of architecture and building thrived, giving birth to unique decorative arts such as calligraphy with its Thuluth, Ruq'aa, Naskh, Farsi, Diwani, and Kufi styles. Such flourishing arts found their expression in the palaces, mosques, Qurans, swords and many other artifacts.

It would be untruthful to say that Islamic life is a stark one, nor that there is no room in it for mirth, joy, humor, or for the sounds of singing and music as families celebrate their weddings.

In fact, to show Islam as dark, stark and uninviting is a plain injustice towards it. We published many books detailing the principles of Islam on this aspect such as the '*Fiqh of Singing and Music*', the '*Fiqh of Entertainment and Leisure*', and '*Islam and Arts*' which should be referred to in order to understand the moderate position of Islam which shuns both the exaggeration and the belittling of value.

21- Peopling the earth, achieving development and protecting the environment:

One of the salient features of the trend towards moderation and renewal is attention to the activity of peopling the earth as one of the objectives for which Allah created Mankind, along with worshipping Him and serving as His vice-

(32) Narrated by Ahmed in *al-Musnad* (18494) and other scholars who declared its chain of narration as sound. Narrated by abu Dawoud in *Salat* (1468), al-Nassa'i in his introduction (1015), Ibn Majah in *Iqamat al-Salat* (1342), by al-Hakim in *Fadail al-Quran* (1/575), and al-Baraa. The wording is attributed to al-Hakim.

regent on earth. Allah (SWT) says: [*It is He Who hath produced you from the earth and settled you therein.*] (*Hud*, 61) The term settling refers to the divine injunction to man to people and develop the earth, achieve a global and sustainable human and material development, protect the environment with its different components: human beings, animals, plants and inanimate objects by safeguarding them from the pollution and corruption that arise from man's abusive utilization of God's bounty in all tyranny and ingratitude. It also implies protecting the environment and preserving the balance of the universe and the order of Allah's creation and its organization, cooperating in all that can facilitate humanity's life and infuse it with beauty, and considering this as a form of worship and *jihad* at the service of Allah.

The earth's inhabitants should join hands in safeguarding their earth and confronting the threats besieging it from those who seek to wreak havoc with its good order, just as prophet Saleh warned his people: [*And follow not the bidding of those who are extravagant, who make mischief in the earth and mend not (their ways).*] (*Al-Shu'araa*, 151-152) The earth's inhabitants should endeavor to maintain the balance of the universe: [*And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice), in order that ye may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance,*] (*Al-Rahmane*, 7-9) instead of fighting each other.⁽³³⁾

Allah created the earth and [*Bestowed blessings on the earth, and measure therein all things to give them nourishment in due proportion,*] (*Fussilat*, 10) and guaranteed that each creature shall have its source of sustenance [*There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance dependeth on Allah,*] (*Hud*, 6) [*It is We Who have placed you with authority on earth, and provided you therein with means for the fulfilment of your life: small are the thanks that ye give!*] (*Al-A'raf*, 10) Thus, the earth's civilization becomes a well-balanced one that honors man and considers him as Allah's vice-regent on earth and not just a highly functional animal. It helps him draw benefits from the bounty that Allah created and from what the universe offers to serve him, the abundance bestowed from the skies and the earth and which man corrupts by becoming greedy and domineering and by straying far from the path of rectitude.

22- Peace with the non-violent and *jihad* against the aggressors:

Another feature of the renewed reformist trend in understanding the mission of Islam is calling to peace with all those who extend a hand in peace: [*O ye who*

(33) See our books *Environment Protection in Islamic Charia, The Sunnah as a Source of Knowledge and Civilization*, Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo.

believe! Enter into Islam whole-heartedly,] (*Al-Baqara*, 208) and sparing humanity unnecessary destructive wars as the Prophet urged: “*Do not wish to meet the enemy and pray for safety from Allah,*”⁽³⁴⁾ as well as endeavoring to conclude peace treaties with other nations as the Noble Prophet strived to do after the Hijra. In this regard, he concluded a solidarity and joint defense treaty with the Jews of Medinah and welcomed the Hudaibiyya peace accord with his opponents from Quraish, an agreement that the Quran labeled as an outright victory.

Bearing this mind, Muslims only engage in war if they are forced to, as says the Quran: [***Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it***] (*Al-Baqara*, 216). When the Muslims and their enemies met but did not engage in battle as happened after the Ahzab conquest, Allah described this saying: [***And Allah turned back the Unbelievers for (all) their fury: no advantage did they gain; and enough is Allah for the believers in their fight.***] (*Al-Ahzab*, 25) What a wonderful comment. About the unbelievers, Allah said: [***Therefore if they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (Guarantees of) peace, then Allah Hath opened no way for you (to war against them).***] (*Al-Nisaa*, 90) If the battle is nonetheless engaged, then Islam welcomes any return, whenever possible, to peace: [***But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace.***] (*Al-Anfal*, 61)

Yet, we need to stress the obligatory aspect of *jihad* in the name of Allah in defense of the sanctity of religion, of the house of Islam, of the Islamic Ummah and of the meek on earth, and of rising up against the tyrants and goliaths of this earth and mobilizing all material and military resources to intimidate the enemy. We need to shed light on the various forms of *jihad*: psychological *jihad*, *daa'wa*-based *jihad*, civilian *jihad*, and *jihad* against domestic injustice and corruption, as well as the military form of *jihad*. One of the obligatory forms of *jihad* is commanding goodness and warning against sinful deeds and endeavoring to change evil using either one's hand, mouth or heart.

Jihad could be a collective duty, which would involve preparing mighty armies that are well trained in warfare and armed as heavily as possible, and supplying frontiers and sea fronts with the necessary troops to discourage any enemy from coveting Muslim lands. Jihad may also be the individual duty of the Ummah to free its lands from any foreign occupation, hence the obligatory religious duty of resisting foreign occupation until the enemy is evicted from the lands of Islam.

(34) *Hadith* agreed upon, narrated by al-Bukhari in *j al-jihad wa al-sayr* (3024), by Muslim in *al-jihad wa al-sayr*, (1742), as well as by Ahmed in *al-Musnad* (19114), and by Ibn Dawoud in *jihad* (2631), on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Abi Awfaa.

The first territory in need of liberation is Palestine, the land of the Ascension and the Nightly Journey, occupied by the insidious Zionist forces fully supported by the West, usurping the land, displacing the Palestinian population, shedding their blood, desecrating their sanctities, building their state on their torn limbs with fire and brimstone. The savage and bigoted Zionist occupation has managed to build its own state at the heartland of Arabs and Muslims and right in their face.

Still, the Israeli state was not satisfied with the territory it had usurped, for there was the initial belief that the land of Israel stretches from the Euphrates to the Nile, and from cypress forests to palm groves. So, Israel went on to occupy parts of other Arab countries and continues today to destroy and kill in Palestine and around it, accountable to none and bolstered by American dollars, weapons and an American policy that uses Israel to fulfill its goals in the region and effect radical changes, altering even its name to that of the greater or new Middle East. The Ummah needs to stand up to this double-sided colonialism - Zionist and American - which targets the Islamic Ummah as a whole and has declared war on Islam in the name of the fight against terrorism.⁽³⁵⁾

23- Care and attention to Islamic minorities aboard:

Another feature of this renewal drive is caring for the millions-strong Muslim minorities living outside the Islamic world since they are part of the Islamic Ummah but fated to live in societies with different followings. The Islamic Ummah is under obligation to assist them in living, with unwavering attachment to their religion, in these foreign societies where they serve dynamically and portray Islam through their actions and dealings, apply its teachings in their lives and invite these foreign societies to Islam through their words and actions.

The Ummah's scholars and preachers should protect our minorities against the concepts peddled by the extremists who whilst living within these societies consider them as the enemy, profiting from their resources and respecting none of their rights of conventions. Our scholars need to clarify the correct Islamic stance, in the same way that the European Council for Iftaa and other councils have done.

The duty of these minorities is to engage in material and moral cooperation in order to create their own religious, educational, social and recreational institutions and to be able to preserve their social and religious identity. An individual

(35) See our major work *Fiqh of Jihad*, a paper on *al-Quds: the Cause of Every Muslim* published by Maktabat Wahba, and our book *Islam and Violence* published by Dar al-Shorouq.

standing alone is weak, but he becomes strong if he is part of a community. Such communities should have their own *fiqh*, tailored in accordance with their conditions but in adherence to the Sharia. Its motto should be: loyalty to religion without alienation, and integration within society without dissolution.¹⁽³⁶⁾

The duty of every member of these minorities is to preserve his faith and religious identity and enhance them with good knowledge, positive actions and good morals, and to also protect his children and family: [*Save yourselves and your families from a fire,*] (*Al-Tahrim*, 6) and strengthen his ties with his fellow expatriates. Together, they can fulfill their duties towards themselves and their families, invite others to Islam, remain strongly attached to the Islamic Ummah and not forget their causes. These communities represent a political asset for the Islamic Ummah in the West and other parts of the world, helping in the fight against the Zionist lobby in these countries.

24- Protecting the rights of religious minorities in Islamic societies:

This entails recognizing the rights of religious minorities -Jewish, Christian, idol worshipping or others - and treating them in the way decreed by Islam which consists of allowing them to live in peace with their faith and not to interfere in their matters of faith, rites or other private business. There is consensus among scholars on considering them as members of the house of Islam, or in today's language, as citizens with the same rights and obligations as Muslims, apart from that which is imposed by religious difference. No Islamic rite or traditional practice must be imposed on them.

The Muslim majority should not exercise pressure on them in such a way as to subject them to hardship in their material or religious matters, nor repress them with regard to what is lawful in their religion even if Islam prohibits it, such as eating pork and drinking alcohol, even though the entire world is now fighting alcohol consumption in view of its dire material and psychological repercussions on the individual and the family.

Labeling them as *ahl al-dhimma* is not compulsory either. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, dropped what is even more important than the word *dhimma* which is *jizya* when the tribe of Banu Taghlib, who were Christian Arabs, offered to pay what was imposed in *jizya*- and even double it up- under the name of *Zakat*, as paid by Muslims since they found the term *Jizya* highly

(36) See our book on the *Fiqh of Minorities*, published by Dar al-Shorouq.

offensive. Umar accepted and other companions concurred with him, which represents a precedent in levying on them taxes similar to the zakat paid by Muslims as one of the tenets of their faith and by non-Muslims as a tax. They can also enlist in the armies of the Muslim country in which they reside.

The Quran did not warn us against treating them well or being fair and just towards them as long they do not fight us on grounds of religion or evict us from our lands, nor support anyone bent on driving us out⁽³⁷⁾: [**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.**] (*Al-Mumtahana*, 8)

The religious minority in Arab countries, especially the Christian one, has its own specificity, which makes it part of the Arab Islamic civilization and culture in the sense that they master the Arabic language, making them Christians in faith but Muslims in culture.

25- Adopting the principle of ease in fatwa and daa'wa endeavors:

One of the key features of moderation and renewal is adopting the path of facility in fiqh and fatwa-making, as urged in the Holy Quran: [**Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties,**] (*Al-Baqara*, 185) [**And has imposed no difficulties on you in religion,**] (*Al-Haj*, 78), “*Make matters easy, not hard,*”⁽³⁸⁾ and finally: “*You were sent to make matters easier and not more difficult.*”⁽³⁹⁾

Therefore, hardship is to be avoided in defining obligations and prohibitions, and derogations to rules must be issued where needed in adherence to the principles of 'necessity makes the unlawful lawful,' and “necessity can obviate obligation.’ A broader ijtihad must also be applied where there is no specific legal text by favoring what is deemed good for the public (*istislah*), applying discretion (*istihssan*), respecting tradition and preempting risk causes. Should the need exist for inflexibility, then let it be applied with regard to fundamental principles and not secondary matters since the Noble Prophet did warn against extremism, radicalism, and difficulty.

(37) See our book on *Non-Muslims in the Muslim Society*, and our paper on *Religious Minorities and the Islamic Solution*.

(38) Agreed upon, narrated by al-Bukhari in *al'Ilm* (69), by Muslim in *al-jihad wa al-sayr* (1734), on the authority of Anas.

(39) Narrated by al-Bukhari in *al-Tahara* (220), Ahmed in *al-Musnad* (7255), Abu Dawoud (380), al-Tirmidi (147), al-Nasai (56), all of whom addressed it in their chapters on purification, on the authority of Abu Hurayra.

Whilst ease has always been desired at all times, it is much more in demand in our age where materialism has taken the lead over morality, where people's lives have become complicated, the road to righteousness littered with obstacles and the temptation to evil very strong.

This desired ease does not mean finding excuses to justify today's reality, nor emulate the West or please rulers by twisting religious texts to forcibly suit this facility, making the unlawful legitimate and altering the Charia laws. Such a position is as rejected as the stance of those who escalate the difficulty of that which Allah made easy and reject any *ijtihad* that seeks to lighten the burden of mankind.⁽⁴⁰⁾

What completes this facility in *fatwa* is favoring glad tidings when spreading the word of Allah. This association between preaching Islam and giving glad tidings was first made by the Prophet when he said to Abi Moussa and Mu'ad as he dispatched them to Yemen: “*Treat people with ease and do not burden them, and give them glad tidings and don't fill them with aversion.*”⁽⁴¹⁾ Anas also narrated the prophet's words of advice: “*Make matters easy not difficult, and given people glad tidings instead of filling them with aversion.*”⁽⁴²⁾

There is a need for more developed systems and contents of Islamic daa'wa: one addressing Muslims to help them understand their religion's precepts, correct misconceptions, reinforce their faith, draw their attention to fundamental issues, shed light on the truth of Islam and refute the fallacious accusations leveled at this religion by its adversaries. The other one would target non-Muslims since Islam is the message of humanity at large: [*We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures,*] (*Al-Anbiaa*, 107) and use the tools of modern times such as satellite channels, internet and other means to bring this message to the whole world and in different languages while remaining in full respect of both the fundamentals of religion and the spirit and methods of these times.

Inviting Muslims to righteousness follows the guidelines drawn out in the Quran -wisdom and gentle preaching-, and challenges through dialogue in the gentlest of ways, whether they followed an entirely different religion, belonged to a school of thought within the same religion or engaged in any other form of

(40) See our book *Islamic Renaissance: from Adolescence to Adulthood*, chapter titled: from difficulty and aversion to ease and glad tidings.

(41) Agreed upon by al-Bukhari in *al-jihad wa al-sayr* (3038), Muslim *al-jihad wa al-sayr* (1733), and also narrated by Ahmed in *al-Musnad* (19742) on the authority of Abu Moussa.

(42) Previously cited.

opposition, the principle being to adhere to the concept of giving glad tidings while observing ease and facility when issuing *fatwas*.

Bringing glad tidings in matters of *daa'wa* involves mentioning hope along with fear or before fear, promise with admonition or before admonition, stressing the reasons of hope more than obstacles and disheartening factors, and presenting Islam as the religion of optimism not pessimism, of hope and not despair, of love not hatred, and of mutual acquaintance not division. Presenting Islam also as the religion of dialogue and not clash, the religion of compassion and not violence, of mercy and not cruelty, of peace and not war, of building and not destroying, of unity and not discord. Emphasis must be put on the reasons for hope and not the causes of frustration, on the glad tidings that Islam brings⁽⁴³⁾ instead of the clash theories and the images they reflect of an alienated Islam and a regressing faith.

26- Observing the Sunnah of gradualism and all other divine teachings:

One of the traits of renewal and moderateness is wise gradualism in *daa'wa*, teaching, *fatwa*-issuing and reform, and avoiding rushing matters before their due time and picking fruits before they ripen.

This gradualism is a universal as well as religious Sunnah. Allah (SWT) said: [***Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) apostles of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers).***] (*Al-Ahqaf*, 35)

Allah completed the process of revealing the Quran over twenty three years so that the Prophet could read the verses to people at a serene pace and answer any of their queries: [***And no question do they bring to thee but We reveal to thee the truth and the best explanation (thereof).***] (*Al-Furqan*, 33)

It is important that we observe Allah's ways as they were intended for the universe and for society for these are constants that do not bow to whims, favor anyone or prejudice the other, as Allah (SWT) said: [***But no change wilt thou find in Allah's way (of dealing): no turning off wilt thou find in Allah's way (of dealing).***] (*Fatir*, 43) Whoever adheres to these ways will be best served by them and whoever disregards them will only lose in this process.

This principle applies to Allah's granting victory to and empowering men, to reform and change, to the rise and fall of nations, to allowing the unjust to thrive but not forgetting about them, to linking causes to effects since he who

(43) See our book on *Positive Signs of Islam's Triumph*, one of the papers presented in the series *Tarsheed al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya* (Rationalizing the Islamic Awakening).

works hard shall reap the benefits of his toiling, irrespective of his religion, race or nationality, as well as many other divine canons on which Allah founded the balance of our universe.

27- Striking a balance between constants and variables:

Another symbol of the middle stance is striking a balance between the legal constants and the variables of modern times. Constants cannot be disregarded nor can variables be neglected. Constants cannot be changed into variables, nor variables into constants. Instead, we need to factor in the effects of changes in times, places, conditions and customs on the modification of *fatwas*, *daa'wa* methods and ways of imparting knowledge⁽⁴⁴⁾ while ensuring fidelity to objectives, flexibility and progress in tools and means, steadfast attachment to the founding principles and global tenets and flexibility in secondary matters.⁽⁴⁵⁾

We say yes to 'modernisation'⁽⁴⁶⁾ and to keeping pace with positive scientific and technological progress which adds value to life and to man. We say no to the 'alienation' that seeks to strip the Ummah of its identity and render it dependent on other nations in the name of modernism, globalization or such other concepts.

We refuse the position of those who wish to bring life to a standstill and reduce society to stagnation in the name of religion and leave no room for progress or change, their motto being: the former left nothing for the latter! We refuse the position of those who wish to paint everything with the brush of change, leaving no room for unwavering faith, values or morals. With them anything right can become wrong, and any wrong can overnight become a right. This balance is one prerequisite of the desired renewal.

28- Placing obligations within their legal contexts (fiqh of priorities):

One of the symbols of Islamic moderateness and conditions of the desired Islamic renewal is understanding obligations in a balanced way and placing them at their legally-defined levels, each obligation standing as determined by legal texts which set the distinctions between obligations: [*Do ye make the giving of drink to pilgrims, or the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque, equal to (the*

(44) See our book *Grounds for Fatwa Modification*, published by Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo.

(45) See The chapter on combining firmness and flexibility in our book *General Characteristics of Islam*.

(46) See our book *Indicators of the Islamic Solution*, chapter titled *Yes to Modernism, No to Alienation*, published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo.

pious service of) those who believe in Allah and the Last Day,] (Al-Tawba, 19) “Faith has more than seventy branches. The highest of them is to profess that there is no God by Allah, and the lowest of them is to remove harm from the road. Humbleness is one branch of faith.”⁽⁴⁷⁾ These acts are placed at different levels in line with their importance. The highest cannot be placed low or the lowest brought higher, the small cannot be inflated or the great diminished, nor can we bring forward what should come later or delay what should come first.

Therefore, faith comes before work, general rules before secondary ones, obligatory prayers before optional ones, primary duties before all others, individual duties before collective ones, and collective duties that no one performed over those that some performed. As for proscriptions, polytheism precedes in gravity all acts of disobedience, the capital sin ranks higher than the minor one, and what is declared forbidden by consensus over matters where there is a divergence of opinion.

Another order of precedence is quality over quantity, essence over form, the implicit over the explicit, the acts of heart over those governed by instincts, the indisputable over the doubtful, what is affirmed by legal texts over what is reached by jurisprudence, what is agreed upon by consensus over what is tainted by divergence, and this is what we refer to as 'priorities'.⁽⁴⁸⁾

29- Obligation of reform and change:

Another symbol of moderation and Islamic renewal is the need to meet the demands made by all categories of the Ummah for radical change, for wide-reaching reform instead of partial, temporary or superficial reforms that never reach below the surface or are limited to the role of painkillers, never striking the disease at its roots. Another feature is urging the champions of change and reform to fight regression and corruption since regression paralyses the nation's mind and corruption invalidates its conscience.

Among the obstacles to the Ummah's civilizational advancement is political, economic, administrative and moral corruption and duats should join hands to effect a real and far-reaching reform. Reform can only become a reality if we

(47) Narrated by al-Bukhari (9), Muslim (35) both in *al-Iman*, Ahmed in *al-Musnad* (9361), Abu Dawoud in *Sunnan* (4676), al-Tirmidi (2614), al-Nasai (5005), Ibn Majah (57), all three in the chapter of *al-Iman*, on the authority of Abu Hurayra.

(48) See our book *The Fiqh of Priorities, Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism*, published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo.

muster the willpower and put our hands to the task, acting from our own perspective to fulfill our objectives and serve our own interests. Reform imposed by others to serve their own interests and implemented by them or their agents cannot be considered as real reform.

Reforming tyrannical regimes: the first stepping stone in any reform endeavor is the reform of the tyrannical political regimes that rule over our peoples, control their destiny, silence the voice of every free man, break the pen of every free writer, jail every free preacher, fabricate election results, and repress their opponents using the state of emergency and court martial. There is no cure for corruption except through a radical change that brings to power rulers who are freely elected by the people, rulers who feel the people's suffering, embody their hopes, and who can be held accountable for their actions and redressed or deposed if their bad governance exceeds the limits.

The foundation of every reform is reforming man from the inside. Man is led from his inner parts and not from the external ones, from his mind and conscience and not from his ear or neck, and the motto for reform here would be Allah's words: [*Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls).*] (*Al-Ra'd*, 11)⁽⁴⁹⁾

30- Harnessing our rich legacy of science, arts and literature:

One of the features of moderation and renewal is the link we establish between our present and our past for we are not a nation without a history. We are an Ummah with a heritage, glories and roots that stretch to the dawn of time. We must draw as much benefit as we can from the best of our diverse and rich heritage, the teachings of our scholars, the tradition of our fundamentalists, the wealth of hadith persevered in the memory of hadith scholars, the rationality of theology, the mysticism of the Sufis, the narratives of historians, the sensibility of the men of letters, the imagination of poets, the reflections of wise men and the experiments of scientists. All of this heritage -even matters related to religion and its sources- is the fruit of the Muslim mind. Needless to say, it is not infallible and is open to criticism, revision and question, and to either confirmation or negation, but the Ummah does not come together as a whole around a heresy, and we should ponder our heritage in light of the firmaments of divine revelation and those of human knowledge.

(49) On the issue of the *fiqh* of change, consult our book *The Islamic Solution: A Duty and a Necessity*, published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo, and al-Risala, Beirut.

We also need to set a clear distinction between the divine level of our heritage (infallible) such as the Holy Quran and the undisputed parts of the Prophet's Sunnah, and the human part which includes the explanations that the human mind reached about this infallible part and which cover Islamic fiqh and its rules. But we cannot reject this entire legacy, including the interpretations of the infallible parts, as this would amount to rejecting the infallible as well.

Our efforts must go towards reviving the heritage and serving it with the tools and mechanisms of modern times, selecting the suitable parts fit for generalization to the entire Ummah, and keeping the remaining parts - including the objectionable ones - for study by specialists from academic spheres. Thus, heritage will be in a position to play its role in the advancement of the Ummah and in furthering its eternal mission.⁽⁵⁰⁾

(50) See our book *Our Arab and Islamic Culture between Modernism and Tradition*, published by Maktabat Wahba, Cairo, and the chapter titled *Authenticity not Regression and Modernism Not Alienation* from our book *Indicators of the Islamic Solution*, published by Maktabat Wahba and al-Risala Institution.

TRADITION OF THE PROPHET IN PRIVATE LIFE

Dr Muhammad Imarah*

Islam is the religion of the middle stance. This middle stance was decreed by Allah (SWT) and is not a mere option to be either taken or disregarded by the believers. The Almighty (STW) says in the Holy Quran: [*Thus, have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations.*]⁽¹⁾

With this verse, balance and the middle stance acquire a cause and effect quality that confers on the Muslim Ummah the attribute of 'witness' over humanity with all its nations, peoples, creeds, missions, cultures and civilizations. This causality is intimately linked to the meaning of the 'just balance' and 'witnessing'. The middle stance, as the Prophet (PBUH) taught us, is synonymous with 'justice' (as in a just balance): “*Justice is the middle stance: [We made you an Ummah justly balanced]*”⁽²⁾ and striking the right balance is the condition which confers the status of witness over mankind on the Islamic Ummah. And because this seal Ummah believes in all prophets and in all divine books, it has become eligible, exclusively and thanks to this attribute of justice, to serve as mankind's witness, including in standing as testimony that all prophets have delivered their messages to the nations to whom they were sent.

If scholars concur that there is no disputing terms and appellations, this absence of dispute actually stops at the utilization of these terms. In contrast, the conceptual contents and meanings behind these terms suffer a great deal of debate, especially when definitions of the same term are multiple and at sometimes contradict one another, becoming as myriad as the civilizations, cultures, philosophies and legacies that have spawned them.

The term **religion** is commonly used by various peoples and nations but the connotation it holds for people following positive religions differs widely from its meaning in revealed religions. In materialist philosophies, the concept and load of religion refers to the sum of myths and figments of the imagination produced by

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(1) *Al-Baqara*, verse 143.

(2) Narrated by Imam Ahmed.

the human mind during childhood⁽³⁾. In contrast, religion in its revealed context is a the production of a divine entity, faithfully revealed to prophets and messengers to guide the reason-blessed, of their own free will, to goodness in this world and in the hereafter⁽⁴⁾.

The term **politics** is commonly used by all peoples and cultures. In the positive western civilization, it is the art of the possible in the pursuit of power, taking no heed of the relationship between these political processes and moral values. Islam, on the other hand, establishes a firm link between the practice of politics and attachment to moral values. Politics, in this regard becomes the process by which people become the closest to goodness and the farthest from corruption⁽⁵⁾. There is in here a stark difference between this perception of politics and its Western philosophy as advanced by Machiavelli (1469-1527) and which prevailed in the Western positive civilization's philosophy of politics and continues to widely apply today.

Feudalism is a familiar concept to all nations. Yet, in the Western positive civilization, it refers to the ownership of land and all that is above this land, while in the Islamic context it applies to property transfers for useful and beneficial purposes such as reviving a barren land, developing it and drawing benefits from it in line with the Charia conditions and stipulations of the Ultimate Owner of all wealth and riches, Allah (SWT).

The same applies to the principle of the **middle stance** which for Suqi thought denoted indecisiveness and lack of definitiveness and where moderate positions were seen as devoid of color, taste or smell.

In the philosophy of Aristotle (384-322 BC), the middle stance which is the position between moral virtue and moral vice, is similar to a constant mathematical focal point standing at equal distance from two extremes but in total contrast to them.⁽⁶⁾

The Islamic concept of the middle stance is entirely different. In Islam, this middle position embodies moderateness and inclusiveness and represents a third stance between two opposite extremes from which it is not entirely different. In

(3) See our book *What is the Islamic Identity of Knowledge*

(4) Abu al-Baqaa al-Kafawi, *al-Kulliyat-*, entry on *Religion*, annotated by Dr Adnane Darweesh and Mohamed al-Masri, Damascus edition, 1982.

(5) Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lam al-Mawqi'ayn*, vol. 4, page 372, Beirut edition, 1973.

(6) Cf. on the civilizational mission of terms our book *Economic Terminology in the Islamic Civilization*, pp. 5-15, Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo, 1993.

fact, it derives from these extreme positions the elements of justice and righteousness to create, from them and with them, this new middle way. In essence, it is a rejection of any extremism that leans one way or the other, either towards excess or towards deficiency.

The middle stance of Islam, which rejects the extreme materialism of Judaism, and the spiritual extremism that Christianity has come to espouse, negates neither materialism nor spiritualism, but encompasses instead the elements of material and spiritual justice and righteousness in such a way as to strike the right balance between the two. As such, the all-embracing Islamic middle stance gives birth to the balanced man: an ascetic at night and a knight in daytime, an individualist committed to his community, immersed in worldly matters but mindful of the afterlife, ensuring a balance between state and religion, the self and the other, and between fervent devotion to the Creator and enjoyment of the pleasures and beauty that Allah created and placed at mankind's disposal.⁽⁷⁾

And since role models play a key role in educating others and in shaping the human being, society, culture and civilization, it was by divine grace that the man destined to be the role model of the Islamic Ummah and the paragon of moderateness was the illiterate prophet whose life represented the perfect embodiment that this Islamic all-encompassing middle stance could ever represent in this world. Allah (SWT) created him in his own image to serve as the role model and embodiment of the Islamic middle stance. He was a human being and the recipient of divine revelation, fulfilling only those miracles that Allah bestowed on him. At that time, and because he was at the receiving end of the inspiration process, he represented the connection between the realms of the earth and the heavens, the gateway between the material world and that of the Unseen. In the words of Sheikh Mohamed Abdo (1265-1323AH/1849-1905AD), his soul was “*so filled with divine majesty that no human could ever aspire to hold a spiritual sway over it. He was given access to the world of the Unseen by Allah and held knowledge of people's destinies. In this elevated status, he stood at the junction of the two worlds, at the edge of the visible world and the beginning of the Unseen one. He lived on earth but appeared not to belong there, and he ascended to loftier spheres in the countenance of those who did not belong there. He received commands from Allah and spoke of the divine majesty with knowledge of what cannot be perceived by the human mind, describing the divine entity only in the attributes that humans choose to believe, and expressing himself only in the words that*

(7) Cf. on the concept of moderateness and the middle stance and its dimension our book *Features of the Islamic approach*, pp. 77-193, Dar al-Rashad, Cairo, 1998.

their minds could grasp. At the same time, he was a mortal affected by all that affected humanity, but without this undermining his prophecy standing.”⁽⁸⁾

Allah (SWT) created and fashioned him to have the perfect manners. His life and policies were an amalgam of human ijtiḥād and of divine guidance that steered the course of this ijtiḥād and provided decisive rulings in matters that did not suffer ijtiḥād. He was the fervent and devout worshipper who stood in prayer before the divine Master until his feet swelled. He was the prophet who made jihād for the love of Allah his and his Ummah's act of ultimate piety. He was the brave soldier under whose wing other soldiers sought refuge when the fighting became fierce and the battle reached its peak in violence, and when no one was closer to the enemy than he was (PBUH). Yet, he was shyer than a virgin behind her veil, decreeing that modesty and humility were one of the branches of faith. He was the bravest of all, the wisest of all. His worship was an act of jihād and his jihād was an act of worship in search for closeness to Allah.

As a role model, his middle stance combined fortitude and patience with the highest planes of piety and fervor in prayer: [*Nay, seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance and prayer: It is indeed hard, except to those who bring a lowly spirit.*]⁽⁹⁾

The Prophet's model also combines goodness both to man -in absolute terms- and to the flora, fauna and the environment, including inanimate things (because they are all animated with life, immersed in the glorification of their Creator, even though we do not understand their praise), with strictness in defending Allah's religion and His sacred ordinances.

The example set by Mohammed combined renunciation to the worldly pleasures and goods with love for the beauty that Allah created and infused in this beautiful universe. He urged people to choose beautiful names, take pleasure in lawful pursuits, seek Allah's protection against bleak sights -in the travel prayer-, his prayer when he beseeched Allah for the blessings of rain was “*Oh Lord, bestow on this earth what makes its beauty*”. His moderateness favored his inclination to live among the poor - and not the mighty and self-indulgent lords - but still appreciate delicacy and refinement. In a description of some of his features he was said to “*have the softest of all hands, the most fragrant of all smells, sweeter*

(8) Complete works of Imam Mohamed Abdo, vol 3, pp. 416-420-421, annotated by Dr Mohamed Amara, Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo, 1993.

(9) *Al-Baqara*, verse 45.

that the smell of musk. His face shone in contentment and his sweat was like pearl drops."⁽¹⁰⁾

His moderateness showed in his fervent invocations when he retreated to the mosque for worship but his determination to be presentable even during his retreats. He often asked Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, when he was in her quarters, to dress his hair⁽¹¹⁾, peace be upon him.

Thus, and through this all-embracing Islamic moderateness, the Prophet as a role model represents the perfect man who rose in distinction above the two extremes of exaggeration and dearth.

This illiterate prophet who came to change the material and spiritual matters of this earth, to change the course of history and alter the concept of culture and civilization and of man's humanity, who struggled for the thirteen years of his Mekkan era, edified and developed a state, led more than sixty conquests and campaigns over the nine years of his Medinah era, is a prophet whose moderateness married grueling struggle with entertainment of the self as a way of reinvigorating it and infusing it with more energy to be able to continue the struggle and hard toil, and enjoy all the forms of beauty and pleasures created by Allah in this life.

While the art and aesthetics-related aspects of the prophet's biography were addressed in earlier studies⁽¹²⁾, the subject of the present paper is the prophet's tradition in amusement through anecdotes and joking and his sense of humor.

Before we address these aspects, let us start by defining the meanings of the words associated with anecdotes, wittiness and humor (*Mulha*/anecdote, *Turfa*/novelty and *Nukta*/witty remark) in the Arabic language and Islamic culture.

'*Mulha*/anecdote', according to al-Zamakhshari (467-538 AH/1075-1144AD) in *Assas al-Balagha* is the witty saying or action. The word is used metaphorically to refer to attractiveness in people as in (*Wajh malih*/pretty face) or the exclamation 'How clever!' Someone with a sense of wit and humor is metaphorically considered as attractive and appealing.

Speaking to his wife Sulayma, the poet al-Termah (125AH/743AD) said:

(10) Narrated by Imam Ahmed.

(11) Narrated by Imam Ahmed.

(12) Cf. *Islam and Arts*, Dar al-Shorouq, Cairo, 1991, and our book: *Music and Singing: Lawful or Prohibited?*, Dar Nahdat Masr, Cairo, 1999.

*Witty and charming as she may be
Defeated she shall be
By a love for you that dispatches
All wittiness to oblivion*⁽¹³⁾

In *Lissan al-Arab*, Ibn Mandhour (411-530AH/1232-1311AD) narrates, on the authority of Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with father and son, that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “*The truthful is blessed with three virtues: wit, dignity of bearing and love.*”⁽¹⁴⁾

Witty words or actions confer humor and lightness on situations and represent an embellishment on that which is basic and to the point. Moderation in humor is much desired since this humor is considered the salt that flavors the food. In moderation, it is appreciated, but in excess it simply ruins the food.

Turfah/ novelty (plural *Turaf*) is what is original and entertaining⁽¹⁵⁾, and anything appealing that is produced through a sense of inventiveness⁽¹⁶⁾.

It is the amusing saying or action that constitutes an addition to the norm and that is entertaining to the listeners or viewers.

Nukta/witty remark (plural *Nukat* or *Nikat*), in the literal meaning refers to the white spot in a black background, or the black spot against a white background. In another definition, it is the highly complex matter resolved thanks to careful consideration and deep reflection. Metaphorically, it refers to something unusual and to witty wording that is pleasantly perceived by a person. Anecdotes are the riddles and delightful parts of speech⁽¹⁷⁾.

Mazh/joking is repartee and jousting as opposed to seriousness. People blessed with a sense of humor stand out against those who lack this spirit and are disagreeable and tedious.⁽¹⁸⁾

Jousting is a lighter variation of normal talk or actions with funny embellishments that confer lightness on them and banish tediousness and unpleasantness

These were the definitions of the various Arabic terms related to humor.

(13) *Assas al-Balagha*, chapter on 'Mulh/witticism', Cairo Edition, 1960.

(14) *Lissan al-Arab*, chapter on 'Mulh/witticism', Dar al-Maarif, Cairo, 1981.

(15) *Assas al-Balagha*, chapter on *Turf*/novelty.

(16) *Assas al-Balagha*, chapter on *Turf*/novelty.

(17) *Assas al-Balagha*, chapter on anecdotes, *al-Kulliyat*, entry *Nukta*/witty remark, al-Munjid, entry *nukat*, Beirut edition, 1986.

(18) *Lissan al-Arab*, entry on *Mazh*/joking.

And since the Prophet (PBUH) was a perfect role model whose traits, qualities and actions reflected an all-encompassing moderateness and the just measure of balance, his life and his status as a role model were not devoid of anecdotes, jokes and a wittiness that served the purposes of entertaining, refreshing and reinvigorating hearts to be able to confront life's challenges and hardships while adhering to righteousness, truthfulness and justice, a middle stance that belies any extremism, be it in excess or in deficiency.

Perusing the Prophet's sunnah, we come to the realization that he used to joke with his companions -male and female-, whilst being truthful at all times. His companions, may Allah be pleased with them, asked him: "*O messenger of Allah, you also joke with us! He responded: "Yes, I do. But I only tell the truth."*"⁽¹⁹⁾

Speaking on the traits of character of the Mohammed (PBUH), Ali Ibn Taleb said: "*The Messenger of Allah had a jovial countenance, was even-tempered and easy-going*".

In another hadith by Abdallah Ibn al-Harith Ibn Juz': 'I never saw a person more smiling than the Prophet⁽²⁰⁾. He always presented a smiling and laughing face to his companions, showed interest and wonderment at what they said and mingled with them."

He considered play and entertainment acceptable and granted space to an Abyssinian band to perform and dance at the mosque of Medinah. He asked his wife Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, whether she wished to watch them and enjoy their games, dances and songs. She stood behind him, her cheek to his cheek (in a beautiful display of tenderness) until she had enough and left. When Umar Ibn al-Khattab entered the mosque, he wanted to scold and chase the Abyssinians, but the Prophet (PBUH) stopped him and asked the band to continue playing, saying: "*Let Bani Afrada be...so the Jews know that there is latitude on our faith, and that I want sent with a tolerant faith.*"⁽²¹⁾

In a *hadith* narrated on the authority of Jaber Ibn Samra: "The messenger's companions sometimes recited poems in his presence and reminisced about matters from the times of pre-Islam. They would laugh and he would smile, scolding them only on matters that were unlawful."⁽²²⁾

(19) Narrated by al-Tirmidi and Imam Ahmed.

(20) Narrated by al-Tirmidi and Imam Ahmed.

(21) Narrated by al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidi and Imam Ahmed.

(22) Narrated by Muslim.

In a hadith on the authority of Abdellah Ibn Masoud: *“Sometimes he (PBUH) would laugh until his teeth showed”*.⁽²³⁾

Kaab Ibn Malek related that when the Prophet (PBUH) *“was happy his face would light up, shining like the moon.”*⁽²⁴⁾

Anas Ebn Malek related that that prophet (PBUH) was *“a most entertaining person with his wives.”*

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, related the following story: *“The messenger of Allah (PBUH) was sitting with me and Sauda Bint Zam'a. I made porridge, served it and asked Sauda to eat but she said: I don't like it. So I said: “By Allah, you will eat it, otherwise I'll smear your face with it.” She said: “I will not so much as taste it.” I took some in my hand and smeared it over her face. The Messenger of Allah was sitting between us and he lowered his knees to protect her from me. I took more from the plate and plastered it on my face, and the Prophet laughed.”*⁽²⁵⁾

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said: *“Once the Prophet challenged me to a race and I won. When I gained weight, he raced me again and he won, and said: ‘We are now even.’”*⁽²⁶⁾

Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, related the following story: *“Al-Dahhak Ibn Abu Sufyan al-Kilabi was a highly unattractive man and when he pledged allegiance to the Prophet he said: ‘I have two women who are more beautiful than this redhead (in the presence of Aisha before the hijab verse was revealed). Will I give you one of them in marriage?’ Aisha said: ‘Who is the better-looking of you, you or her?’ He responded: ‘Of course I am better and nobler.’ The prophet laughed at her question since the man was truly ugly.”*⁽²⁷⁾

Al-Hassan narrates: *“An old woman came to the Prophet and asked him to pray to Allah to grant her entrance to heaven. The Prophet said: ‘An old woman cannot enter paradise.’ The woman started crying and he said: ‘You will not be old at that time. Allah (SWT) said: “Lo! We have created them a (new) creation and made them virgins, lovers, equal in age.”*⁽²⁸⁻²⁹⁾

(23) Hadith agreed upon.

(24) Narrated by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidi and Imam Ahmed.

(25) Narrated by Abu Yaala with a good chain of narration.

(26) Narrated by Abu Dawoud and Imam Ahmed.

(27) Narrated by al-Daraqtni.

(28) Al-Waqi'a, verses 35-37.

(29) Narrated by al-Tirmidi.

Zayd Ibn Aslam said: *“A woman called Oum Ayman came to the Prophet and said: 'My husband calls you.' The prophet asked: 'Isn't your husband the one with a white spot in his eyes?' 'No, he is not!' she said. 'Yes, he is.' The Prophet insisted and she replied: 'No, by Allah, he is not!' The Prophet (PBUH) then said laughingly: 'Everyone has a white spot in their eyes.’”*

Another woman came to the Messenger (PBUH) and requested to be given a ride on a camel. He said: *“We will give you a ride on the baby of a camel.”*

The woman said: *“What shall I do with the baby of a camel? It will not even carry me.”*

The Prophet (PBUH) replied: *“Every camel is the baby of a camel.”*

In a hadith narrated by Anas Ibn Malek: *“Abu Talha had a son nicknamed Abu Umayr, and one day the Prophet (PBUH) came upon them and asked: 'Abu Umayr, what has the Nughayr done? (a rhyme between Umayr and Nughayr which is the name of a small bird the child was playing with)’”⁽³⁰⁾.*

In a report by Zayd Ibn Aslam on the authority of Khawat Ibn Jubayr al-Ansari: *“Khawat was sitting with a group of women from Bani Kaa'b on the road to Mekkah. The Prophet came upon them and asked him: 'Abu Abdallah, what are you doing with the women?' He said: 'They are braiding reins for a straying camel of mine.' The Prophet moved on, then later on came back and asked: 'Abu Abdallah, is your camel still given to straying?' He said: I felt embarrassed and kept silent. After that, I avoided the Prophet and run away out of shame whenever I saw him, till I came to Medinah. He found me at the mosque praying and sat beside me. I lengthened the prayer until he said: 'Do not delay, I am waiting.' When I concluded the prayer, he asked me: 'Abu Abdallah, is your camel still given to straying?' I said: 'By He who sent you with the truth, my camel never strayed since I embraced Islam.' He said: 'Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar! May Allah guide Abu Abdallah to the right path.' The narrator said: His Islam became stronger and Allah indeed guided him to the right path”⁽³¹⁾.*

Nuayman was one of the most humorous companions of the Prophet (PBUH). Whenever a fine item came to Medina, he would buy it and give it to the Prophet as a present. One day, he brought some honey to the Prophet. However, he later brought the salesman as well to the Prophet and said: *“O Messenger of Allah, pay the man his due.”* The Prophet asked: *“I thought it was*

(30) Agreed upon.

(31) Narrated by al-Tabarani in al-Kabir.

a present!?” Nuayman replied: “*Prophet Muhammad! I wanted you to taste this honey so much, but I did not have any money. So I did it this way.*” The Prophet laughed and paid the salesman⁽³²⁾.

Anas Ibn Malek said: “*The Prophet (PBUH) had perfect morals and manners. One day, he sent me on an errand and I said: 'I will not go!' But deep down, I intended to do as the Prophet had ordered me. I went out to pass by the other boys playing in the market. All of a sudden, the Messenger (PBUH) grabbed me from behind and I looked back to see him laughing, Then he asked: 'Anis, did you go where I ordered you?' I said: “Yes, I am on the way.”*”⁽³³⁻³⁴⁾

These were examples drawn from the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) on his virtues and qualities, derived from his actions and his sayings with his family and his companions (male and female). They all stand witness to the genuine dimension of the Prophet's ways that many disregard, either intentionally or otherwise, when they perceive Islam as harsh and insensitive, when they expect the stance of Islam and Muslim scholars to be stern and foreboding, as if they wish to emulate those about whom Allah said: [***With this doth Allah warn off his servants***]⁽³⁵⁾. They deliberately or unintentionally disregard the role model that Allah set in Mohammed (PBUH), true to the divine verses: [***It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (Their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast Taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).***]⁽³⁶⁾ Even with his opponents, Allah (SWT) commanded the noble Prophet to proceed gently, warning against violence and decreeing non-violence as the preferred path to soften and change hearts: [***Repel evil with that which is best: We are well acquainted with the things they say.***]⁽³⁷⁾ And: [***Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to***

(32) Related by al-Zaubayr Ibn Bakkar in 'Anecdotes', and by Ibn Abdelbarr.

(33) Narrated by Muslim.

(34) Cf: Abu Hamed al-Ghazali (*Ihya' Ulum al-Din*), vol. 7, pp. 1282, 1303, 1325 and 1328, vol 9, pp. 1573-1577, illustrated edition, Dar al-Shaab, Cairo. Al-Iraqi quoted the *hadiths* mentioned by al-Ghazali in this regard - on anecdotes and humor as inspired from the Prophet's biography. Cf. also al-Mughni 'an Haml al-Asfar fe al-Asfar fi Takhrij ma fi al-Ahyaa men Akhbar, annotated edition. Cf. al-Raheeq al-Makhtoum, Safii al-Rahmane al-Mubarakfouri, pp. 486-487, Dar al-Wafaa, Egypt, 1999.

(35) *Al-Zumar*, verse 16.

(36) *Aal-Imrane*, verse 159.

(37) *Al-Muminun*, verse 96.

Allah, works righteousness, and says, "I am of those who bow in Islam"? Nor can goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!]⁽³⁸⁾

The Prophet (PBUH) was the paragon of perfection, the devout worshipper, the fearless fighter, the compassionate tender-hearted man, uncompromising on any transgression of Allah's limits, smiling, benevolent and entertaining of his family and companions with wit and anecdotes, holding the key to the hearts and to the fiqh of souls and minds to achieve man's happiness in this life and in the afterlife.

On the authority of Abu Hurayra: "A man named al-Aqraa Ibn Habes came upon the Prophet (PBUH) laughing and playing with al-Hussain, may Allah be pleased with them, pulling his tongue out and laughing with the child. Al-Aqraa Ibn Habes was astonished at the Prophet's behavior and said: 'I have ten children and never kissed one of them. The Prophet said: He who has no compassion for others cannot expect compassion from them.'⁽³⁹⁾

There is in joviality, humor and wit, - when applied in good proportion to refine hearts, reinvigorate minds and spread bring people closer together-a display of mercy and an act of charity that Allah, the Compassionate, records in the balance of good deeds of the tender-hearted.

(38) *Fussilat*, verses 33-34.

(39) Narrated by Muslim.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND REGIONALIZATION

Dr Abbes Jirari*

Despite the large volume of the published literature on identity, there is a pressing need to review⁽¹⁾ its most important elements, including its concept, components and the various issues it raises.

The specification of the concept of identity should not be expanded to such extent that it would lose some of the national distinctive features demarcating it from other concepts. Nor should it be narrowed down to such extent that it would be confined to limited specificities, whose orientation would be controlled by mostly racial political motives. In general, identity refers to the nature, role, entity and affiliation, as well as the materialization of such belonging in the consciousness and unconsciousness to prove the will of existence and life for both individuals and groups.

National identity is embodied in stable elements and regulating values, due to the continuous adherence to it down the ages and generations, with honest love, intellectual and psychological ties that attract these generations, making them all interact with it, with or without deep awareness. That is in a quite spontaneous and natural fashion.

In its stability, the invariability of its main elements and core components, it may be exposed to some development factors, or even subjected to change imposed by the nature of the universe characterized by its multiversity and diversity. Such change is also imposed by the interaction of the self with itself and with others. This leads to achieving the human dimension that undoubtedly

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(1) See the publications of the author below:

- **Culture: from identity to dialogue** (Publications of Al Jirari Club, Volume 3 - First edition- Rabat, June 1993).
- **Self and the other** (Publications of Al Jirari Club, Volume 13 - First edition- Rabat- April 1998).
- **Our identity and globalization** (Publications of Al Jirari Club, Volume 18 - first edition- Al Umniya Printing House- Rabat - December 2000).
- **Issues for reflection from an Islamic perspective II** (Publications of Al Jirari Club, Volume 45- First edition- Rabat- June 2008).

enriches the identity experiences, providing it with vital and creative areas, where it would strengthen its openness factors, and the possibilities of exchanging mutual influence.

Thus, identity urges the individuals who relate to it to build and develop their home-country, seeking its progress, to defend it and preserve its dignity. They are called to open up its future prospects, overcome the challenges facing it, facing the obstacles hindering its progress. They are also encouraged to address the external and internal dangers that threaten it, especially those stemming from the misconduct of the self, hindering the preservation of the pride of the citizens this country and respect of their humanity, ensuring their rights and obligations, under stable conditions, fair governance, justice based on equal opportunities and solidarity among them, without any discrimination or favoritism. An exception to such equality relates to the extent of defending the components of identity and the required efforts and sacrifice which people undoubtedly make at varying degrees.

Four components constitute identity and interact with it:

First: Home-country, which consists of the territory, space and the associated time reflecting its history, including various natural and human elements, and the resulting political, economical conditions as well as social and behavioral patterns.

The home-country (nation) for us is Morocco, characterized by its geographical location at the top of the African continent, overlooking two great seas, the Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean, and standing close to Europe, serving as a way-station between East and West. This advantage has enriched its environment which is characterized by diversity and multiplicity, allowing it to be open to many civilizations and cultures, with which it has always been interacting through multifaceted exchange.

Confirming to this status, the text of the Moroccan Constitution⁽²⁾ stipulates in its preamble that the Kingdom of Morocco is a unified state with full sovereignty belonging to the Great Maghreb is committed to:

(2) His Majesty King Mohammed VI announced the start of the revision of the Constitution in his speech delivered on 9 March 2011(4 Rabia II, 1432 AH). He appointed the Advisory Council in charge of this revision, chaired by Mr. Abdellatif Manouni, on the following Thursday. The Referendum on the New Constitution was conducted on Friday 1 July 2011. The results of the Referendum were announced by the Constitutional Council (decision no 851-2011) on 14 July 2011. A Dahir was issued under no 1.11.91 for the enactment of the text of the Constitution on 29 July 2011. It was published in the Official Bulletin no 5964 bis on 30 July 2011.

- Working towards building the Maghreb Union as a strategic option.
- Consolidating the bonds of belonging to the Arab and Islamic nation and strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity with the brotherly peoples.
- Strengthening cooperation and solidarity relations with the peoples and countries of Africa, especially with the Sahel and Sub-Saharan countries.
- Strengthening the ties of cooperation, convergence and partnership with Euro-Mediterranean neighbor countries.
- Expanding and diversifying friendship relations, and humanitarian economic, scientific, technical and cultural exchanges with all countries worldwide.
- Consolidating South-South cooperation.

Second: Religion, with its impact on believers, its jurisprudence which permeates all systems that regulate the functioning of the nation, and the resulting ideas, concepts, perceptions and principles which guide citizens' way of life.

Religion in Morocco is Islam, which exceeded being a mere belief, accommodating the Jewish minority that shared with it citizenship in freedom and tolerance. It has become, due to its holiness and commitment, a symbol of national identity and unity, as well as internal feeling in the conscious and subconscious, without which life is inconceivable.

The Moroccan Constitution stipulates the religious component on many occasions, recalling in the second paragraph of its preamble, that “the Kingdom of Morocco is an Islamic country with full sovereignty”, and “Moroccan identity is characterized by the forefront position of the Islamic religion therein.” Article 3 of the first Chapter states that “Islam is the religion of the State,” stressing the provision mentioned in Article 1 in this Chapter the invariable principles of identity: “The nation hinges in its public life on comprehensive invariable principles embodied in Islam, the tolerant religion, national unity with its numerous branches, Constitutional monarchy, and the democratic choice.”

The situation of the State in this Islamic framework, or considering its frame of reference Islamic, does not mean that it is not endowed with modern institutions and laws similar to those available in the countries that apply civil systems, in the sense close to secularism. Indeed, the religious nature of the State is not incompatible with civilian authorities and the values they call for, as it is

stipulated in many places of the Moroccan Constitution⁽³⁾ such as freedom, democracy, individual and collective rights. Such values include political practice, which constitutes an important part in conducting state affairs in Islam, is not at odds with it, though Article 7 of the first Chapter stipulates, as a matter of reserve, that “political parties may not be established on religious, linguistic, ethnic or regional basis, and generally on the basis of any discrimination or violation of human rights.”

The provisions of the Constitution stipulating these “civil” principles removes any ambiguity, though they raise some ambiguity that could be exploited wrongly in order to raise the fear of converting the State by this frame of reference to an theocratic state based on the divine absolute rule, as was common in many European countries, especially France and England, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This allegation is denied by Islam and rejected by its principles that do not make of the ruler - impartial or partial - a tyrant, deriving its authority from a mandate issued by the Creator, who will alone ask him about how it was used.⁽⁴⁾

(3) See, for instance , Article 25 of Chapter 1 on “Freedom of thought, opinion and expression”, Article 26 of Chapter 1 on the development of “Cultural and artistic creation and scientific and technological research”, Article 28 of Chapter 1, providing for the preservation of “freedom of the press” and “the right of expression and dissemination of information, ideas and opinions, freely and without any constraint, unless otherwise provided under the Law”, Article 29 of Chapter 1 on “freedom of meeting, gathering, peaceful demonstration, establishing associations as well as union and political affiliation”, Article 16 of Chapter 1 on the “protection of legal rights and interests of Moroccan citizens living abroad”, Article 19 of Chapter 2 which stipulates that men and women on equal footing enjoy civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights and freedoms”. See also Article 31 of Chapter 2 on the obligations of the State for citizens to benefit from their rights, Article 161 of Chapter 12 on the National Council for Human Rights, and Article 163 on the Council of the Moroccan Community Living Abroad.

(4) To preclude this erroneous conception, the Constitution specified the powers of His Majesty the King, and his constitutional rights in the management of institutions. Article 1 of General Provisions stipulates that “Morocco is a constitutional, democratic, parliamentary and social Monarchy. The constitutional regime of the Kingdom is founded on the separation, balance and collaboration of powers”. It also states in Article 2 that “sovereignty belongs to the Nation, which exercises it directly through referendum and indirectly through its representatives.” Chapter 3 on the monarchy stipulates in Article 41 that “the King, Commander of the Faithful, sees to the respect for Islam. He is the Guarantor of the free exercise of religious affairs. He presides over the Superior Council of Ulemas (Islamic Scholars). Article 42 states that The King Head of State, His Supreme Representative, Symbol of the unity of the Nation, Guarantor of the permanence and continuity of the State and Supreme Arbitrator between its institutions. He is the Guarantor of the independence of the country and the territorial integrity of the Kingdom. The King exercises these missions by Dahirs by virtue of the powers that are expressly devolved to him under the Constitution. Article 47 stipulates that the King appoints the Head of Government from within the political party ranking first in the elections of the members of the Chamber of representatives. On the proposal of the Head of Government, He

Given that Islam is the State religion, it “ensures for every individual the freedom of practicing their religious affairs”, as provided under Chapter III of the Constitution. Unlike the constitutions of other Islamic countries, the Moroccan Constitution does not mention the concept of “freedom of belief”, to which reference is motivated by the existence of non-Muslim citizens in the countries of such constitutions. The provision for “freedom of religious practice” in the abovementioned Article 3 is considered as a precautionary smart move that does not preclude the existence of a Jewish minority that has the right to freely practice their religious affairs.

Third: Language, as a mean of communication, a structure for messages, an envelope for thought, a tool for literary expression, artistic creativity, and expression of emotions and feelings.

Language in Morocco is standard Arabic, along with of many other local languages and dialects that enrich it, including Berber and Hassaniyya as well as other Arabic dialects used in rural and urban areas. The status of Standard Arabic is corroborated by the fact that it is the language of the Holy Quran, and it is the vehicle through which the rich heritage of various areas of science and arts was produced.

Therefore language is considered a means of self-protection and self-defense, which spares us it from the dependence on any foreign language and falling in the grip of its hegemony. Learning other languages should not be neglected, however, since their use is imposed by reality and modern circumstances, specially English and Spanish, as well as the French language, inherited from the colonial period, making us believe in the past that French was the only way to achieve progress and catch up with the developed world, even though it lost its status in the international arena.

The Constitution provides for the linguistic component of identity, as it stipulates in Article 5 of Chapter 5 that:

- Arabic is the official language of the State. The State works for the protection and for the development of the Arabic language, as well as the promotion of its use.

appoints the members of the Government.” In Article 48 “the King presides over the Council of Ministers”. In Article 53, “he King is the Supreme Head of the Royal Armed Forces.” In Article 55 “The King accredits the ambassadors to foreign powers and to the international organizations. In Article 56 “the King presides over the Superior Council of the Judicial Power”, which is confirmed in Article 115 of Chapter 7.

- Berber constitutes an official language of the State, being common patrimony of all Moroccans without exception. An organic law shall define the process of the implementation of the official character of this language, as well as the modalities of its integration into education and the priority domains of public life, so that it will be in time capable of fulfilling its function as an official language.
- The State shall work for the preservation of Hassaniyya⁽⁵⁾, as an integral component of the unified Moroccan cultural identity, as well as the protection of dialects and cultural expressions used in Morocco. Likewise, it sees to the coherence of linguistic policy and national culture and the learning and mastery of foreign languages most widely used in the world, as tools of communication, integration and interaction with knowledge society, and opening onto different cultures and contemporary civilizations.

To this end, the same Article stipulates that “a National Council of Languages and Moroccan Culture shall be created, in charge of the protection and development of Arabic and Berber languages and the diverse Moroccan cultural expressions, which constitute an authentic heritage and contemporary creation. It brings together the entire set of institutions concerned with these domains. An organic law determines its attributions, composition and operation modalities”.⁽⁶⁾

Fourth: Culture , including this heritage that has been accumulated down the ages and generations, as well as the achievements produced by the citizens of the nation in all cognitive, spiritual and emotional areas , and other skills that reflecting their persona and their personality.

Culture in Morocco reflects the creative capacity and genius of Moroccans, specially their creative contribution that has enriched the Arab, Islamic and human culture via their scholarly, scholastic and grass-root creativeness, and even via their regular daily life practices.

(5) A variety of Arabic originally spoken in southern Morocco.

(6) The author has proposed a solution to the integration of Berber in education programs, in paper entitled “**The meaning of the constitutional nature of language**”, presented to the National Symposium organized by the Committee on Values and Heritage at the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco, in Rabat on “**Arabic Language in media, administrative and legislative discourse in Morocco**”, on 20-21 October 2010. (See the proceedings that appeared in the publications of the Academy).

See the paper also in “**Selected Texts**” on the website of the author: www.abbesjirari.com

Due to its ties with the rest of the components of identity, particularly the language component, and its intellectual pattern, culture is characterized by distinctive specificities that allow it to conduct exchange with others. It enriches itself thanks to its capacity to absorb the elements of adaptation and factors renewal as well as its interaction with other cultures. It thereby crisscrosses all circumstances of time and space, while preserving its own vitality and unique peculiarities, without neglecting the requirements of the knowledge-based era, marked by information revolution, and the launch of human capacity for creativity in various fields.

In its preamble the Moroccan Constitution summed up the main elements constituting the cultural component: Islamic-Arab, Berber and Saharan-Hassaniyya, enriched with its African, Andalusian, Hebrew and Mediterranean components.



Thanks to these foundations and attributes, national identity turns into energy that driving towards knowing the self and genius it is endowed with, as well as the capacity to ensure the necessary needs for building the Nation, and the required attitudes. Hence, it is considered as the fortress to which everybody recurses in order to defend the nation in times of crisis.

Identity, first and foremost, includes invariable, viable and sustainable content, due to its relation with historical, social, intellectual and psychological elements, themselves also subject to well-determined laws and conditions. It also includes variable content, since it is subject to factors of society that tends to development and even change.

Therefore, sticking to identity -including recalling and raising awareness to it- is due to the fear of losing national specificities, and the imposition of the globalization model with its economic and marketing schemes. This model involves cultural dimensions and behavioral patterns that could lead to the imposition of its hegemony and sovereignty over nations, as a polarity unit that control the universe. The concept of national sovereignty has shrunk so much that the international community, with its financial, technological, military and media power, may very well intervene in the affairs of sovereign states, which could lead to the violation of such sovereignty. The fight of terrorism and tracking it down in its alleged pockets has been a pretext for this intervention, particularly in third world and Islamic countries.

This attitude towards globalization does not mean self-confinement and rejecting the others who imposed their scientific, technical, and production progress. Rather we are required to work with the other, using our economic and scientific capacities, great resources and strategic locations that qualify us for exchange and competition.

This requires our communities and their officials to wake up and overcome their vanity, to review their plans and management methods which they have adopted, or perhaps imposed for long periods, and realize that such methods are obsolete and unacceptable.



National identity, with its invariability and renewal, expands and shrinks, since it is a network amenable to growth and branching off. It expands as a result of interaction with other identities, especially those with which it shares overt or covert components. It narrows down, branching off small local identities, as a result of the nation's plurality and diversity.

The Moroccan Constitution stipulates in Article 135 of Chapter 9 on regions and territorial communities that “The territorial collectivities of the Kingdom are the regions, prefectures, provinces and communes. They constitute moral persons of public law, which democratically manage their affairs. Article 136 also states that “the territorial organization of the Kingdom is based on the principle of free administration, cooperation and solidarity. It ensures the participation of the populations concerned in the management of their affairs and promotes their contribution to integrated, sustainable human development.”⁽⁷⁾

Based on this concept, the Royal speech revealed at the appointment of the Regionalization Advisory Committee⁽⁸⁾ that “the targeted extended regionalization is not merely a technical or administrative measure, but a decisive orientation for the development and modernization of the state structures and the promotion of integrated development.”

His Majesty's speech highlighted the four foundations which regionalization is based on:

(7) Chapter 9 of the Constitution devotes many articles - from 135 to 146 - to discuss regionalization.

(8) In Marrakech, 3 January 2010.

First: Sticking to the nation's sacred entities and laws in the unity of the state, the nation and territory

Second: Commitment to solidarity, regionalization should not be reduced to just a new distribution of powers between the center and regions...

Third: Adoption of coordinated and balanced powers and potentials, as well as avoiding overlapping or clashing mandates among the different local communities, authorities and institutions.

Fourth: Adopting the extended decentralization without which regionalization will not be effective, as it should be activated within effective territorial governance based on coherence and interaction.”

The goal, as the royal speech indicated, is “to achieve fundamental objectives, chief of which is to specify autonomous and viable regions through the development of rational and realistic criteria for a new regionalization system. The second objective is the emergence of democratic councils endowed with enough powers and resources to promote integrated regionalization.”

In the light of these royal orientations and Constitutional articles, the possibility of achieving regionalization can be delivered based on three elements:

First: Geography represented in the space, the nature of the land, including plains and rough terrain, the resources it that constitute the wealth and bounties granted by God in the area, be it abundant or scarce, and how all this is reflected on the mentality of the population living in this land.

Second: History, including its incidents, events, policy makers, and masterminds of challenges and constraints down the ages, not only locally, but also at the level of relations with the rest of the regions, with the center and even beyond. These relations were not free of snags and disturbances.

Third: Culture, including all its academic, scholastic and grass-root aspects, as well as the related creativity forms, thinking patterns and behavior types, and the ensuing customs and traditions.

These factors strongly impact economic, social, and cultural life, constituting thereby a regional specificity showing a unique character. It can overlap with the specificities of other regions, constituting unity that enriches the invariable principles that compose the nation's identity and unity, strengthening its components without any incongruence or clash. However, overcoming some sensitive issues needs awareness-raising and a sense of citizenship, with a view to getting rid of

its causes. This would be possible by the dissemination of education and family socialization, as well as spreading justice and democracy and generalizing comprehensive development, making it available to all citizens. This would eradicate the notions of “useful and useless Morocco”, and the dichotomy “city and countryside”, “center and periphery”. This would also guarantee the integration and cohesion of all regions, and enable each region to independently promote the foundations of a character viable for activation and renewal. This would also eliminate the vestiges of the colonial period, which built its policy on differentiation and division. This policy unfortunately found who adheres to it and nourish it under independence.

As part of this disburdening process, there is a pressing need the reform of institutions and the fight against corruption, as well as a fair distribution of wealth and the involvement of citizens in the management of their affairs. This cannot be achieved by a territorial solution that adopts technical and bureaucratic measures. Due to its complex political and cultural nature, this issue needs to take into account the entire set of components involved, including the overt elements and the covert ones that need to be detect freely, scientifically, objectively and rationally. First and foremost, this endeavor should be conducted with a national vision that needs to be clear. If the regional partition remains ambiguous, it would be impossible to establish its laws and enact its regulations, which will have a negative impact on the upcoming local community elections, which involve many sensitive issues.



Belonging to a particular region -any region- is the affiliation to an identity rather than simply a territory subject to a specific administrative division. It is not a self-isolated identity but it brings itself closer to an extended one, to join it and integrate with it, without losing the color of its local specificity.

Specificity is considered as a differentiation element if it is seen in a limited narrow vision that could lead to consequences threatening national unity. At the same time it constitutes a rapprochement element if it is viewed through a far-reaching extended vision, which guarantees the continuity of this unity, ensuring security and stability. This vision requires ensuring; with full awareness and conviction, that regional affiliation does not override national affiliation. That is; local specificities do not outweigh the invariable components of the nation, because this involves a threat to unity, despite the possible objective motives conducive to it, as result of accumulated demerits.

However, rapprochement is almost inevitable, because human nature as created by God shows that individuals tend to get to know each other and cooperate with other individuals to ensure their livelihood and happiness. Individuals progressively work their way up until they reach the community, which extends from one circle to a larger one, starting from the human and regional territory in which they live up to the level of citizenship in large framework; namely the state.

The extended regionalization is not a temporary political move, or merely a means to reach a political solution to the Sahara issue⁽⁹⁾ through the call for autonomy. Rather, it is a choice to achieve the reforms expected by Moroccans, in order to build a unified and strong Morocco, characterized by modernity and cohesion, in which the region and the center are coordinated and consistent at the political, economic, social and cultural levels. Put differently, this move is intended to establish a state capable, on the basis of the values of its national components and identity, to communicate with others, especially with human values, and contribute to enriching its world components, to engage its own personality and future projects in the international relations system, which is interest-oriented.

Morocco with all its regions, regardless of their number, is the nation that lives inside us and the nation where we live. We love this nation and it loves us. We identify with it not only as a piece of land where we were born and where we live, but this identification is conducted with the heart, mind and conscience as a source of wealth and a stimulant for creativity and production, as well as coexistence characterized by solidarity and harmony with those who belong to this nation, and also those who share all forms of mental attributes relation, that can be summarized as is it follows:⁽¹⁰⁾

- 1- Tendency to stability.
- 2- Strong self-awareness, capacity of openness, and awareness of the need for a communication, integration and working with others joining, meeting, and cooperating with them.
- 3- Love of liberty and resistance to any force whatsoever, in an extraordinary capacity of patience and endurance of crises.
- 4- Facing challenges and dealing with them in a practical and realistic spirit and the sense of decision-making.

(9) Moroccan Sahara covers the two regions of "Sagua el-Hamra" (literally in Arabic, Red Canal) and "Río de Oro" (literally, gold River).

(10) See our book mentioned above "Culture: from identity to dialogue," pages: 13-14.

- 5- Tendency for moderation in everything, including the nature of the Ash'ari creed, Maliki doctrine and Sunni Sufism.

There is no doubt that this propensity, with its values, is the main actor in protecting Moroccans from any deviation or extremism, although this historical truth has started to be exposed to some agitation and disturbance. At any rate, the values of citizenship are preserved. They constitute the ethical system regulating the mental and behavioral relations between individuals in a given society. It includes the ideas and feelings expressed by people, whose visions and perceptions may be mostly fixed as they are related with other invariable principles in society, especially religion, while others could be subject to development and renewal according to reality. This is due to change factors, and the changes affecting customs and traditions reformulating them in minds and practice, as well as the shifts that legislation itself may undergo while dealing with reality matters.

GLOBAL ETHIC: SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Dr Taha Abderrahman*

To address the concept of a **global ethic**, both through analysis and evaluation, dictates that we first prepare the ground with the help of two clarifications: one is conceptual and the second is historical.

A- The conceptual clarification pertains to the distinction to be drawn between the concept of a global ethic⁽¹⁾, and another concept that also refers to the morals shared by all human beings, namely universal ethics.⁽²⁾

Global ethics are those of which the fundamentals and guiding principles were formulated by thinkers and philosophers as reason-based positive ethics that each person should adhere to in his drive to lead a righteous life and in the quest for happiness. The following are two examples of this: the ethics of duty formulated by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, and the utilitarian ethics of which the foundations were laid down by the philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham and further expanded by his successor, the English philosopher John Steward Mill.

Global ethics share three essential traits. First, they are theoretical in nature since they have been inferred through a process of abstract rational theorizing from a set of maxims. Secondly, their source is one since the philosopher tackles them in full independence and is under no obligation to seek the approval or consensus of others about them. Thirdly, these ethics are largely secular in their thrust since their author avoids basing his judgments and findings on premises that are directly or explicitly sourced from religion.

As for universal ethics, they have entirely different if not outright contradictory attributes. They are first and foremost of a practical nature since they are inferred from man's live ethical experience. Secondly, they flow from myriad sources as many parties take part in defining their bases and rules. Thirdly, they are religious in orientation since they derive their values and principles from different religions.

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(1) In French: Ethique globale, and in German: Weltethos Allgemeine Ethik.

(2) In French: Ethique universelle, and in German: Allgemeine Ethik.

B- The historical clarification pertains to the historical context in which the concept of a global ethic has been evolving:

Although the concept of a global ethic only emerged in 1990⁽³⁾, the first stirrings of an ethic that brings together the world's nations emerged within the context of a dialogue dynamic that involved various religious movements more than a century ago, i.e. since the first World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 which subsequently became known as the 'Parliament of the World's Religions' to celebrate the scientific and technological progress achieved by modernism of which 'religious brotherhood' is considered one of the fruits.

This dynamic took body in many religious debates on various topics, at different levels, with diverse objectives and in different parts of the world. It also resulted in the creation of various institutions and organizations such as the World Council of Churches, and the World Council on Religion and Peace (WCRP). Despite this feverish dialogue activity, the second conference of the Parliament of the World's Religions' was only held a century later, in 1993, in the same American city and on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. However, only six years lapsed before the Parliament's 3rd conference was convened in Cape Town, South Africa⁽⁴⁾ in 1999, then the fourth one followed in Barcelona, Spain, in 2004, and the fifth one in Melbourne, Australia, in 2009.

The second conference of the Parliament of the World's Religions achieved its distinction thanks to an outstanding declaration dubbed the 'Declaration toward a Global Ethic'. The second conference's organizers had in fact entrusted the Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Küng with the task of drawing up a draft declaration as he had previously worked on the same topic and had published, two years earlier, a book titled 'Toward a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration'⁽⁵⁾ in 1990. After the adoption of the said Declaration by the conference, Küng intensified his efforts and multiplied his conferences and articles in a bid to shed light on this project and its objectives and underscore the potential benefits of its implementation and its prospects. These efforts included the publishing of a number of books, some of which were co-written with other authors such as:

(3) The process of globalization has played a key role in creating the need for the concept of a global ethic.

(4) The conference held in Cape Town called upon the participating civil society institutions to pledge commitment to the shared ethics identified by the second conference and to their implementation.

(5) Projekt Weltethos, Piper 1990.

Declaration toward a Global Ethic (1993)⁽⁶⁾, 'Yes to a Global Ethic' (1995)⁽⁷⁾, 'A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics (1997)⁽⁸⁾, 'Science and Global Ethic' (1998)⁽⁹⁾, and 'Why a Global Ethic? Religion and Ethics at the Age of Globalization (2002)⁽¹⁰⁾. He also served as president of the Global Ethic Foundation which was created in Tübingen in Germany in 1951⁽¹¹⁾. The foundation adopted the above-mentioned Declaration as its core project and set as its objectives research development and the organization of gatherings and training actions in fields related to interfaith and inter-cultural relations.

Küng's Declaration played a key role in furthering the efforts to establish a global ethic, resulting in a series of reports and appeals issued in this regard, and of which we can mention the following:

- *Our Global Neighborhood* in the report drawn up by the Universal Governance Commission appointed by the United Nations and which dedicated its second chapter to the ethic of globalization.
- *Our Creative Diversity* (1995) in the lengthy report of the United Nations Global Commission for Culture and Development jointly, published by this Commission and by UNESCO.
- *A Universal Declaration of Global Ethics* drawn up in 1996 by the American theologian Leonard Swidler.
- *A Universal Declaration to Human Responsibilities* (1997) drawn up by the Interaction Council made up of former heads of state and government, and submitted to the heads of state and government, to the United Nations, and to UNESCO.
- *UNESCO's Universal Ethic Project* put together by its UNESCO's Philosophy and Ethic Division and in pursuance of which two major international conferences were organized. The first one was held in Paris around the theme: "Prolegomena to a Universal Ethic" in 1997, and the second one in Napoli in the same year. Both these conferences were attended by prominent ethics philosophers from around the world.
- *The Declaration of Human Rights and Responsibilities* issued in 1999 by the 3rd Parliament of the World's Religions held in Cape Town, and which

(6) Erklärung zum Weltethos, Piper, 1993.

(7) Ja zum Weltethos, Piper, 1995.

(8) Weltethos für Weltpolitik und Weltwirtschaft, Piper, 1998.

(9) Wissenschaft und Weltethos, Piper 1998

(10) Wozu Weltethos? Religion und Ethik in Zeiten der Globalisierung.

(11) Global Ethic Foundation, see the institution's website at: www.weltethos.org.

reaffirmed the outcome of the 2nd conference and invited relevant role-players to bring this Declaration into reality.

Our interest lies in the declaration issued by the 2nd Conference of the World's Religions, i.e. the Declaration toward a Global Ethic⁽¹²⁾ signed by a large number of leading figures with various religious affiliations, including Muslims. Among these personalities were the Pakistan-born scholar Mohamed Hamidallah and the Iranian thinker Hussein Nassr.

1- Analysis of the Declaration toward a Global Ethic:

We will now engage in an analysis of this Declaration's contents. Its preamble states that its formulation was largely motivated by the many crises faced by the world: an economic crisis that reveals itself in the poverty, starvation, exploitation, glaring social disparities between rich and poor, and the massive debts crushing many poor countries; an environmental crisis that is manifest in the disruption of all ecosystems as a result of unbridled exploitation of the earth's natural resources; a political crisis that is reflected in the religious conflicts opposing various religions, the escalating tensions and widening chasms between the religious and the secular, further compounded by violent power conflicts, and finally a social crisis manifest in the disregard of justice, the spread of social disarray, the collapse of the family institution and the marginalization of women.

The Declaration then moves on to edify its ethics on four fundamental affirmations:

1.1. The mandatory nature of a global ethic: we cannot build a new world that would help us transcend this multifaceted crisis without ethics that all nations can adhere to. And since mankind is one large family, each individual carries the burden of responsibility in building this new world order. The responsibility of religionists is to attain consensus on a set of binding values, unwavering criteria and fundamental practices in ways that would make this consensus the bare minimum necessary for the emergence of a global ethic around which would be built the rights of human beings as contained in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

1.2. The fundamental demand for humane treatment phrased in the following way: every human being must be treated humanely. This implies that the individual's dignity is safeguarded, that he is not deprived of his inalienable rights

(12) Cf. the full text of this Declaration at: <http://www.weltethos.org>.

and is not subjugated to serve another human being, and that his worth is not valued in terms of his race, gender, age, color, religion, language, or homeland or community. Associated with this demand is the Golden Rule, which for thousands of years has been affirmed in many religious and ethical traditions, as a fundamental principle upon which to base a global ethic: "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others," or in positive terms, "What you wish done to yourself, do to others." No major religion is devoid of an image or many related to this rule. In Islam, it acquires different forms and uniqueness in the sense that a Muslim's faith is conditional upon this treatment. On the issue of faith, the noble hadith says: "*None of you is a true believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself*"⁽¹³⁾, and: "*Wish on people what you wish on yourself and you shall attain faith*"⁽¹⁴⁾. It is clear that this rule is based on the avoidance of all forms of injustice that could result from egotism in various aspects of life.

1.3. Four important affirmations that flow from the demand for human treatment and similarly manifest in two, negative and positive versions, namely:

- a- Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life: The negative formulation of this affirmation is 'Do not kill' and its positive one is "respect life". This commitment presupposes the peaceful resolution of conflicts within a framework of justice while endeavoring to foster love for peace in younger generations since humanity cannot exist without world peace. It also prohibits torturing another human being, be it physically or psychologically, or killing him unless he violates the rights of others. Adhering to this commitment also entails focusing on the natural foundations of life because the components of this planet are all interrelated and the

(13) The *Shiaa* narrate many *hadiths* and reports in this regard. It is narrated on the authority of Al-Sadeq that the Prophet - peace be upon him- said: "*The most righteous of all people is the one who loves for people what he loves for himself and hates for them what he hates for himself*". In his message to Mohamed Ibn Abi Bakr, Amir al-Mumineen, peace be upon him- wrote: "*Love for the generality of your subjects what you love for yourself and for your loved ones, and hate for them what you hate for yourself and your loved ones, for that is greater proof of your virtue and a greater measure of justice for your subjects.*"

(14) Al-Siouti, *al-Jamii al-Saghir*, and also *Saheeh al-Bukhari*, it is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "*Abu Huraira, be devout and you will be the best of all worshippers, accept that which Allah has proportioned for you and you shall be the richest of all men. Love for believers what you love for yourself and your family and hate for them what you hate for yourself and family and you shall a true believer, be a good neighbor and you shall be a Muslim. Avoid excessive laughter for in there lies corruption of the heart.*"

connection desired with the planet is one of harmony and interaction and not one of dominance.

- b- Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order. The negative formulation of this commitment is 'you shall not steal' and its positive one is 'deal honestly and fairly!' This second commitment is based on the premise of considering private property a right that gives rise to obligations towards others. In this manner, managing individual interests must take society's needs into consideration. This commitment also finds body in the act of raising younger generations on the moral values of compassion, empathy and care for the weak and the needy. It should exceed individual goodwill actions and assistance projects to some disadvantaged societies in order to reach a level where the assistance is directed at rebuilding world economy institutions. This would help limit wild consumption and accumulation of immense wealth and shift economic power from a contest for control to serving mankind and achieving equity between nations. Indeed, there can be no world peace in the absence of world justice.
- c- Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness: the negative formulation of this commitment is "you shall not lie!" and its positive one is "speak and act truthfully!" This commitment dictates that representatives of religions rise above the denigration of other religions, the tarnishing of their precepts and the sanctioning of hatred and fanaticism against their followers. The media, artists, writers, scientists, politicians and rulers are all called upon to shun all forms of distortion, misleading, hypocrisy, deception, opportunism and untruthfulness in their words and writings, ensuring at the same time that the young are raised in the respect of values of truthfulness in thought, word and deed. There can be no global justice in the absence of truthfulness in words and deeds among human beings.
- d- Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women. The negative formulation of this commitment is 'you shall not commit sexual immorality' and its positive one is 'respect and love one another!' This final commitment is aimed at the avoidance of all forms of sexual exploitation, gender-based discrimination and the patriarchal domination that adult or underage females are subjected to, sensitizing youth at the same time to the fact the sexuality is not a destructive force but a creative and affirmative

partnership where life is shared with a sense of responsibility, mutual respect, love and trust. Indeed, humanity cannot be complete in the absence of a shared life built around the respect of both partners.

1.4. Transformation of consciousness: earth cannot be changed unless this transformation starts in the consciousness of individuals and society. Therefore, each individual and society should recognize and appreciate their share of the responsibility in awakening the spiritual powers that lie dormant in men through, reflection, meditation, praying⁽¹⁵⁾ and positive thinking.

In its conclusion, the Declaration recognizes the difficulty of achieving consensus on many disputed ethical questions such as biological, sexual, scientific, media, economic and political ethics. But it does indicate that suitable solutions can be attained in the spirit of the fundamental principle developed in the Declaration. It finally urges communities of believers to formulate their very specific ethics that shed light on their stance on crucial issues such as life, death, the enduring of suffering, happiness, selfless sacrifice and compassion.

Having reviewed the guidelines of the global ethic as these were addressed in the Declaration, we will now present our own critical remarks on these ethics.

2- Evaluating the Declaration toward a Global Ethic:

It is doubtless that this vanguard initiative of the Parliament of the World's Religions reflects a profound awareness among religious contemporaries of two core issues:

First: Religions are in need of peaceful interfaith dialogue and of seeking what unites them, particularly in light of the history of wars in Europe and the blame attributed to religion in kindling these wars recalled in the Declaration by the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Secondly, religions can still play a key role in the world despite the latter's strong attachment to secularity and its drive towards a globalization that has almost managed to economically, politically and culturally unify its far reaches. The authors of the Declaration seem in fact to be gearing up to a morality-based religious globalization.

(15) The term praying refers to making request (as in the German term Gebet) and not in the ritual concept known to Muslims.

Yet, and despite the heightened awareness reflected by the Declaration, there is room for two critical remarks:

First: it is not enough for global ethics to have religious roots. These ethics should enhance the value of religion in this embattled world in the same way that consensus was reached on values that can resolve the world's crises: non-violence, solidarity, tolerance and equality. This value cannot thrive unless these global ethics raise the banner of religion and reinforce its status, thus achieving what I call **the empowerment of religion in the world**. The core duty of religion is to ensure the sustainability of its role in guiding nations on a path that leads to their wellbeing and serves their interests, and to be perpetually on the ready to rescue humanity from the pitfalls preying on it, rather than ensuring that the ethics agreed upon replace religion or, even worse, obviate the need for it.

Secondly, it is not enough that the global ethic enjoys the consensus of all religions. Instead, it should be able to elevate the morals of mankind to a level that no religion can reach on its own, otherwise the consensus of religions becomes obsolete and useless. These morals can only be elevated if they enhance and develop the ethic, achieving what I call a **moral advancement of the world**. The underlying purpose of the global ethic is to empower the human being to acquire a moral superpower that can stand up to all crises in ways that cannot mastered by the morals of a religion on its own.

With these observations in mind, we can raise the following two questions:

First: Is the Declaration toward a Global Ethic conducive to the empowerment of religion in the world?

Second: Does the Declaration toward a Global Ethic help heighten morality in the world?

Let us address the first question, and then we will give the second one its due attention.

2.1. The Declaration and failing the condition of religious empowerment:

If we peruse this Declaration, our attention will be drawn to a number of processes applied by the authors and indicating an explicit dismissal of some religious and political components. These processes hold evidence that the Declaration failed the prerequisite of religious empowerment.

2.1.1. How the Declaration failed the condition of religious empowerment:

The first of these aspects is the omission of the foundation. The authors claim that their Declaration is explicitly founded on religion, arguing conviction

that the absolute truth transcends this world and that the ethics agreed upon are intrinsic to this spiritual truth. Yet, if we look closely at the four affirmations of this Declaration, we fail to see where this metaphysical truth falls in the structure of ethics, nor how man's morality is achieved by adhering to them. In fact, all that we come across is intimation that religions preach such or the other ethic or that the spirit of religious heritage incites man to behave in one way or the other, this ethic or that behavior being self-sufficient as they stand. Therefore, we cannot consider this indication as a religious foundation for the global ethic because such foundation presupposes the existence of spiritual principles and a metaphysical truth from which these ethics flow. Instead, the Declaration limits itself to attributing to religion in a general way the ethics flowing from the fundamental demand of humane treatment: non-violence, solidarity, tolerance and equality. Yet, there is a tremendous difference between attributing something to religion and founding it on religion.

The second failing is the suppression of the name of God. The Declaration's authors deemed it wiser not to open their text with the name of God, arguing the absence of consensus between religions on this. Their conference brought together four groupings which they named: prophetic religions of the Near East comprising Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Sufi religions of India such as Buddhism and Hinduism, wisdom-religions of the Far East such as Confucianism, Taoism and the religions of Japan, and finally the natural religions of Africa, Asia, America and Australia. Needless to say, the perceptions held by these religions of divinity are so divergent and disparate that some religions have no notion of a divine entity while others believe in multiple deities of whom none is the Almighty.

Still, entirely suppressing the name of God remains unacceptable. It may have proven difficult to start the Declaration with God's name for the above considerations, but there is no reason why another formulation could not be found to satisfy all beliefs such as "In the name of the one we worship", "in the name of the religion we believe in", or at least the more general formulation of "in the name of the religion we uphold". Instead, the Declaration came devoid of all this, thus confining itself within the same context as declarations that are unfounded on religion, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Third: the suppression of faith. The Declaration's authors wished non-religionists to embrace the ethics they listed along with the religionists. This explains why the concept of faith was entirely absent from the moral values the Declaration promoted in its four affirmations although faith has a spiritual significance that is common to all religions. And since this spiritual value was of little significance to non-religionists it was not deemed equal to the values

mentioned in the Declaration. The problem is that the consensus of religionists does not seem to suffice in deciding on global ethics as these must also meet with the approval of non-religionists. Therefore, and in drafting this Declaration, the religionists, along with representing their fellow religionists, seem to have also appointed themselves as proxies for non-religionists.

Fourth: eliminating religious action. Where the Declaration addresses the foundations of global ethic, there is no mention of religious activity, and even less an explanation of the merit of religious action in embodying these ethics. The reader of the Declaration can easily develop the impression that these ethics can be achieved through some other way, an illusion that will persist even after the Declaration states, towards the part dedicated to ethics, that prayer is one channel through which behavior and hearts can be changed. In fact, the value of this mention is quickly dispelled when prayer comes third after meditation as the method best adopted by wisdom-religions, and reflection as the medium used by spiritual religions. Worse, any importance of this mention vanishes entirely since it only precedes positive thinking as the means of achieving the transformation of consciousness. Thus, the path of worship that is profoundly entrenched in faith and action and presented by praying loses all advantage on the theoretical path of positive thinking which is the farthest removed from faith and action. For non-religionists, what prayer can achieve, prayer being the embodiment par excellence of faith, thought can also achieve.

In view of the above reproaches to the Declaration toward a **Global Ethic**, namely: absence of foundation, suppression of the name of God, omission of faith and suppression of religious action, it becomes clear that this Declaration, albeit issued by people of religion, is far from representing religious empowerment in the world, nor does it elevate or reinforce the position of religion. The two components of religion which are faith and religious action were pushed to the side when formulating these ethics. The Declaration states that giving faith the consideration it warrants limits the globalism of ethics while its omission does not affect it. It also decides that what can be achieved through religious action can be achieved through other methods, and even through its opposites.

2.1.2. Secularity and the global ethic

Secularity promotes three main principles: the individualization of religion, the manifold nature of truth and the rule of reason. We have therefore to establish how each of these principles contributes towards the creation of a global ethic.

A) The principle of the individualization of religion: This first principle presupposes that religion, as it is known, falls within the individual's private

ambit. Secularity has an advantage over the Parliament of Religions in the sense that it addresses the private nature of religion in a consistent and harmonious way. It promotes this principle and operates by its rules while the Parliament promotes the opposite - i.e. religious faith is shared by all believers - but does not apply it.

The application of the principle of individualization of religion gives rise to results that negate the suspicion of subjectivism from the global ethics promoted by secularity.

The **first** result is that religion does not extend to others. From a secular point of view, the presence of religionists at an international conference that decides to draw up a declaration of ethics including non-religionists is tantamount to their non-presence since this presence influences the contents of the declaration to the same extent that the presence of non-religionists does.

Secondly, religion cannot influence social interactions since secularity negates religious action. As such, it entirely curtails any projection of this action outside the private realm in such a way as to influence the interactions of the religious with the non-religious.

Thirdly, religion does not give birth to a global ethic since it is subjective in the eyes of the secularist and as such it can only create an ethic of the same genre, i.e. subjective, whereas the global ethic cannot be promoted by a single entity and should involve several entities that move together in line with the symbiosis uniting them.

B- The principle of the multiplicity of the truth: the fundament of this principle is that the truth does not only have multiple manifestations but is multiple per se. Here again, secularity has an advantage over the Parliament of Religions in that its stance vis-à-vis the multiplicity of religious truth is coherent and free of contradictions. Secularity recognizes the multiplicity of religions and considers that the legitimacy of this multiplicity is no less than the legitimacy of cultural multiplicity, while the Parliament of Religions admits the reality of religious multiplicity but remains silent about its legitimacy.

The principle of truth multiplicity removes the suspicion of absolutism from the global ethics that the secularist undertakes to establish.

- The truth is variable since it is affected by time and space considerations that keep fluctuating and alter it as they change. Therefore, the global ethics espoused by secularists should be open to change and modification

and agreement about them should be amendable. This dynamism represents a source of enrichment and continuity that is not available to other ethics that lean towards fixity under one form under the pretext of having absolute truths as their backbone.

- Plurality presupposes tolerance. When the secularist decided that religious truths are multiple, he did not only acknowledge the other's right to uphold his own truth, but also that the other version of the truth could be as valid or invalid as his own and that it can tolerate the other's without affecting the strength of his faith in it.

C- The principle of the rule of reason. This principle stipulates that there can be no better reference in all matters than the mind since human beings share nothing more equally than reason. Again, secularity has the upper hand over the Parliament of Religions in the sense that its stance towards the relationship of ethics and reason is coherent and free of contradictions, unlike that of the Parliament of Religions. Since the ethics that should prevail are shared by all nations, secularity considers them as reason-related while the Parliament of the world's Religions considers them religious although religions differ from one nation to another.

The principle of the rule of reason negates the suspicion of irrationalism from the global ethic formulated by the secularist.

First: reason has a say in all matters. The secularist removes all restrictions on the mind to whose perception nothing can escape, pushing to the side any other means that may replace or even supersede it. When the mind acquires such qualities, the secularist's recourse to it in inferring global ethics enhances his conviction of the validity and utility of what this reason has inferred since he believes the mind to be in a perpetual process of auto-correction.

Second: since the mind is autonomous, the secularist considers that it need not derive from the outside those values that will guide its actions and define its course. Therefore, the global ethics that the mind establishes are derived from within the mind itself.

Third: the mind regards all religious texts as equal in value. The secularist considers that the text has no room besides the mind unless it follows and bows to its rule. And since for him religious texts contradict more than anything else the mind's stipulations, they all become equal in value. The only factor that could set any distinction between them or confer more importance on one text over the other -which is the mind- is initially absent

according to him. Therefore, the irrational that created these texts can only be one and the same even if it comes under different colors.

Thus, we come to the conclusion that secularists were more capable than religionists behind the above Declaration of establishing a global ethic since they managed to preserve the cohesion of their stances on concepts such as religion, truth and mind in their relationship to ethic while the first could not. They also managed to avoid the three pitfalls of subjectivism, absolutism, and irrationalism that affect the stances of the others. If religionists choose -as did the Parliament of Religions- to strip global ethics from religion for the sake of accommodating non-religionists, then their logic can only suffer for it and they therefore lose the legitimacy of addressing these ethics.

Having responded to the first question and proven that the Declaration toward a Global Ethic does not secure a firm position for religion in the world, making secularists more apt to issue such declaration than religionists, we move to the second question on whether the Declaration achieves any form of ethical advancement.

2.2. The Declaration and failing the condition of moral advancement:

There are three aspects proving that this Declaration has failed the condition of ethical advancement. First of all, some of the values promoted by the Declaration cannot be achieved, such as world peace. Secondly, the values that were actually achieved are far below the level required. And thirdly, the values that should have been achieved, such as faith, were not. Let us address each of these failings in more detail.

2.2.1. How the Declaration fails the condition of achieving moral advancement:

The first proof of this failure is that the Declaration cannot achieve world peace. If we go back to Hans Küng's book *Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration* from which the said Declaration was inspired, we will realize that he had affixed a secondary title to it which was: **World Peace through Interfaith Peace**. Then he introduced a series of postulates of which he explicitly declared four and veiled one. These postulates were:

- No peace in the world without interfaith peace (explicit).
- No interfaith peace without interfaith dialogue (explicit).
- No interfaith dialogue without consensus on common moral values, i.e. a global ethic (implicit).
- No survival for humanity without a global ethic (explicit).

What we conclude from these postulates is that Küng set before his eyes the goal of advancing a global ethic and his intention is clear in that he aspires to see nations and individuals achieve a fundamental value that so far has not been achieved, namely world peace.

Although Küng was right in inviting to peace as a lofty value that elevates mankind to higher planes, his first postulate, which is 'no world peace without interfaith peace' was tainted, its naturally negative formulation being open to interpretation, not in the sense that one of the conditions of world peace is 'interfaith peace', or the existence of economic peace or social peace, but in the sense that the obstacle to world peace is the existence of wars among religions. Should these obstacles be lifted, can world peace become a reality? Maybe Küng's thesis is no more than the echo of a thesis etched in the minds through long and recurrent mentions in writings and orally and that is still heavily peddled today to judge by the latest invention of the 'clash of civilizations' term.

This old thesis evolves around the **belief that religion is at root of all wars**, a claim that would take long to respond to and therefore we will record only three objections that cast doubt on its validity:

A- If this thesis could be correct, then it only applies to some religions, or rather to some or other form of religiosity attached to any given religion, namely radical dogma. The Catholic and Protestant wars in France throughout the 16th century are an eloquent example of the transient religious radicalism to which this thesis applies.

B- This thesis almost limits the causes of war to such metaphysical factors as faith or the quest for salvation, whereas the triggers of wars are many, complex and governed by an interplay of all sorts of possible interests, although some wars may be largely dominated by one or the other cause or interest⁽¹⁶⁾. To us, it seems that wars are never purely and entirely fuelled by religion.⁽¹⁷⁾

C- This thesis entirely disregards a crucial fact, namely the exploitation of religion. It is often the case that a war erupts for reasons and considerations unrelated to religion, but those who have sparked it often resort to religion

(16) There are also psychological reasons behind the quest for power, social factors such as defending a cultural identity or the desire to lift an injustice, economic reasons such as the usurpation of resources and the race for material gain, and political motives such as the occupation of territories and the thirst for hegemony.

(17) Nothing can equal war in the ambiguity of its causes and motives.

to confer legitimacy on it or win over allies, religion becoming the victim of these material wars where the enemy seems to be religion per se instead of being, as they allege, the cause behind wars.

If the thesis of religion as the root of all wars becomes void, the thesis of world peace being solely contingent upon interfaith peace will also fall away, particularly since religion, for those promoting this thesis, is reduced to a set of metaphysical beliefs upheld by the individual and has no sway over the organization of social institutions in the world. How can it then hold such a power over the world? The truth is that in today's world war cannot be sparked by religion but religions are used as its fuel. In today's world, the cause of war is the hegemonic power held in monopoly by the world's superpowers and religion may be used to serve the interests of those stoking the fires of war, thus turning it into a war on religion as much as it is a war on the enemy.

If it is confirmed that world peace is not in the hands of the religionists solely, then there would be no need to seek the concordance of religions -as is the case of the Parliament of the World's Religions, in advancing humanity's morals by pursuing this value. All that this concordance can achieve is to serve as an opportunity to urge for world peace by preaching and spreading good advice. As for peace, as a lofty human value, whether it is global or not, there is no respected religion that does not strongly promote it and strive to achieve it where it is much needed, starting with relations between two people and ending with relations between two nations. There is no better example than the divine religions that made the declaration of peace a greeting and the prelude to any interaction or communication between individuals.

The second aspect of the Declaration's failure to achieve moral advancement is that it promotes a minimal level of ethics. Küng admits that the global ethic reduces its association with religions to the ethical load that is common to them both. As previously mentioned, this comprises some values, constants and basic practices. It is therefore clear that this common destiny cannot exceed the minimum level at which all religions meet despite their differences. The truth is, the moral elements that make up the global ethic are less than the moral elements that could make up any religion since this religion needs to include, in addition to these common values, other elements that are specific to it and shared by no one, otherwise it would become the global ethic itself, which is not possible.

It may be argued that the Parliament of the World's Religions made all religions equal so there can be no upper or lower one, nor better or worse. The answer is that this de facto equality relates to the overall affiliation to religion as

such and is an inalienable right of all religions, but it is not equality in terms of the specific components that make up each religion, its beliefs, values, rules and models, nor is it equality in worth. If such was the case, the Parliament of the World's Religions would have opened itself up to the plague of irrationalism and the absurd and therefore forfeited the criteria of 'truthfulness, and even that of 'truth'. If the Parliament were to believe all religions despite the contradictions of some of their beliefs and their dissimilarity in principles, and as a result considered them as equal to factual truth, then it would have refuted all these religions and labeled them as fallacies since there would be no reason to believe in one religion to the exclusion of others, or to even believe in religion in the first place.⁽¹⁸⁾

No one can deny that religions vary in the number of their components, and there is no harm in engaging in a comparison of their worth in terms of these components' nature, value or impact. If differences did not exist between religions in their particularities, in fact were it not for the superiority of one over the other, there would have been no need for organizing gatherings and conferences to seek concord about one or the other detail or identify shared points.

If we concede that global ethics, as presented in the Declaration, are lesser in the sense that their number is small, we will see that they cannot elevate humanity more than what a given religion can do on its own since the moralization potentialities contained in these elements remain lesser than their counterparts in the components of one religion. Furthermore, even the religion ranked on a low scale can elevate this ethic higher than the Declaration can ever do since it comprises two elements that are nowhere to be found in the Declaration and that can boost ethical advancement. The first element is that these common ethics are based on religious acts, which increases the share of the religionist in these ethics to match his dedication to religious action. The more profound his dedication to religion is, the more ethics he will acquire, and vice versa since there is no other way of acquiring morality than religious endeavor. The second element is that religion provides specific guidelines as to how a person should behave, conditioned by morality, in all situations where he may find himself, knowing fully well that these conditions and situations represent the testing grounds of these moral values upheld by religion.

The third aspect of failure to meet the condition of ethical advancement is that this Declaration lacks the mainstay of every religion. Küng refuses that the

(18) These results flow automatically from the thesis of 'absolute religious relativism' and nothing can be more detrimental to religions than this thesis.

Declaration toward a Global Ethic serve as the core of a unifying universal religion besides the existing religions, or a religion constructed from all these religions⁽¹⁹⁾ for the following two reasons: this Declaration cannot serve as a substitute for holy books: the Torah of the Jews, Jesus' sermon on the Mount, the Muslims' Quran, the Hindus' Bhagavad Gita, Buddha's teachings or the Analects of Confucius, because they are the mainstay of people's faith and actions, and even the secret of their existence and their *raison d'être*. Secondly, because these books came complete with a full set of morals compared to which the Global Ethic Declaration is nothing but a seed.

If we grant Küng his belief in the impossibility of the Declaration's serving as an alternative to religious books and that these books did bring full sets of morals, we cannot concede that this Declaration constitutes the core of these ethics. In essence, the core is supposed to hold the key components of what it is serving as a core for in so much that if these components were to come to fruition they would give birth to the same thing. As it stands, the ethic of the Declaration does not comprise all the central components of religious morals and therefore does not deserve to serve as its core. The core element without which religion cannot be is lost in this Declaration despite the fact that Küng admitted, quite explicitly, its central importance in all religions, namely faith. Therefore, no declaration can serve as the core of religious values unless it comprises the 'faith' factor and seats it in a lofty position.

Therefore, the Declaration should not have listed 'faith' as an attribute of the Parliament of the World's Religions only but should have made it one of the affirmations around which it built the global ethic. Just as this Declaration was founded on the culture of peace, the culture of solidarity, the culture of tolerance and the culture of equality, it should also have adopted the culture of faith as one of its fundamentals. There was an utter absence of wisdom, contrary to what the Declaration's authors believe, in their decision to disregard faith, for no human being who upholds any ethic can do without faith, not only because it is a duty in itself, but also because no duty can be accomplished without it, and this duty here is ethic. Faith is the spirit that elevates man's ethics and brings them closer to those revealed from the higher spheres. Since the four affirmations that the Declaration invited to: non-violence, solidarity, tolerance and equality lacked the component of faith, they amount to no more than calculated interests. But when faith exists at their root, they become more like gifts bestowed and stark is the difference between interests and gifts.

(19) Cf. pages 6 and 75 from *Manifeste pour une éthique planétaire* by H Küng and K.J. Kuschel.

Furthermore, the Declaration should have given precedence to the affirmation of faith since faith is the root and foundation of global ethic and presented it in a similar way as the other four affirmations i.e.: commitment to the culture of faith and the respect of religion. Had it done so, the Declaration would have achieved coherence and harmony and accomplished the mission of convincing non-religionists to respect religions as much as they respect the rights of others. Strong evidence of this shortfall in the Declaration is manifest in the denigration of messengers (peace be upon them) that we are witnessing today and the challenging of the religions they brought to the world, and in the audacity of some as they tarnish the Divine Entity even in societies that have for long held this entity above all questioning. All of this is committed in the name of freedom of expression as if this was an absolute right that cannot suffer any challenging or proven wrong in any way. To date, not a single document has been issued by an international organization to enforce the respect of this right as much as they do the respect of human rights. Had the Declaration stipulated this affirmation and illustrated its crucial importance, we would have been closer today to passing an international law banning anti-religious extremism, especially in view of the many endeavors made to ensure the adoption of this Declaration by such international organizations such as UNESCO and the United Nations.

The keenness of the Parliament of the World's Religions to please non-religionists into accepting and adhering to this ethic has resulted in a shameful undermining of the rights of religionists and deprived them of any mechanism of protection against the challenges and prejudice that the future could hold. It is now proven that this favoritism towards non-religionists or secularists did not even manage to secure their full commitment and merely resulted in weakening the Declaration's authenticity and its utility.

It is thus clear that by omitting faith the Declaration prevented the universal advancement of ethics. It equally failed to enhance the ethics of religionists since faith is the basis of their morality and they can only become morally stronger by strengthening their faith. Through this omission, the Declaration actually dealt a blow to faith and therefore brought no improvement to the ethics of religionists. It also failed to enhance the ethics of secularists enough to prevent them from undermining religionists in their faith. In any event, secularists would not have found serenity in ethics chosen by those who oppose their own creed even if these ethics were not entirely foreign to theirs. After all, they see themselves as more capable than religionists of discovering for themselves these faith-free ethics.

The response to the second question shows that the Declaration towards a Global Ethic did not fulfill the objective of bringing about the moral advancement it set out to achieve. It sought to ensure that religions, brought under the single banner of the Declaration, can elevate global ethics in ways that no religion could do individually. Instead, it was proven that any given religion was more capable of bringing about this ethical advancement than the Declaration -despite the consensus it enjoyed-, thanks to the power of faith and the religion's practical means that remain beyond the reach of this Declaration and its mechanisms. Therefore, we should seek this moral advancement in every religion apart.

Should we settle on this, we will need to address one question: is ethical advancement the same in every religion or does every religion have its own form of advancement that is either superior or inferior to the others'. Should this, as a result, incite us to seek moral development not in any religion but in the one that achieves the highest level of it, should such a religion exist?

2.2.2. The single religion and the global ethic: We mentioned earlier that religions vary in the number of their faith and practical components, and may also vary in nature. The existence of such variations in the components of religions should bring effects of the same nature, and any difference in components results in a difference in terms of impacts, and the first of these impacts are ethics. Therefore, ethics should vary in kind and in number from one religion to another just as the components that generate these ethics vary. Put this way, it becomes possible to say that some religions can achieve an ethical advancement that no other religion can achieve. The question is when can a specific religion be more effective in achieving ethical development than any other, or what are the religious criteria of ethical advancement?

It is not difficult to identify these criteria if we just ponder what we previously said about the Declaration towards a Global Ethic in terms of methodology and content. This reflection will enable us to infer four main criteria of advancement which if met by any religion enrich its share of moral development more than any other religion that does not meet the same criteria or meets only some of them. These are:

A- The criterion of awareness of the connection between religiosity and morality: meaning that religion can be more conscious of the link between religious action and moral behavior. This criterion is the practical basis that backs any type of ethic and which proved to be lacking in the Declaration toward a Global Ethic.

B- The criterion of adherence to core moral guidelines: meaning that a religion could be more predisposed to meet moral guidelines than others. Needless

to say, the second criterion presupposes that this religion should at least meet the five moral guidelines of which the Declaration mentioned four.

C- The criterion of religion's broad scope: religion can bring under the banner of ethics what others cannot. This third criterion arises from the objective listed in the Declaration as the 'demand for humane treatment'. In essence, the higher the ethics applied by a believer in dealing with the other, regardless of the nature of their interaction, the closer he is to treating this person in a humane way.

D- The criterion of moral augmentation entails that religion brings about new moral stages to humanity thus building on earlier stages reached by earlier religions. This fourth criterion is inferred from the universal character of the ethics adopted by the Declaration and which presupposes the unity of mankind's moral history, and that the earth's nations have experienced multiple moral stages, the more recent ones being more advanced than earlier ones by virtue of a law of accumulation of ethics.⁽²⁰⁾

If we apply these four standards to religion - although this application is impossible to carry out by one person - we will come up with two groups of religions. To one category some of these criteria will apply, and to the second category all criteria will apply, and we will realize that the religion we seek falls in the latter category. Chances are there will more than one religion in this category. Should this be the case, we will need to devise a more advanced criterion that will enable us to choose from among the religions meeting the four criteria the one that is most deserving of bringing about the moral advancement we seek, and of being a source of the global ethic. This new criterion is formulated as follows:

- This religion should reach the highest level in meeting the four criteria in the following way:
 - The religion will fully meet the criterion of awareness of the connection between religiosity and morality when this link reaches a perfect synergy level where there can be no ethical behavior without religious action and no religious action without ethical behavior.
 - The religion will fully meet the criterion of expanding the scope of ethics when it elevates material work to the level of religious action and makes it a creator of morality just as it was a creation of this morality.

(20) In the same way that there is an accumulation of the knowledge acquired by man in his dealings, there is also an accumulation of morals and practices that he acquires from his dealings with others.

- The religion will fully meet the criterion of ethical differentiation when it embarked on the last phase in the moralization brought by religions and showed that whenever religion tackles this loftiest of all criteria it would take the lead over all other religions, and become worthy of feeding all nations with its ethics.

Since there is little room to engage in a comparison of all religions that fall in the second category, we can start by looking at one, and should it meet these criteria we will search no further and consider it the most advanced and most fulfilling of the desired global ethics. Should this religion give rise to any objections, we would ask the party raising the objection to provide evidence that another religion is more worthy of this position.

2.2.3 Applying the supreme criterion on Islam: It is only natural that one would start with one's own religion, apply the criterion and test the level of its ethical perfection. Let us then review Islam which we chose in light of the aforementioned criterion to see if this religion can fully meet the four moral advancement criteria.

A- Synergy between religious action and moral behavior: Islam set out as on a quest to perfect the process of human moralization initiated by preceding religions, as the noble *hadith* says: “*I was only sent to perfect good character*”. Everything ordained by Islam, the actions of the senses and those of the heart are different means through which this religion can bring about a heightened morality. This fulfillment takes basically three forms:

One of these is augmentation, meaning that it enhances prior ethics by at least one unprecedented level, as is the case with the ethic of sincerity. There is sincerity, which is a lofty form of behavior, and there is ultimate sincerity which is a loftier form where this truthfulness and sincerity is not directly perceived.

The second form is revelation since it opens in prior ethics a dimension that was not opened before. This is the case with injustice Islam having introduced the concept of 'injustice to the self' to complement 'injustice towards the other'. It even made injustice towards others secondary to the injustice towards the self and introduced an element that did not fall under injustice, namely the idolization of entities besides the Supreme One.

The third one is innovation since it derives from a given ethic what was not attributed to it in the past. A simple example is what was brought under the 'war ethic' such as the prohibition of mutilation, of felling trees, burning fields and of demolishing homes.

B- Heeding the five indisputable ethical guidelines with precedence given to faith. Muslims concur that the Islamic Charia is founded on what they termed 'the five essential objectives'. If we compare these five objectives with the five affirmations we will come up with an extraordinary similarity. This similarity is apparent in the comparisons that we can draw between:

- A commitment to the culture of faith and respect of religion which can be summarized in the respect of religion vs. the safeguarding of religion.
- A commitment to the culture of peace and respect of life which can be summarized in the respect of life vs. the preservation of life.
- A commitment to the culture of tolerance and truthfulness - which can be summarized in truthfulness in life vs. the preservation of reason.
- A commitment to the culture of solidarity and a fair economic system which can be summarized in a fair economic system vs. the preservation of property.
- A commitment to the culture of equality in rights and gender partnership which can be summarized in partnership of the genders vs. the preservation of procreation.

While the last four objectives imply the safeguarding of religion -the context indicating that they can only be safeguarded through the rules of the Islamic Charia- Muslim scholars agreed by consensus to place the objective of religion safeguarding at the forefront, vision and foresight allowing them to understand that other objectives can be preserved in other ways and with rules other than religious ones. We have seen how the omission of this commitment from the Declaration toward a Global Ethic has resulted in a truncated declaration that does not befit the position of religionists and that is more deserving of being presented by non-religionists because they are better suited to draft it since it truly reflects their stance.

C. Raising worldly action to the status of religious action. As stated in the noble *hadith*: “*Your actions are judged in light of your intentions*”, Islam places spiritual values in a high position. At the forefront of these values are the following three: good intention, truthfulness and sincerity. Thanks to these values, Islam could expand the scope of religious action in such a way as to include that which was not part of it and what is not act of worship or a pious action becomes one. Observe how the two explicitly material actions of commercial activity and marital relations become, the moment the intention behind them is to obey Allah's commands, two actions for which reward is due, similar to any other act of pure worship.

This possibility of inclusiveness and expansion that exists in Islam enables it to meet the challenges created by transformations in worldly actions. As such, Islam can renew ethics in ways that accommodate these material changes. Any novel form of action can confer on the worker the most relevant ethic provided this deed is undertaken with the intention of worship.

D. Embarking on the last phase of the human moralization process: in terms of the history of religions, divine monotheist religions are considered as subsequent to polytheist religions although the latter continue to exist today. This only goes to prove that religions allow the same principle of accumulation as human knowledge. The monotheist religion thus acquires advanced morals compared to the polytheist one. It is also a fact that Islam adds on to the moral potentialities it shares with previous religions ethics that are unique to it for the simple reason that the moral age experienced now by humanity is truly that of Islam and not other religions, monotheist or polytheist alike. By virtue of this, Muslims become morally responsible for all that happens to people in their time. Every religion has two ages: a moral age which starts with its revelation and ends with the revelation of the next religion. Since no religion will be revealed after Islam, this religion takes possession of the present and the future. Religions also have a historical age which starts with the beginning of revelation and ends with the end of faith in it, and this second age is the only one that other religions share with Islam.

If it is proven that the ethics of the one religion that can meet our needs for a global ethic, reference not being made here to the truncated ethics contained in the Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions and that Islam perfectly meets the requirements of ethical fulfillment, it becomes acceptable to consider Islam as the religion best placed to meet the ethical demands that can free our modern world from its social, economic, political and environmental crises, until otherwise proven.

To sum up, we can say that the Declaration toward a Global Ethic issued by the Parliament of the World's Religions invited to four fundamental values which are: solidarity, tolerance, non-violence and equality as global ethics inspired by religion and that form part of the golden rule of action adopted by all religions. However, this Declaration omitted two values that are fundamental to religion, namely faith and religious action which were considered by the Declaration's authors as non-global in the hope that the non-religionists would accept this global ethic. Through this omission, the Declaration failed in two of its duties:

The first one is empowering religion in the world. This failure gave non-religionists an edge in their ability to establish the global ethic that this Declaration set out to formulate considering the consistency and coherence of their position and their attachment to principles that are better suited to formulating an ethic that is devoid of the religious loan.

Secondly, the obligation to advance morals in the world, in which case any given religion becomes more apt than this Declaration to achieve the desired moral development. This religion is best represented by Islam in view of the fact that its moral scope encompasses those of all other divine religions and even further expands them.

This critique of the Declaration toward a Global Ethic gives rise to some crucial findings that refute the perceptions and opinions held about ethics and religions, perceptions that are so deeply ingrained in minds that they have become granted facts. These findings are:

- There are only two ways to formulate a global ethic. Either through secularity if religion is omitted from this ethic, or through religion if the latter is maintained and preserved.
- It is not the duty of the Parliament of the World's Religions to strive to convince non-religionists and strive to please them at the expense of the Declaration's principles, but rather the opposite, i.e. to convince them of the universality of religion, the rationalism of adhering to its tenets and the realism of referring to its precepts to resolve the world's problems.
- The globalism of an ethic does not lie in securing the consensus of individuals and nations about it because the object of their consensus maybe a fallacy or an injustice, but lies instead in proving with solid arguments that this ethic can meet global moral challenges.
- The major concern of interfaith dialogue is not the involvement of religionists in global issues where non-religionists could compete with them, but to pore over religious issues that affect the faith, rites and transactions of various religions.
- The dialogue between religionists and non-religionists -or secularists- is more useful in acquiring the ability to meet global religious and ethical challenges than dialogue between religionists or dialogue between non-religionists. This dialogue can raise two key issues with the potential of restoring the balance of relations between the two parties. One is the universality of religion vs. its local identity, and the second one is the generality of religion as opposed to its individuality.

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- Religious actions are not internal, limited to individuals and affecting only them. They are instead external acts that affect society and their repercussions go beyond their authors to affect all others.
 - Spiritual issues are not closed to rational discussion or to moral comparison because their rationalism is much broader than that of material issues and their morality is much more profoundly anchored than theirs.
 - Religions can be differentiated on the basis of their share of this extensive rationalism and this deep-seated morality, just as concepts and theories are differentiated in light of their share of abstract rationalism and free flowing morality.
 - World peace cannot be achieved through interfaith peace alone and as long as interests and the logic of power prevail and govern interactions between individuals and nations. We are of the opinion that this logic cannot endure till the end of times.
 - Harnessing the spirituality of religion to ensure material domination is a war against religion as much as it is a war against mankind, and a war against the self to the same extent as it is a war against the other.

SECOND GLOBAL ARAB ISLAMIC RENAISSANCE

Dr Said Bensaid Alaoui*

Renaissance is a social and intellectual process that seeks to return to a specific point of reference in time or to a cultural-spiritual model where actions succeed in transcending an unsatisfactory reality. It may be worth our while to first revisit the meaning of the term 'fall' in order to better grasp that of 'renaissance' or 'revival'. Indeed, many of our contemporary Arab scholars equate renaissance with revival. And if we ponder any given phase in the history of mankind when renaissance was a contemporaneous issue, we will find that all these movements converge at three main elements. Our attention is drawn to three models that diverge in their time and space dimensions but converge at the same elements: the 16th century Western European Renaissance, the 19th century Japanese Renaissance, and the first Arab Islamic Renaissance.

The first common denominator of these three episodes of renaissance is that they all adopted a specific era as a point of reference. The 16th century Western Renaissance adopted the Greco-Roman era as its frame of reference, and particularly the Greek civilization. The advocates of this renaissance preached a return to the original texts which, in their opinion, had been ruined by the interfering hand of the ecclesiastic institution which had stripped them of their great essence and transformed them into mere artifacts after stamping them with a theological cachet. The humanistic movement associated with the European Renaissance was no more than an unremitting effort to reconnect with the Greco-Roman thought considering it the primordial theoretical and spiritual foundation that inspired thought and action in the Western world. The champions of the Japanese renaissance who strived to break free from the terrible state of backwardness compared to the Western world, had also their own points of reference (addressed by the researcher Mohamed Aafif in his study on “*Origins of Modernism in Japan (1568-1868)*”, published by the Centre for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut⁽¹⁾). In the case of our Renaissance age thinkers, the call to look

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(1) Published in 2010.

back to the righteous forefathers reflected in fact a process of mental collage or, as described by Max Weber, an intellectual pattern that merged several eras to come up with a good role model from the past. The term '*salaf*' (predecessors) is essentially used to refer to the era of Rightly-guided Caliphs and Islam's golden age, that is if the criteria used in this definition is morality and virtuous religious behavior. The second definition of virtuous predecessors (*salaf salih*) relates to the first Abbasid era with its symbolic *Bayt Al Hikma* (House of Wisdom), the translation movement, the great influence of Greek thought and its adaptation to the Arab and Islamic environment, all of which made it possible to formulate new theories in grammar and rhetoric, develop theology, philosophy, jurisprudence and various Islamic sciences in budding stages or what came to be known as the age of codification. Another era that nurtured nostalgia was the Al-Andalus era, an epoch of dialogue, tolerance and co-existence, of Ibn Rochd, Ash-Shatibi and other prominent figures of Islam in the Middle Ages.

The second and sine qua non element of renaissance is the existence of a cultural project with clearly defined objectives and vision. This global cultural project was another common feature of the three renaissance eras we mentioned, as evidenced by the various movements to revive and restore the old books and documents that had fallen into oblivion. For example, Sheikh Mohamed Abdu and his co-disciples and students sought to print and publish major Islamic texts and documents that had been neglected or forgotten for centuries. These sources, which had constituted the mainstay and foundation of the Arab Islamic culture, had caved in before abridged versions, annotations, or academic sheets which were organized in the form of versified works and commentaries. Thus, the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Khadoun, (*Al-I'tissam*) and (*Al-Muwafaqaat*) of Ash-Shatibi and other mother sources came back to life and were published anew. In this drive to revive heritage, a wide movement of translation from European languages was initiated to acquire first-hand knowledge of these vital sources of knowledge that stimulated critical abilities and expanded the horizons of knowledge. The humanistic movement which paved the way for modern age in Western Europe was in essence a movement to liberate the human mind from the shackles of Church domination and part of a global cultural project which, although not obviously so, was an implicitly collective endeavor. The case of modern Japan is equally clear. The Meiji period and the decades that preceded it witnessed a feverish cultural activity when hundreds of Western books on various subjects were translated into Japanese.

The third element that is vital for every renaissance movement, as revealed by readings into mankind's global history, is the **human vector**. Any cultural project (the backbone of renaissance) is in need of patrons of culture and benefactors of thought and knowledge.

What is then the second Arab Renaissance? What are its resources and its components? What is this movement that we call today the Arab Spring and what could be its possible link to this second renaissance?

There is little doubt that the Arab and Islamic world has experienced a shockwave that affected its different parts at varying degrees after the fall of the Berlin Wall and how this fall symbolized the deterioration of the communist camp and the countries that evolved in its orbit. Many voices rose demanding democracy in the sense of political plurality and a parliamentary system close to the liberal model and advocating the respect of human rights. Such demands echoed values from the capitalist ideology and symbolized, in the discourse held by many totalitarian regimes in the Arab world, the opposite of demands for unity and socialism and the fight against imperialism under all its manifestations.

Thus, the outline of a new world was taking shape in the horizon, shaped by the profound changes and revolutions experienced in communication and information and the spread of satellite channels and new communication media. Emphasis should be laid on the direct impact of the information revolution, then that of the digital revolution on the entire Arab and Islamic world. For example, failure was the lot of all attempts made by the totalitarian regimes of these countries to censor the new forms of communication and the internet because these regimes themselves desperately needed these communication networks, first for security purposes since they could use them to hone intelligence and monitoring means thanks to the enormous amounts of information they contained, and secondly because these channels were needed for economy and trade, and most particularly for international exchanges.

Does all this mean that all the '**conditions of renaissance**' have come together in the Arab and Islamic world today and that consequently we are on the threshold of the much desired second renaissance?

In Arab countries experiencing a movement of revolt (under its myriad forms and manifestations), there is almost full consensus among observers and researchers on describing these movements as 'spontaneous'. This spontaneity automatically negates the element of planning and the absence of the base that formulates clear objectives and draws up a precise executive roadmap of organized

and systematic political action. Indeed, most political parties in the Arab and Islamic world were either taken by surprise, or at the least unable to understand what was unfolding before their eyes. What ensued was that many parties and organized political structures tried to contain these movements within their own folds. True, much was said about the role of the internet in mobilization and organization, and much was written about youth and virtual work and the association between these two. But the element of surprise and shock remained dominant and colored the reaction to these movements, either positively or negatively. Today, and now that these Arab revolution movements have completed their second year, attempts to understand them continue to stumble and falter. This in fact was a case of the historical act preceding the theoretical conceptualization. We do not share faith in the pure coincidence of human actions, nor do we deny the human mind's ability to grasp and understand and even predict what may happen through a logic-based approach supported with evidence. To accept such explanation would be tantamount to espousing the absurdity which negates the attributes of mind and reason, and relegate Man to a state of negativity and dependency that strip him of the blessing of reason that Allah bestowed on him. Instead, we believe that understanding and conscience may at times precede the historical act and at other times come after it, and both scenarios have their justifications.

The Arab revolution movements were firstly and primarily led by youth. Other age groups, some beyond the youth stage, subsequently joined the movement. There are two clear reasons for this: **one** is demographic in the sense that youth account for almost 60% of the Arab world's population. The **second** reason is social. Young people are the social stratum most exposed to frustrations, injustice and misunderstandings. In the opinion of older generations, Arab youth are entirely disconnected from politics, uncaring about public matters, fully dedicated to the pursuit of the trivial and the secondary among the Ummah's causes. Yet, the slogans brandished by the Arab movements stand in full denial of these assumptions. When we peruse these slogans we come to the realization that they are not in the least removed from politics, that they are in fact nothing but political. The demands for freedom and social justice, the rejection of corruption in all its financial, administrative and juridical manifestations, demanding that the symbols of this corruption leave, all of these are political demands even if their advocates do not engage in political work in the ordinary sense of seeking to gain and hold power. How arbitrary and unfair the judgments and accusations leveled against youth seem now, accusations that certainly lacked supporting evidence and justification. Conditions in the Arab world have reached

a level of conduciveness to qualitative change that may lead to an explosion, and most analytical readings have become obsolete and senseless.

Yet, there are stirrings of a second Arab renaissance pointing in the horizon, a renaissance that is at the same time a continuation and improvement over the renaissance age as it was experienced by Arab and Islamic thought late in the 19th century and in the first four decades of the 20th century. These stirrings may carry the promise of a better and positive future just as they may herald an era of negativity and barrenness.

Once again, we find ourselves before a new question: what share do culture and the cultural edifice hold in the Arab revolution?

And once again, the premise of this question is not skepticism, nor is it cynicism. It is instead a question laden with empathy and faith at the same time. Let me phrase it differently: the youth movements or uprisings driven by youth are more akin to a wake-up call and an exhortation to the Arab conscience. But they cannot evolve beyond these two roles. And while these two efforts are not to be sniffed at in terms of historical endeavor, the issue remains one of logical and natural means and capacities.

It is in organized and legitimate political action that we find the sound, normal and logical start. In this path are drawn the general guidelines of cultural action, the fine distinction between a rightful uprising that serves first and foremost the desire to change and aspires to renaissance in its fully integrated sense, and movements that call for change but lack a clear vision and programs that fully recognize the value of culture and its requirements.

Thus we come to a simple conclusion, as simple as all great things in life: renaissance, in its profound sense, cannot be dissociated from culture and from the cultural project. Renaissance cannot exist, nor be recognized, in the absence of these two elements.

We need to mention in this regard that the series '*On Islamic Renaissance Thought*' designed and adopted by Alexandrina Bibliotheca and in the preparation of which many blessed steps have already been taken, is the embodiment of the said cultural project, although this project is much broader and more comprehensive in scope. Truth be said, the endeavors of Alexandrina Bibliotheca contribute towards the advancement of the second Arab Islamic renaissance and pave the way for it.

What is the value of this contribution if we look at the classics that have been republished and at the new editions currently in the pipeline?⁽²⁾

To answer this question, we need to ponder the enlightenment load of the books and masterpieces left in legacy by the figures of Arab and Islamic renaissance. Indeed, the books inherited from that golden age are outstanding and of immense value in their enlightenment drive and their determination to celebrate intellect and freedom, in their recognition of human dignity, and their enlightened understanding of the Islamic religion. Such values are all present for example in the writings of Sheikh Rifaa al-Tahtawi in his book *'Manahij al-Libab al-Mesriyya fi Mabahij al-Adaab al-Asriyya'* and in *'al-Murshid al-Ameen lel Banat wal Baneen'*.

The desire to acquaint youth with all that is beneficial in the West is what motivated Ahmed Fares al-Shidiaq in *'Kashf al-Mukhabba 'an Funoon Europa'*, and Khayr-Eddine al-Tounssi in his book *'Fi Aqwam al Masalik fi Ma'rifat Ahwal al-Mamalik'*. The same applies, albeit in a slightly different way, to Abdelrahmane al-Kawakibi's book *'Tabaii al-Istibdaad wa Masari' al-Isti'baad'*, and al-Taher al-Haddad's book *'Imraatuna bayna al-Shariaa wal Mujtamaa'*. Alerting Muslims to what Sharia tenets they should recall today and apply after proper understanding was the gist of Allal al-Fassi' books *'Difaa '3an al-Sharia'* and *'Fi Maqasid al-Sharia al-Islamia wa Makarimiha'*, as well as of the book of al-Taher Ibn Ashour bearing an almost similar title. The same lessons we find in the books of Mostafa Abdulrazik and Ali Abdulrazik and in the writings of such erudite scholars from al-Azhar as Sheikh Abdulaziz Jawish and Sheikh Tantawi Jawhari in his understanding the Holy Quran - and all of these are but a few examples in a long list that is impossible to exhaust.

There is certainly no exaggeration in our description of the worth of the endeavors by Alexandrina Bibliotheca to advance the second Arab global renaissance. We may also need to point out that the enlightenment project planned by the Library (as described above) preceded the revolutions witnessed in many parts of the Arab world.

(2) Editor's note: Among the works published within this series are: *Tabai' al-Istbdad wa Masari' al-Isti'baad* by al-Kawakibi, *Tajdid al-Fikr al-Dini fin al-Islam* by Mohamed Iqbal, *Maqasid al-Sharia* by Ibn Ashour, *al-Tamheed li-Tarikh al-Falsafa al-Islamiyya* by Mostafa Abdulrazik, *al-Awda ila al-Dhat* by Ali Shari'ti, *al-Hayat al-Ruhiyya* by Mohamed Mostafa Hilmy, *al-Islam, Deen al -Fitra wal Huriyya* by Abdulaziz Jawish, *al-Madrassa al-Islamiyya* by Mohamed Baqir al-Sadr, *al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* by Ali Abdulrazik, *al-Huriyya al-Diniyya* by Abd al-Mutaal Al-Se'eedi, *Quran and Philosophy* by Mohamed Youssef Moussa, *Civilizational Issues: Conditions of Renaissance* by Malik Ibn Nabi, and *Manahij al-Albab al-Mesriyya fi Mabahij al-Adaab al-Asriyya* by Rifaa al-Tahtawi.

ARAB CULTURE: QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Dr Khalid Azab*

The international arena witnesses a profound controversy about the future of culture. In every state, the debate relates to the role of intellectuals - whether they constitute a significant category - as well as the role of culture in building the identity of society and the state. Let us start by defining the “intellectual”. Intellectuals are individuals who work in any area of knowledge production and dissemination. In the recent past, the problem was how to access information. The intellectual was the individual who memorized a huge quantity of information, and had the capacity of accommodating it into a vision made of a sequenced orderly image. However, since the information revolution of the internet era, the production of information has become the most important focus. The famous saying “**knowledge is power**” implies producing rather than merely possessing information. It is now the key to guarantee survival and continuity, in an era where political, economic, scientific and cultural struggle for dominion is in full swing. This explains the emergence of the term “digital gap”, which is increasingly widening on a daily basis. Concurrently, digital knowledge producers constantly raise problems, such as subjecting digital networks to strict control, intellectual property rights, imposing exaggerated prices on software programs, which deprives impoverished people from possessing modern knowledge.

This indicates that the operators in the areas of knowledge production should be endowed with a high standard of knowledge, and the capacity to store information in databanks to retrieve it when needed. The transformation of governments and institutions into electronic entities requires setting up centers aimed at explaining the changes occurring in societies due to such changes. Here comes the role of intellectuals who try to explain the transformations permeating societies, such as the integration of the entire set of communication tools and devices (television, radio, newspaper, book, internet services) into one gadget (iPad), as well as the unification of individuals with this device and the formation of virtual communities dissociated from reality. The explanation of technological and societal transformations constitutes a philosophy underlying a new trend that saves humanity from drowning in the digital world; it is even the unique truth in life.

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Hence, we will not talk about the role of the institutions or ministries of culture in making the future of Arab culture. Such institutions are still incapable of assuming this role. Intellectuals would join cultural institutions to gain notoriety, or they would serve as editors of cultural periodicals or scientific journals.

The definition of certain notions is in order:

- **Power of knowledge.**
- **Knowledge production,**
- **Producers of knowledge.**

Today, the power of knowledge determines the power of any state or society, and the production of knowledge is the tool to achieve such goal, namely obtaining knowledge. Producers of knowledge are no longer the traditional intellectuals. Rather, they are divided into the categories below:

- Inventors.
- Governmental institutions such as the ministers of culture and bodies which in the last fifty years have played a major role in knowledge production, and whose producers have turned into staff members working for such institutions.
- Civil society, in the form of institutions such as the Arab Thought (Al Fikr Al Arabi) Foundation, which was established thanks to the support of a set of Arab public figures, or individuals, such as *Al Thaqafa* (Culture), the Algerian journal which managed to transmit Algerian culture beyond its narrow national borders, to the entire Arab world at the same time, due to volunteering efforts by Algerian intellectuals, or the Egyptian Dar Al Kutub (Book House), which was launched by a group of youth.

In this regard, I would like to raise the issue of history journals, by way of illustration. History journals constitute a major information channel, and a tool to access the new developments in history studies, yet the status of Arab history journals is in dire need for a comprehensive review in terms of content, form and distribution.

The Journal of the **Egyptian Association of History Studies**, the oldest Arab history journal, is still published today. It has preserved such a high academic standard for years that it is considered one of the best Arab history journals. It has excelled in publishing new history studies, but it conspicuously neglected two significant fields, namely the historical development of history and the philosophy of history. It seems that the exaggerated emphasis of those in charge of its classical tendency prevents it from raising courageous issues. However, it has

introduced readers to historians from many Arab countries, since it submits research works to the scientific scrutiny of referees, regardless of the name and notoriety of the author; the content is refereed for publication.

The Journal of the Union of Arab Historians, which in fact consists of two unions, one in Baghdad and the other in Cairo, is sometimes characterized by publishing repeated topics and does not raise the debate on history issues. The journal of Baghdad Union has recently shown pan-Arab dimension while the journal of Cairo has been influenced by *Al Dara*, the Saudi journal, as well as the Journal of the **Egyptian Association of History Studies**.

Numerous history journals are published throughout the Arab world, the most successful of which is the journal of “**History of Arabs and the World**”, published in Beirut. It represents an intermediate journal: It is neither purely academic nor properly historical. It attracted many readers, but its distribution is rather limited, which negatively affected its dissemination. Its back issues grew so valuable and rare that their prices increased at the stores of used books. **Modern Egypt Journal**, published by Dar Al Kutub, represents a good model of specialized history journals. However, since it specializes in the modern history of Egypt, its readership is confined to the scope of such special area. While “**Al Dara**”, the Saudi journal, enjoyed significant circulation for quite a while among readers interested in history studies, it is considered a specialized journal, as it focuses on the affairs and history of the Gulf.

In the field of history studies, it is worth mentioning the journal *hawliyat kuliyyat al adab* (Periodicals of the School of Humanities) at Kuwait University, where each issue focuses on a specific topic. These periodicals were characterized by their new serious topics and insightful analysis, such as the conquest of the island of Rudus, Arab conquest of Sindh, as well as other topics relating to Mamluki, Umawi, Abbasid and Andalusia history. They even combined history and civilization ... etc.

Arab history periodicals witnessed a breakthrough with the publication of the first refereed electronic historical periodical, namely “**Kan**” Periodical (<http://www.historicalkan.co.nr/>), whose first issue appeared in September 2008, as a quarterly. It attracts numerous readers on the internet, from the Arab world, Europe and the Americas. Its content is varied, including research works, studies, book-exhibitions, university dissertations, and reports on academic events. Its issues have appeared regularly to date. Its dissemination hinged on the importance of communicating with the general public via e-mail as well as bloggers. It set up a Facebook community to disseminate the news of its partner Arab historians.

It even published topics in English. More than 120 writers have contributed to this periodical, affiliated to the universities of Mawsil, Tikrit, Tlimsan, Mu'ta, Zakazik, Al Balqa', Oujda, Cairo, Ayn Shams and several Arab institutions. Its wide circulation was supported by the preparation and distribution of free e-books, especially new ones.

Audacity in publication seems to be the distinctive feature of this digital journal, due to the approach adopted by the young intellectuals running it, who transcended the scope of classical studies, like the school of Abdullah Al Aroui in Morocco and Khalid Fahmi in Egypt. It differentiates itself by combining history and anthropology, research in the philosophy of history, as well as research into the future of history studies. Will the success of "Kan" electronic periodical trigger a change in history journals in the years to come?

In spite of its short experience and limited resources, this electronic historical periodical achieved more significant success than many universities, supported by a network of historians extending from Morocco to Kuwait, who volunteer to write in this periodical for free.

The publication of the periodical "*Madarat Rharbiya*" in Beirut led to a significant shift towards understanding the West. Interest in the West had been for many years confined to translating some published books, or stealing content of its productions and assigning it to translators. This journal, however, presents western thought and its trends through an objective scientific mediator, allowing students, intellectuals and readers in the Arab world to be aware of the development of western communities, and understand their civilizational changes, considering the impact of understanding such changes on the trends of development worldwide.

In the Arab world, this periodical tends to focus on regional and international issues, through monitoring the major trends of events, analyzing the geo-strategic complexities relating to west-east relations. It also introduces the Arab reader to western scientific progress, particularly the information revolution, focusing on understanding communication tools in various knowledge areas.

"*Madarat Rharbiya*" translates quarterly booklets dealing with strategic topics, within the setting of common interests, in collaboration with research institutions operating in Europe and North America. This journal constitutes a unique experience, and it is run by individuals fully aware of its significant mission, rather than official institutions.

Having exposed the philosophy of this journal, it should be noted that its importance can be seen in the authoritative character of eight issues of the periodical

I have read. Nonetheless, it suffers from some shortcomings, one of which is its limited distribution. For instance, I came across its website quite by chance (www.madarat.net). I also asked my friend Dr Ridwan Al Sayyid to bring me some issues of the journal from Beirut. Secondly, subscriptions are confined to Lebanese translators and writers. This may very well prevent the periodical from extensive dissemination. The third demerit is the absence of Eastern Europe and Scandinavian countries from the journal, sharing this mistake with all Arab cultural periodicals. We are still fascinated by the culture of Germany, Britain, France, Holland, Japan, Italy and Spain. We have confined ourselves to such a narrow sphere that we cannot escape it to date.

Even so, the journal involves many merits. It tackles thorny issues, opening readers' minds to the developments in the West, such as European attitudes and policies on the Middle East. This journal presented the analysis of Christine Orlick, an American specialist in European affairs, foreign affairs and defense, which was submitted to the Research Department in the American Congress. It highlights the American vision as to the European attitude towards the Middle East, especially the growing role of European foreign policy on many controversial issues between the two parties. Europe is striving to play a role proportional to its capacity as a donor, as well as its geo-political interests in the vicinity of hot spots in the Middle East. Such analysis undoubtedly exposes significant visions to Arab political decision makers.

Jean-Pierre Escofier, a researcher at the University of Rennes, also uncovered the American hegemony in Europe, which may look surprising to us in the Arab World. The draft European constitution provides for observing the rules of World Trade Organization and NATO, which implies submission to a foreign power, compromising the sovereignty of Europe on its own land. This is corroborated by the presence of American military bases in Europe, even after the cold war era, as well as the American spying networks throughout Europe.

The issues and topics of this periodical, such as Islam through Western Eyes; Minorities in its Closed Towers; America: the Self-Charming Empire; Epic of Democracy; Iraq: War of Geography and History; and Judaism: Mind and Soul of the West, all are significant references for us to be aware of the developments around us. Though scarce, such journals constitute the silver lining of the cloud of poor-quality cultural periodicals or those that suffer from stagnation.

Cultural journals:

“*Al Arabi*”, the Kuwaiti periodical, is still considered an outstanding Arab cultural journal, and it has offered valuable cultural services, since its inception

with an Arab character. However, a new phenomenon has emerged, namely digital cultural periodicals, such as “*Al Thaqafa*”, the Algerian periodical. For many years, Algerian intellectuals had been isolated from the rest of the Arab world, before the internet provided the opportunity to access Algerian culture. This was achieved thanks to the initiative of the cultural civil society, without any high costs. This journal put an end to the monopoly of cultural publications by the Ministry of Culture; so much so that we can now even talk about the “independent intellectual”.

Unfortunately, some good-quality journals are disappearing in the Arab world, such as “*Alam Al Fikr*”, the Kuwaiti journal “*Al Mawrid*”, the Iraqi journal “*Fusul*”, “*Al Makhtutat Al Arabiya*”, as well as other periodicals with serious content, introducing us to intellectuals, philosophers and creative writers. These periodicals have been faltering in recent years, due to the disappearance of the pioneering founders, as was the case with “*Alam Al Fikr*”, due to the shortage of funds and distribution despite its high quality, as was the case of “*Al Makhtutat Al Arabiya*”, published by the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts, or due to successive wars, as was the case with “*Al Mawrid*”.

Since these periodicals are faltering, how can we talk about a new generation of highly qualified scholars, intellectuals, philosophers and academics, who can offer new visions, provide a critical analysis of current events or outline future prospects. Such journals represent:

- Space to learn about these figures.
- Space to put forward new views.
- Space for sharing views and ideas.
- Contribution to the world cultural trend.
- Contribution to building the future.

The expenses of these periodicals are borne by government institutions or research centers. It is worth repeating the experience of “*Alam Al Fikr*”, which benefited from Kuwaiti resources to set up an intellectual journal to produce knowledge in the Arab world.

Do we have a publication industry?

Raising the issues of publication in the Arab world seems astonishing to some and repulsive to others. However, the harsh truth that would astound the reader is that the publication industry does not exist in the Arab world. There are only book printers, bodies and houses living on an old heritage or continuous

support of the State, surviving on the publication of university set books, or exploiting a few remaining outstanding Arab names in the world of authorship, without producing new generations of writers.

The fact is that only a few publishers honor their mission sincerely. The rest publish works without any prior plan, without being aware of the content that they publish and the rationale behind such publication. Their only concern is material gains; if they shrink, they complain that their business slows down, since their goods are not in demand on the market.

This issue indeed requires an effective response that diagnoses the current situation in the Arab world and proposes the solutions to this increasingly deteriorating situation.

Making one specific party accountable would reduce the problem to one entity, excluding the other parties, but we should be aware of the parties involved:

- Official book bodies, Federation of Arab Publishers, Union of Arab Writers, various newspapers and communication media, schools of arts, public and private publishing houses, printing industry chambers and printing companies, ministries of finance and ministries of industry for their responsibility as to paper industry.

Nonetheless, the silver lining to this dark cloud is that there are certain experiences worth mentioning. The Egyptian General Authority for Books managed to publish a series on the “**history of Egyptians**”, which filled a huge gap in Egyptian history, and presented young historians to the Egyptian and Arab cultural arena; so much so that it has become a crucial reference, at a cheap price, for any researcher. This periodical is an exception because it is characterized by a clear scientific method in selecting topics, regardless of the nature of the author.

Another endeavor is the National Project for Translation, implemented by the Supreme Council for Culture in Egypt, which will lead to the diversity of source languages in translation into Arabic. The diversity of translated encyclopedias and the serious content of publications have enabled this project to occupy an outstanding position in the Arab cultural arena. The project has produced a new generation of translators, who will be influential in the years to come. The project seems to increasingly develop from one year to the next. For the past two years it has published books not only on humanities but applied sciences as well.

Another praiseworthy experience is that of National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in Kuwait. It published its great series “*Alam al Amaarifa*” (the World of Knowledge), one of the best publications in the Arab World, “*Rawa'i Al Adab Al Arabi*” (Masterpieces of Arabic Literature), starting with the master-

pieces of world theatre. The insightful selection of the encyclopedias to be published underlies the high standard of credibility of the Kuwaiti series published.

Book production is generally a complex and complicated process, requiring any publishing house to operate regularly and adequately, in conformity with the mechanisms of this industry. First of all, at some point the company should specify its area as a publisher, whether it is a specialized or general publisher, or both, which is the case for major international publishing houses.

The next stage is the specification of the role of the publishing consultant, whose profile is rather rare in the Arab World. The consultant is supposed to be an intellectual and good reader, fully aware of the publishing movement. He is competent enough to adequately evaluate the work submitted to him. He is also well versed on the stages of book production. Instead of assuming the role of the addressee, he plays the role of the evaluator, requesting the modification of the content presented to him. He offers advice to the author so as to make his book pleasant to read, and its scientific content accurate. The consultant then offers advice to the designer of the book and determines the targeted readership as well as the quantity to be printed. To this end, author's rights should be preserved rather than denied, as it is often the case in Egypt and the Arab world. Further, consultants in major publishing houses go as far as to ask authors to write on a specific topic that they deem more marketable or neglected by publishers. Consultants usually seek specific writers to be deployed in the implementation of a publishing project, which they believe would secure reasonable profits for the publishing house they work for. These types of advisors, along with well-designed marketing plans for books, are behind book sales in millions of copies in the United States, Europe and Japan. This is because the publisher considers the publishing process an integrated industry. Some publishers in the West offer advance payments to writers for the publication of the works agreed upon.

Let us now turn to the categories of published books, which include the following:

- Publications satisfying specific readers' wishes, including service books such as those on diseases and the simple ways to treat them, those on decor, clothes and fashion, and books on computing and software programs.
- Publications for university use, on which many Egyptian and Arab publishing houses survive.
- Cultural, scientific and literary publications, representing the lowest percentage of all books, unlike the case in the entire world. These publications also include political works, such as memoirs and books analyzing political events.

The issue that I would like to raise in this regard is whether the book is a means of entertainment or education. Most publishers have not realized that books involve fierce competition. They did not attach much importance to the production of books, assuming that only catalogues, arts books and children's books are concerned with the look of published works. They have neglected the design of ordinary books, which have turned into an unattractive commodity.

Most publishing houses do not give much importance to the distinction between luxury production and low-cost production of books. They do not have a specialist who is in charge of studying the marketing of books and specifying the wishes of readers. Coffee table books, which are read and looked at by families in the evening, are not available on the Arab book market. Moreover, economic institutions do not support the book industry. Books are not part of the presents offered to customers by banks and companies, as in the West. Newspaper pages and television programs on book presentation are either informative or courtesy-oriented. Also, books are presented with no critical spirit, though such spirit indicates the way in which one book is distinguished from another, as well as the motivations behind introducing it to readers by the journalist.

Raising questions and trying to respond to them would create interest in reading the relevant books. Moreover, the phenomenon of publishing entire books in newspapers before they appear in book forms would help a great deal in their marketing. This practice is rather scarce in Arab newspapers. Public libraries do not have a clear and well-defined book acquisition policy and supply programs that would assist publishing houses in determining their future programs. The paper book-electronic book relationship remains the object of many questions that need a separate debate.

Is the era of traditional libraries over?

Libraries constitute an indicator measuring the development of nations, a warehouse for their knowledge and treasures, as well as a space bringing together scholars, intellectuals, literary writers and scientists. It serves as an incubator hatching and nurturing new generations of these scholars. Therefore, nations have strived to have national libraries, libraries specialized in specific disciplines, and others for the dissemination of culture in urban and rural areas. However, in the internet era and the advent of digital libraries, many questions are now raised about the nature of libraries. Does the huge flow of information and knowledge threaten cultural identity? Is this the end of the age of libraries?

A digital library involves a set of information submitted to methodical management, aiming at offering knowledge services, through storing and managing information in digital form to provide it via a network of computers. We have to differentiate between the flow of information that reaches the computer of any individual at home, and information management on the web. The former is rather random, while the latter is verified and sifted for the receiver to qualify it as credible.

It should be emphasized that a race has now started towards a new type of human knowledge production tools on the web rather than paper. The nation which will have an effective well-managed presence will indeed have a future in world culture in the years to come. Does this mean that the notion of library is now the subject of serious questions?

A positive answer will undoubtedly be logical. Radical transformations are currently underway, some of which have led to the formation of the Digital Library Federation (DLF), as opposed to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), including libraries in American universities, the British Library, Oxford University Library and Bibliotheca Alexandria. All these libraries strive to create a virtual library community constituting an online human knowledge repository. The second type is the community of traditional libraries; that is the national libraries in charge of storing, cataloguing and preserving national publications and other repositories of knowledge. Paper-based knowledge warehouse is confined to a certain space, while a computer-based repository can reach every single house and is updated every second. The former is a single disconnected repository; each set of sheets of paper constitute pictures, forms, tables and statistics, separate entities. The latter, on the other hand, concurrently combines texts, images, figures, tables as well as films. Content can be continuously changed and improved. Readers can interact with such content and even criticize it; hence the difference between stagnant paper-based knowledge and lively interactive online knowledge.

Thanks to the rich internet resources, readers no longer need to buy paper books or consult encyclopedias to access information. To publish their works, writers no longer need the tradition publisher. Writers and poets now publish their works in various digital repositories. What is the role of e-libraries if the reader is independent from them and the writer does not need them? The organization of information is conducted by information professionals, who evaluate the quality of the flow of information online. They are also in charge of preserving cultural identity on the net. Such a role is so crucial that these

professionals need libraries to host them and provide the required space for them to disseminate information, in the form of e-books, websites or portals. Hence, we cannot claim that the era of libraries is over. Libraries now assume a new role, undoubtedly hinging on the dissemination of digital information.

While traditional and e-libraries differ in many respects, they share the human component that produces knowledge to be used. Libraries of both types constitute the medium that relates producers and consumers of knowledge. Such medium always requires a human Google-like search engine in charge of uncovering repositories of all types.

The internet has changed the concepts of time and space and offered opportunities that had been unthinkable in the past few years. It provides access to a huge repository of knowledge in numerous fields. The web contains tens of billions of pages accessible in one second or even less. The value of the internet depends heavily on the search engine used to find the content available and select the most appropriate element thereof to present it to the user. It is unreasonable to imagine the researcher trying to find the content sought among billions of information items without a guide. Hence, the search engine has become the most important component of the information and communication network. Google is now the major search engine. It not only offers its services to hundreds of millions of web surfers, but it has concluded partnerships with leading academic libraries so as to digitalize millions of books and make them available to researchers. This initiative has sparked a global controversy, especially in the United States of America, where conflict flared up between publishers and Google. Europe is also deeply concerned about the dominance of Google search engine over the digital space, since this involves the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon culture on world culture. It is as though the world has become mono-cultural in the physical space, emphasizing the hegemony of a single specific culture. Hence, the European, Asian as well as Arab cultures are compromised in this space. This seems to have driven Jean-Noel Jeanneney to write a book entitled “*When Google defies Europe*”, raising the following issues:

First, the dominance of Google search engine would lead to exclusively selecting the content available in English. When the engine finds thousands of pages, it presents them in an order regulated by a “philosophy based on reading frequency”. Put differently, the page consulted by the largest number of users is granted priority. This would drive an increasing number of users to read such a page, corroborating its position in the upcoming search conducted by another researcher.

Secondly, Google's emphasis on a single paragraph in a single page compromises the cultural content of the work; hence it is not the best way to introduce a book or article to readers.

Thirdly, while we should stress the fact that our culture should be accessible in Arabic to readers and researchers worldwide, Google search engine grants precedence to English content.

Fourthly, our cultural product should be presented differently from merely scattered paragraphs in separate pages. Our cultural masterpieces should not be suppressed to the benefit of superficial circulating content.

Jeanneney concludes that a European digital library should be established, presenting culture in various European cultures. Europe should invest in producing a search engine as efficient as Google, to provide services to the readers and researchers wishing to learn about European culture.

It emerges from this discussion that there is a pressing need to start seriously thinking about creating an Arabic search engine and establishing an Arabic e-library. In the absence of a digital space with strong Arab presence, the Arab cultural future will be compromised. Since this controversy has been sparked in Europe, such issue should be raised at the Arab level. Are there any Arab efforts in this regard?

“*Al Warraq*” website and the “*Arab Digital Library*”, launched by Bibliotheca Alexandrina, represent the first serious Arab attempts to set up an e-library on the net. However, these attempts face several problems, including the following:

- Lack of databases of Arabic publications from the 19th century up to now.
- Lack of clarity as to copyright for both publishing houses and writers.
- Increasing use of the internet by the users aged between 18 and 40, without integrating this use in university research operations, or university curricula.

What is science: Scientific methodology ?

As long as science has a huge impact on human history, it is obvious to inquire about the accurate meaning of “science”, and the ways in which it differs from other human activities.

Like any other human activity, science cannot be evaluated and categorized into types. However, the scientific method is characterized by two features in studying the universe: observation and testing.

1. Observation

The idea of scientific knowledge hinges primarily on observation. Unfortunately, this understanding has been associated with certain fallacies. The most predominant misunderstanding is that scientists observe the world independently of all concepts related to the object of discovery. This idea is usually turned into a fallacy repeated by philosophers seeking to specify the social structure of science. Scientific observation is “loaded with theory”. The good scientist is not the one who starts his work without any plausible expectations, but the one who convincingly admits the facts of nature when the results are not compatible with the expected outcomes. Instead of discarding or forcing the results, the scientist would change his assumptions about the results. The historical development of science indicates that observations are followed by intensive cognitive intellectual activity to uncover the organization of data, which would serve as the basis to delivering distinctive theories providing a scientific explanation about the world.

2. Testing

The most important aspect of scientific procedure is the continuous comparison between the hypotheses underlying our theory and the facts on the ground in nature. This is a distinctive feature of science compared to other human activities. It is a neutral external frame of reference against which assumptions are tested. If the experiment or observation does not confirm the theoretical hypotheses, the theory is simply discarded.

This aspect of science is the most challenging for non-scientists to understand. The problem here concerns its relation to the issues of neutrality and objectivity. These two issues are raised in post-modernism culture.

Is science part of culture?

The answer to this question depends on the meaning of the term “culture”. If it is understood, in its broad sense, as the social and physical network where the entire humanity lives, science is undoubtedly part of it. The ability to understand and deal with the natural world is the feature distinguishing humankind from the other species.

However, the term “culture” is often used with a more limited connotation. That is what could be termed “**high culture**”, the body of knowledge needed for a person in society to be accepted in the community of intellectuals.

We cannot talk about science and culture without mentioning the pioneer Charles Percy Snow, who delivered the annual “Rede Lecture” at the University

of Cambridge in 1959, entitled "*The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*", published later in book form with the same title. It is based on the major hypothesis that scientific and literary cultures have been developed to annihilate each other. He used literary genres to present evidence to condemn this attitude, showing its ignorance of one the most significant forces that constitute society. He presented his view along the following lines:

"A good many times I have been present at gatherings of people who, by the standards of the traditional culture, are thought highly educated and who have with considerable gusto been expressing their incredulity at the illiteracy of scientists. They give a pitying chuckle at the news of scientists who have never read a major work of English literature. They dismiss them as ignorant specialists. Yet their own ignorance and their own specialization is just as startling..."

"Once or twice I have been provoked and have asked the company how many of them could describe the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The response was cold: It was also negative. Yet I was asking something which is about the scientific equivalent of: Have you read a work of Shakespeare's?" (Page 14)

It is obvious that this vision sparked serious debate among the outstanding figures of English literature, involving fierce attacks beyond any reasonable considerations.

Hence, the best way to bridge the gap between the two cultures is to make sure that all students have studied background scientific knowledge. Knowledge would thereby occupy its appropriate position, along with the other intellectual topics, as an authentic component of our culture.

Scientific culture:

The concept of basic cultural knowledge could be defined as "*the body of knowledge required for an individual to understand the physical world around us, to deal with the issues that people face in life, in newspapers or elsewhere.*"

This definition is based on considerations specific to the average citizen's style in using science. Citizens need enough knowledge of economics to read an article on tax legislations, and enough knowledge of law to read a newspaper article on a lawsuit submitted to the Supreme Court. They also need some knowledge of genetics to have an opinion about the ethical issues raised in society. Therefore, it has been put forward that science represents a kernel element of our

culture, and that understanding science would further consolidate the aesthetic experience we have developed about the world around us.

The issue on the fact that basic cultural knowledge changes as time and space change is often raised to claim that such knowledge is impossible to specify, even when we assume that it exists. The long history of basic cultural knowledge indicates that it basically changes at a rate of at least 1% annually. Hence, the follow-up of basic cultural knowledge is not more difficult than observing the unavoidable changes that a normal dictionary undergoes. Basic cultural knowledge indeed changes according to time and space, but it changes in patterns and ways that are quite predictable and controllable.

It should be pointed out that the common thrust of all these arguments is that the type of knowledge required for average citizens is quite different from the type of knowledge needed by scientists and engineers, since the former does not involve the ability to practice science or solve a function in mathematics. It seems to be based on general understanding of the basic principles according to which the world operates. The individuals who have access to basic scientific knowledge would know that energy cannot be created or destroyed, but it is converted from one form into another, for instance, from solar radiation into electrical power. However, they are not necessarily capable of analyzing the adequacy of a special mixture of conductors to build a photovoltaic cell, which can produce electricity when exposed to radiating energy. Nor are they supposed to be able to count the number of cells required to replace a tradition power plant.

Scientific culture in the Arab world:

The lack of engagement in science in the Arab world and lack of a forward-looking vision for science constitute the major cause behind our underdevelopment. The Arab world suffers from serious defects that could be summarized as follows:

- Lack of funding required for scientific research and development. Suffice it to point out that only 0.5% of GDP is allocated to scientific research in Arab countries. The nature of scientific research is highly complicated, and represents a universal partnership linking academies, universities, individual scholars, conferences and scientific publications.
- Increase of reading-writing illiteracy rate in many Arab communities, and spread of scientific illiteracy as well as computer illiteracy. This indicates the absence of the value, role and contribution of the citizen. Without a degree of scientific culture, the citizen cannot effectively contribute to any action in society, requiring an understanding of the issues relating to mankind, society, nature and the universe.

- Lack of the sense of the adventure of knowledge and discovery of the unknown, freedom of inquiry, and the right to difference, in the sense that diversity enriches thought and enhances civilizational progress. This process is achieved through socialization and schooling to create a general atmosphere.
- Emigration of scientific researchers abroad, where they find opportunities conducive to expressing themselves and showing their capacities, instead of living as strangers in their home countries.
- Lack of a policy for knowledge and educating society, through national policies integrated with the global network of scientific and technological achievements, as well as the ability to deliver national security;
- Lack of modernity as a vision and objective, which explains the absence of modernizing mechanisms in all activities of society, as there is no conviction that integrated modernization is key to solve Arab defects.
- The role of Arab television stations in educating society, since the superficial character of these communities has been reinforced through generous expenditure on music programs and films, instead of production based on the dissemination of knowledge and science, such as documentary films and scientific programs. There are limited attempts in this regard, such as the arabization of National Geographic TV in Abu Dhabi.

Scientific journals:

The West has created a system ensuring the easy distribution of books and scientific periodicals, through the subscriptions offered by public and university libraries in these journals, as a guarantee of the publication of specialized scientific journals, according to a distribution network covering publication costs. Hence, these specialized periodicals enjoyed good dissemination in many areas, and such system was successful for a hundred years and successive issues appeared. However, when these periodicals were digitalized, their cost increased gradually so that libraries had to buy them at a price exceeding 25 to 50% of their budget. Libraries in developing countries cannot afford to pay for these subscriptions, which constitutes a major snag hindering science and knowledge. The Egyptian Medical Journal and *Majallat Majma' al-lugha al-'arabiyya* (Journal of the Academy of Arabic Language) in Egypt are not endowed with a distribution network, as it is the case in Europe and the united States, since Arabic e-journals are limited.

The spirit of modern time is the systemic scientific knowledge, a special type of the relation of human existence with nature, self and society. That is the

relation of observation and theory, formulating rules and laws uncovering the consistence and transformations of phenomena, answering questions on reasons and manners and the ability to make predictions, as well as the application of knowledge to social life. It is a methodical scientific thinking driven by its own power to achieve more results. It is the opposite of the culture of self-sufficiency or absolute truth, which kills curiosity for knowledge and adopts a reductionist type of thinking, which explains phenomena by external reasons. This would prevent individuals and hence society from bringing their life under control. The culture of science is the culture of changing the world consciously and voluntarily, rather than simply understanding it, solving its problems and contemplating its universal phenomena. The culture of science is the culture of believing in the value of humanity and nurturing humans; hence it is the culture of democracy.

Science is the tool to consciously prove oneself culturally, economically and politically. It is a tool for self-defense and the guarantee of security and victory in the struggle for existence. It is the appropriate tool to express identity and confirm its authenticity, without any ideological fallacies. This is because identity in essence is the action of the conscious self, the achievement of the societal “us” in meeting the challenges, using the language and capacities of the modern era; this would support the sense of belonging and consolidate the components of the cohesion of social texture.

How do we go to the future?

Culture is a life style in society, manifested in the way of thinking as well as individual and collective behavior patterns, the way individuals view themselves and others, the mode of dealing with public and private property, enjoying life, cooking and costumes etc... Human history shows that no society made progress without advanced culture. The culture of society could be seen when one walks in squares and streets in how people organize their livelihood's common affairs to develop the quality of their life in society.

Besides these general aspects, the dissemination of scientific culture is a component of cultural renaissance in society. It involves a vision of the world and its laws, a method of thought as well as a style of dialogue and decision-making. It is based on logic, rationality and evidence. It does not engage in criticizing faiths, out of respect, since these have their own area of inquiry different from the area of science and knowledge, which is mundane and based on observation through the senses, argumentation through analogy, logical inference and the use of the human mind.

Scientific culture and authentic tendency for knowledge should be promoted in our Arab context, in line with the civilizational appeal put forward by Arab and Muslim scholars down the ages, and in conformity with modern time. No society can strongly drive towards science and knowledge without taking interest of the future. This requires taking care of the youth, who constitute the driving force of the time to come. The great potentials of young generations should be optimally exploited to guarantee the contribution of society's general culture in the global knowledge revolution of our time.

Nonetheless, Arab culture suffers from a crisis whose aspects include the deterioration of behavior at all levels, lack of critical thinking, excessive controversial debates without effect on the progress of society, spread of verbal and behavioral violence in society, as well as the intolerance of individuals vis-à-vis those who are different from them in terms of culture, gender, knowledge and religion.

Education is crucial for building the future, and it is difficult to separate education and culture. Hence the reform of Arab-Islamic culture is absolutely necessary for our livelihood in society to be founded on reason. The reform we wish to achieve is not only the increase of cultural products of creative and artistic works, in terms of both quantity and quality, but also the increase of participation in cultural activity, and interest in its products at the grass-root level, for cultural values to turn into a way of thinking, a life style, a forward-looking view, and a new spirit constituting citizens' consciousness.

It stands to reason that the reform of Arab Islamic culture is the key to reconstructing the modern Arab Islamic personality. Such personality would be more open onto plurality, acceptance of others' opinion and scientific method. It would be endowed with a degree of scientific culture, compiling a great repository of history and knowledge, and aware of current affairs in the world.

The comprehensive cultural reform is the genuine key to the renaissance of the Arab-Islamic society, and the restoration of the Arab position among nations. Such position is based on mutual respect; it is not taken by force nor is it bought with money; it is rather acquired by hard work, productivity and continuity.

The current conditions of culture in the Arab-Islamic World requires frank self-criticism, including, in particular, reviewing the conditions of our institutions of culture, information, scientific research, education and higher education, with a view to reforming them all. Universities should be reformed, for university professors to restore their position, and for the university to regain its specificity and autonomy.

Therefore, I propose the following recommendations:

- The need to pay attention to the rise of the role of the civil society in cultural life in the years to come, taking account of the new facilities provided by the internet for intellectuals to initiate change.
- The need to restructure the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), creating a new board of intellectuals and independent cultural institutions, besides the conference of Arab ministers of education and higher education, which decides its policy, as well as the importance of supporting the Organization's budget.
- Consolidating the role of pocket book series such as “*Aalam Al Ma'rifa*” in Kuwait, and “*Iqra*” and “*Kitab Al Hilal*” in Egypt, since they have a positive impact on Arab culture.
- Reviewing the system of Arab digital culture to move from randomness to creativity, discovering inventive individuals, and promoting Arab culture.
- The future of culture in the Arab-Islamic World hinges on the birth of intellectuals independent from the classical system, which is founded on the state sponsoring intellectuals by integrating them into its own sphere. This is because the internet has created a wider and cheaper space for publication, allowing intellectuals to express themselves.
- Expecting the emergence of intellectuals outside the scope of capitals. The era of the centralism of the capital culture (such as Cairo, Damascus and Beirut) is over. Writers and intellectuals will attempt to emerge beyond the scope of these capitals, and the internet will be their point of departure.
- Disappearance of half-truths from Arab cultural life. Typifying and patternizing societies should be reviewed over and over again. Cultural policies are undoubtedly important. Any culture can easily fall prey to the hegemony of “the other”, unless there is a vision to build a strong culture through education policies to consolidate the self via the national language. Concurrently, the national heritage should be subject to rational questions and serious debate. In the absence of such critical thinking, there will be no Arab culture. Instead, there will be a distorted Arab culture influenced by francophone or Anglo-Saxon orientations, and marginalized in society, compared to the predominant culture. Hence youngsters would know French, English or British literature, but would not know anything about Imri' Alqays, Hassan bin Al Nu'man, Al Zabidi or Ibn Khaldun.

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- The Arab-Islamic World lacks intellectual schools, think tanks and future studies centers. However, such schools and centers will undergo a radical transformation in the years to come. The predominance of science, culture and strategic visions planned for the future, will drive decision makers in the Arab-Islamic World to believe in the power of knowledge in a world where knowledge is critical to survival.



**Introducing
ISLAMIC COUNTRIES**



Map of the Republic of Iraq

THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

“The Republic of Iraq is a single, independent federal state with full sovereignty. Its system of government is republican, representative (Parliamentary) and democratic.”⁽¹⁾ *“The federal powers shall consist of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers, and they shall exercise their competencies and tasks on the basis of the principle of separation of powers.”*⁽²⁾ Therefore, and according to the Constitution, the system of governance in Iraq is republican, parliamentary and federal.

Etymology:

Most of the lands making up Iraq, stretching all the way to the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were known in Acadian, long before Christianity, as *Beit Nahrein* or the land of rivers. It is from this phrase that the Greek name *Mesopotamia* was derived and meant the land 'Between the Rivers'. In the Middle Ages, this region was known as the Arabian Iraq to distinguish it from what was known as Persian Iraq and which lay south of the Hamrin hills and did not include Northern Iraq or the Euphrates Island region.⁽³⁾

The first reference to the name 'Iraq' dates back to the 16th century AD and is believed to have been the Arabization of the name of the Sumerian city Uruk (al-Warkaa), while other researchers believe that it was used to refer to the lowlands.

Geography:

The Republic of Iraq is located in southwest Asia and therefore forms part of the Middle East. It covers the northeastern part of the Arab world and shares borders with Turkey to the north; Iran to the east; Syria, Jordan and Kingdom of

(1) Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, Republic of Iraq, Ministerial Council, Article 1 of the Constitution, page 11.

(2) Idem, Article 45, page 29.

(3) Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Authority, Statistical Collection of 2008-2009, page 3, Harry Sachs: The Great Babylon, translated by Amer Salman, 1st edition (Baghdad, Mosul University, 1997), pp. 23-25, Guy le Strange: Lands of the Eastern Caliphates, translated by Bachir Francis and Kurkis Awwad, page 221.

Saudi Arabia to the west; and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to the south. It lies between latitudes 29°5 and 37°22 north and longitudes 38°45 and 48°45 east. Iraq's surface area totals 435052 km².

Topography of Iraq:

Flood plains represent a quarter of the surface area of Iraq, i.e. 132 000 km², and spread in a rectangular shape (650 km in length and 250 km in width). They stretch between the cities of Balad on the banks of the Tigris River and al-Ramadi in Til al-Aswad, north of the Euphrates river, east of the Iranian borders and west of the desert plains, equally including al-Ahwar and the marshlands. The **desert plateau** is located in the western part of Iraq and, at 198 000 km², occupies practically half the country's surface area with altitudes ranging between 100 and 1000 meters, and including the al-Jazira area. The **mountainous part** of Iraq is located in the northern and northeastern parts of Iraq and extends to the borders it shares with Syria, Turkey and Iran in the west, north and east. This terrain occupies a quarter of Iraq's surface area (92 000 km²). The fourth section is made up of Iraq's plan known as the **rolling uplands** and constitutes a transition from the low lands in the south and the high mountains in the extreme north and northeastern regions. It accounts for 50% of the highlands or 67000 km² of which 42000 km² lie outside the mountainous zone at elevations between 100 and 1200 meters, and 25 000 kilometers within the uplands with heights varying between 200 and 450 meters.⁽⁴⁾

Climate⁽⁵⁾:

Despite its location in a mild northern region, Iraq's weather is subtropical and its rainfall reflects a Mediterranean pattern. Rains are largely recorded in winter and autumn and disappear entirely in summer. Iraq's weather varies between three main types: the first is a Mediterranean weather that covers the mountainous region to the northeast with cold winters and snow topping mountain peaks and where the annual rainfall ranges between 400 and 1000 ml. The silt-covered plains, on the other hand, are known for their transitional weather between the rolling uplands, while the hot desert weather is often limited to the upland region where rainfalls vary between 200 and 400 ml. Weather in the silt and western plains which account for 70% of Iraq's surface area is largely marked by extreme temperatures that reach 45 to 50 degrees Celsius in summer.

(4) Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Authority, Annual Statistical Collection for 2008-2009, page 3.

(5) Idem, page 4.

Demographic Development:

In 2009, Iraq's population was estimated at 31.9 million of which 16.1 million are males.⁽⁶⁾ In 2012, the active population percentage (15-64 years age category) represented 57%. Any increase in this percentage presupposes greater numbers of active citizens which in turn projects higher economic growth rates that are reflected by an increase in employment and productivity rates. Age groups older than 65 years represent 3.3% of the population and, along with the under-fifteen age group, make up the category of dependents.⁽⁷⁾

Education:

Iraq achieved a noticeable drop (41%) in illiteracy rates over eight years between 1997 and 2005, particularly among women where illiteracy reached 60% (against 65% for men in 1997), to reach 19.5% among women in 2005 and 10.4% among men.

There is a clear upward trend in the number of citizens completing the elementary school phase (28% in 1997 compared to 32.5% in 2005). At the secondary school level, the rate of schooling reached 16.3% in 1997 and grew to 20.8% in 2008. The same trend is noted with regard to all other educational stages.⁽⁸⁾

According to statistics from the Ministry of Planning (Central Statistics Authority), the number of elementary schools in Iraq reached 12507 in 2007 while that of elementary school pupils reached 4333154 compared to 2003 when elementary schools were 9115 in number and the number of pupils amounted to 3507975.⁽⁹⁾ The same sources indicate that the number of secondary school students was 66966, the number of State-run universities and faculties was 23 while community colleges were eighteen in number. These statistics also reveal that the number of tertiary education students reached a total of 611 12 in 2009.⁽¹⁰⁾

(6) Situation of Iraqi Population in 2010, 1st National Report on Population, National Commission for Population Policies, page 15.

(7) *Idem*, page 16.

(8) Man and Woman in Iraq, Issues and Statistics of 2009, Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, Central Authority for Statistics and Information Technologies, page 22.

(9) Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Authority, Annual Statistical Collection for 2008-2009, pp. 310-315.

(10) *Idem*, pp. 348-354.

Agriculture:

Iraq is a predominantly agricultural country. Its soil is largely made up of silt deposits from the Tigris and the Euphrates and their tributaries. High temperatures favor growth and ripening, all of which makes agriculture a highly favored occupation among the population. Travelers and historians were struck by this phenomenon from as early as ancient history and considered Iraq the world's granary. Describing Iraq, Herodotus said that the land between rivers produced crops at two-hundredfold the grain, and in an exceptional year as much as three-hundredfold the grain (*if the land is so much as tickled with a plough it laughs back with wheat and barley stalks*).

Agricultural production in Iraq can be divided into two main categories: cattle and animal breeding and the farming of grains and other produce destined for industrial processing such as fruits and vegetables. Among the most prominent agricultural products are wheat and barley. Production of wheat amounted to 2808.9 thousand tons in the winter season of 2011, with an increase of 2.2% over the 2010 crop. The surface area farmed with wheat was estimated at 2748.8 dunums in the winter of 2011, with 18% more land farmed compared to the previous year when this area did not exceed 5543.9 dunums⁽¹¹⁾. Iraq's production of rice reached 398803 tons in 2009 and sunflower production 12531 tons⁽¹²⁾. The report indicates that the number of palm date trees was 9464308 in 2009 with date production for 2008 estimated at 47932 tons⁽¹³⁾.

Health:

The public health sector in Iraq has made significant progress that is clearly measurable against the health situation of Iraq when it was under siege. Yet, there is still a great need for directing all health-related reform efforts to preventive measures, particularly by improving the economic, social, industrial and educational aspects related to public health affairs.

A number of hospitals and health units have been opened in Iraq, bringing the total of hospitals in this country to 221 in 2008. The number of district clinics reached 334 and that of private clinics 189.

(11) Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Directorate of Agricultural Statistics, Production of Wheat and Barley for 2011, page 1.

(12) Idem, pp. 77-79.

(13) Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Authority, Annual Statistical Collection for 2008-2009, page 93.

Civilization and History of Iraq:

The need for defense and for irrigation was to a decisive factor in shaping the first civilization to emerge in Mesopotamia by the ancient inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent who erected fortifications around their cities and laid down irrigation canals. After 6000 B.C., settlements appeared and expanded to become cities in the fourth millennium BC. The oldest of these settlements were Erdo and Uruk in the south where temples were built out of clay bricks and decorated with metal artifacts and stones and where the Sumerian cuneiform writing was first invented. Sumerians were the authors of the first culture that emerged there and spread it up north to the Euphrates highlands. The most important Sumerian cities of the time were Kish, Larsa and Uru.

In 2350 BC, the Acadians, oldest Semitic Aramaic ethnic community to have settled in the Fertile Crescent (around 4000 BC) laid claim to the region. As nomadic tribes, they first migrated to Iraq and lived among the Sumerians. Under the leadership of Sargon of Akkad, they managed to conquer all of Sumer and to bring under control all the cities of Mesopotamia. Sargon made Akkad his capital then spread his power over Babylon, the north of the Fertile Crescent, Ailam, Syria, Palestine and parts of Anatolia. His rule spread to the Arabian Gulf and al-Ahwaz, bringing the entire region under his command and creating the first empire known in mankind's history since the Flood. The Acadian rule over Mesopotamia was marked by great economic prosperity which resulted from enhanced trading relations, particularly in the Arabian Gulf. Caravan routes became regular in those times and the most important of these was the route linking Akkad in the heartland of ancient Iraq to the copper mines of Anatolia. Copper was considered a vital resource in view of its importance in the fashioning of weapons and other war artifacts. Acadian also came to replace the Sumerian language. The Acadians remained in power until they were overthrown by the Gutians (2218 BC), tribes that hailed from the eastern plains. After a period of time, the third era of the city of Uru began with the return to power of the Sumerians in most parts of the Fertile Crescent.

Then came the Elamites and destroyed Uru in 2000 BC, laying claim to most ancient cities. Hammurabi then set out from Babylon to Uru and unified the state towards the end of his reign, although an Amorite dynasty ruled over Assyria in the north. The Hittites, who hailed from Anatolia, managed to overthrow the Babylonian empire and were succeeded by the Kish dynasty which ruled for four centuries. After them, the Mettanni, who came from Caucasia, took hold of the

land between the rivers and remained in the Fertile Crescent for several centuries. But after 1700 BC, they spread out in large numbers across the north and into all of Anatolia. Then the Assyrian dynasty came to power north of the Fertile Crescent and the Assyrians vanquished the Mettanni and conquered Babylon in 1225 BC. They travelled as far as the Mediterranean Sea and invaded Persia in 1100 BC.⁽¹⁴⁾

The inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent spoke many languages but three of these were most important and each developed from the other after Sumerian, language of the Acadians, Babylonians and Assyrians for a brief period in history. The language survived until 500 BC then was replaced by Aramaic. The latter, and after it the Syriac, remained in use until 640 BC when Arabic began to spread in the region after Islamic conquests.

Golden Age of Islam:

Once the principles of the Islamic religion were consolidated and grew in strength, Islamic armies took the banner of the new religion and headed to Iraq to liberate it. This mission was accomplished during the caliphate of Omar Ibn al-Khattab in 13-23 AH/634-643AD). The victory achieved by the Muslims under the command of Saad Abi Waqqas at the battle of al-Qadissiya represented a turning point in the region's history. A few years later, in 16AH/637AD precisely, Muslims laid claim to Madain, capital of the Sassanid State. The road to Iraq thus became open before the advancing Arab and Islamic armies. The Arab army continued its victorious march until it liberated Al Jazira, i.e. the Fertile Crescent.

These expansive conquest campaigns did not take the attention of the caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab away from thinking about the management of the conquered lands and building fortifications where Arab Islamic armies could find refuge. Taking important decisions to urbanize these lands, Omar ordered the construction of Basra in 14AH/635 in the southern parts of Iraq, closer to Shat al-Arab. In 17AH/638AD, al-Kufa was built and many Arab tribes migrated there and mingled with the original inhabitants who converted to Islam. Arabic spread as the language of religion and state.

(14) Cf. Taha Baqir: *An Introduction to the History of Ancient Civilizations*, 1st edition, Baghdad, Dar al-Bayan, 1977), vol 1, Harry Sachs: *the Great Babylon*, translated by Amer Salman, 1st edition, Baghdad, University of Mosul, 1997

Conscious of the prestigious and prominent position that Iraq held among the newly created Arab and Islamic states, Imam Ali Ibn Taleb, last of the Rightly-Guided caliphs (35-41Ah/655-661AD), sought to make al-Kufa the capital of the entire Arab Islamic world during his caliphate. Thus, the second capital of Islam after Medinah was al-Kufa. The city's status as a trading station helped spread the religion of Islam to many other countries having become the launching pad of many expeditions by Islamic armies to the east of the Islamic world.

Despite the fact that Iraq became one of the provinces of the Umayyad State its cities continued to thrive, to judge from the renown achieved by the two cities of Basra and al-Kufa with their great mosques and mansions. The city of Wasit, hailed by historians and geographers for the beauty of its design, architecture and landmarks, was also built. The Umayyad caliphs dedicated much attention to Iraq and appointed only the most competent and seasoned governors to manage it administratively and politically.

Mosul was also the object of great attention from the Umayyads and their governors, with important landmarks and public facilities built there, including the Great Umayyad Mosque and Dar al-Imara. Al-Hur Ibn Youssef al-Amawi, governor of Mosul between 106-113AH (724-731AD) built an opulent palace decorated in mosaics and named it al-Manqoushi.

The Umayyad dynasty and the golden age of Damascus came to an end when power moved into the hands of the dynasty of Bani al-Abbas. After bringing the Umayyad rule to an end in 132AH/750AD, the Abbasid caliphs moved their seat from the Greater Syria to Iraq. During their reign, the State reached its apogee in terms of political, economic, cultural and architectural development. Their first caliph, Abdullah Ibn Mohamed Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah Abu al-Abbas, who came to be known by the name of al-Saffah (the Shedder of Blood) chose al-Kufa as his seat, then moved between al-Kufa, al-Hira and al-Anbar until he built al-Hashimiyya near al-Kufa and declared it as his capital. After his death, al-Saffah was succeeded by Abu Jaafar al-Mansour (136-158AH-754-775AD) who did not set up court in al-Hashimiyya but chose instead to build a new capital for his State that would reflect the glory and greatness of the Abbasids. He began searching for a suitable site that would be central, located on the banks of the Tigris, and with specific features that would correspond to his aspirations. He drew up his city's plan and was successful in his choice. The new city held important advantages in the trading, military, political and natural

sense. He began construction in 145AH/762AD and called it Madinat al-Salam, a city enshrined within walls and behind strong fortifications.

The design and architectural layout of this city is considered the greatest in the history of Arab Islamic city planning and represented a pinnacle in the development of this art which first begun with the planning and design of Basra. Life quickly developed and prospered in the new capital, its fame spread to all parts of the Arab Islamic world, and for five centuries it was the cherished destination of scholars, artists, architects and governors of other provinces. Journeys were undertaken to it in the quest for knowledge and learning.

Under the caliph al-Mansour, building spread to the eastern bank of the Tigris where al-Mahdi ibn al-Mansour and his crown prince along with the latter's Khorasani army set up camp, which explains the name of Askar al-Mahdi given to this side of town (Madhi's barracks). Later on it became known as al-Rusafa after more buildings were added in 159AH/776AD during al-Mahdi's time. This part of Baghdad achieved renown for its palaces, mosques and schools and other academic institutions. Among the most important landmarks built on this side are al-Rusafa Mosque and the palace that al-Mahdi built next to it and called Qasr al-Salam (164AH-780AD).

While credit goes to al-Mansour for building al-Mudawwarah city, it was the caliph Harun al-Rachid who brought this city to glory and truly edified its civilization. During his reign, industry witnessed unprecedented prosperity in Baghdad with the caliph urging people to engage in industry and practice it with dedication, in addition to his other architectural achievements which included expanding the Mosque of al-Mansour and the many palaces, pools and wells built along the route to Makah as well as the harbors.

This construction and edification drive was not limited to Madinat al-Salam and affected all Iraqi cities in fact, persisting throughout the period preceding the fall of Baghdad in 656AH/1258AD. The influence of arts, sciences, crafts and architecture spread from Iraq to the rest of the Islamic world, Iraq remaining in the lead position in this regard.

The city of Samarra was built during the second Abbasid era (specifically in 221AH/835AD) by the Abbasid caliph al-Mu'tassim. He named his city Samarra (literally meaning *pleased is the beholder*) and adopted it as the seat of his government. He erected mansions and a mosque, then other caliphs moved there and Samarra became the capital of the Abbasid state for almost half a century, after which the caliphate returned to Baghdad.

The layout of this city was entirely different from that of preceding cities. Possibly, subjective and objective conditions within the Arab Islamic world at the time played a role in determining the new city's design. Another special feature of this city is that its mosques, palaces and residences are considered the oldest and most important landmarks of Iraq, an embodiment of the glory and elevated status of Arab and Islamic architectural arts, be it in design, technique, artwork or decoration. In this era, Samarraa was resplendent with huge palaces of which the walls were decorated with myriad tile decorations that heralded the birth of a new art of which the features acquired a predominantly Islamic character. Archeological excavations of the vestiges of this city uncovered large quantities of tile decorations that used to adorn the lower parts of a building's walls. These decorations were divided in three categories that historians of Islamic art agreed to name as the early, middle and late styles, differentiated by the way these tiles were laid out and their components. In view of this, one may consider that the birth of Arabic mosaics was in Samarraa then developed in Baghdad and Mosul.

Although the city of Samarraa was short-lived, not having exceeded half a century, the city expanded largely during that period. The caliph al-Mutawakkil built the city of al-Mutawakiliyya north of Samarraa and named it al-Jaafariyya after him. The vestiges of this city are still standing today, including its mosque known as the mosque of Abu Dalaf, along with other monuments. In 276AH/889AD, al-Mu'tamid 'Ala Allah decided that the caliphate's seat should move back to Baghdad, but to the eastern part of it, and thus Baghdad became once again the capital of the House of Islam and a new lease of life was given to the building of luxurious mansions and great mosques.

It was during the Abbasid rule that the Turks began interfering in state matters, exploiting the weakness of the caliphs. The Turks took over sensitive state positions after the caliphate lost much of its glory and the Abbasid State literally lost large swathes of its lands. Turkic commanders took control of the situation and opportunists exploited the state of deterioration to secure a full deputation to manage their provinces. This resulted in the emergence of city-states east and west of the Islamic world, conditions that emboldened the Buyids to invade Baghdad during the reign of al-Mustakfi Billah (334AH/945AD).

Between 334 and 445 AH (946-1053AD), Baghdad was ruled by the Buyids. The caliph legitimized the invaders by conferring titles such as Mu'iz al-Dawla to Ahmed the Buyid. The Buyids' role in the life of the Abbasid States was a largely negative one. Under their rule, the Abbasid caliphate reached abysmal

degrees of weakness and dissolution although the building movement continued in Baghdad and reached tremendous levels of civilizational advancement. Al-Mutee' Billah (334-363AH/945-973AD) built Dar al-Tawawees, Dar Al Murabba'a and Dar al'Muthammana. The caliph al-Tae' Billah, son of al'Mutee' (363-381AH/973-991AD) built even more palaces, mosques and hospitals in Baghdad.

Towards the end of the Buyid era, Iraq's situation deteriorated even further. The Abbasid caliph al-Qa'im bi Amr Allah sent for help from the Seljuks who were at that time expanding their rule in Iran. Their armies marched on Baghdad under the command of Toghorlebuk al-Seljuki and entered the city in 447AH/1055AD, putting an end to the Buyid authority with the blessing of the caliph who authorized them to rule the Islamic world and Baghdad in his name. The Seljuks ruled Baghdad until they were evicted by the Abbasid caliph al-Nasser li-Deen Allah in 575AH/1179AD and defeated in Iran.

One of the landmarks of this historical era was the renovation of the Buyid state palace which was enclosed behind walls and became known as the Seljuk Sultanate palace. The palace remained in operation until 583AH/1187 when it was demolished by the Abbasid caliph al-Nasser li Deen Allah.

The late Abbasid era, stretching from the liberation by al-Nasser li Deen Allah of Baghdad and several important parts of the Islamic world from Seljuk control and until the fall of Baghdad in 656AH/1258AD, is considered one of the most glorious eras in Arab and Islamic history. During this era, the caliphate regained its luster and power, conditions became stable and the status of Baghdad rose even higher, with thriving sciences and literature and more building and construction. This explains why most of the monuments still in existence today date back to this era. The personality of al-Nasser li Deen Allah, the length of his rule which exceeded forty years and his accumulation of wealth, played a key role in the renaissance and development of the country. He carried out many architectural projects such as building mosques, renovations, schools and sanctuaries and incoming and outgoing guest houses. His architectural feats extended to all parts of Iraq and other provinces that were under his control. One of his architectural achievements was the mosques of al-Khafafin and Ma'rouf al-Karkhi.

Another legacy of al-Nasser li-Deen Allah was the minaret of Sheikh Ma'rouf al-Karkhi located on the western side of Baghdad in the cemetery named after him and dating back to 612AH/1215AD. The mosque attached to the minaret

was restored several times of which the latest was during the reign of the caliph al-Nasser li Deen Allah, as indicated on the inscription plate of the minaret and which has survived till today in one of the muqarnass decorations of its porch.

When al-Nasser li-Deen Allah passed away, the caliphate went to al-Mustanssir Billah (623-640AH/1226-1242AD) who used the immense wealth left behind by his father to build up the country and champion knowledge and scholars. He ordered the building of many schools such as the Mustansiriyya in Baghdad which achieved great renown. He built the Abbasid Bridge on the road leading to Samarra (a military bridge) and all these buildings have stood the test of time. The last Abbasid caliph to reign was al-Musta'ssim Billah, son of al-Mustanssir (640-656AH/1232-1258AD) and during his rule the Tatars invaded Baghdad in 656AH/1258 and engaged in a looting, burning and murdering spree that lasted forty days. Academic and educational institutions were burnt, the treasures of Baghdad's palaces, schools and mausoleums were pilfered. Hulaku's invasion of Baghdad resulted in the destruction of many landmarks, still the city slowly began coming back to life and shortly after its fall some of its buildings were restored and new ones, some of which continue to stand today, were built. To that era date back two prominent landmarks: the minaret of the al-Khulafaa Mosque (currently Souq al-Ghazal) and the mausoleum of Sheikh Omar al-Sahrourdi.

In a short time, Hulaku managed to create a state made up of all the provinces annexed to modern times Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iraq. Many sultans succeeded to Hulaku and some of them converted to Islam and carried out some reforms and architectural works, then the state's power began to weaken and deteriorate. Governors of provinces and governorates proclaimed their independence and created city-states and scattered kingdoms, similar to what had previously happened in Iraq. In 740AH/1340AD for example, Sheikh Hassan al-Kabir declared his independence and created the Jalairi state.

The Jalairis were also Mongols and some of their more famous sultans were Sultan Oweiss and Sultan Hussein under whose rule the governing of Baghdad was entrusted to khawaja Amin Eddine Morjane who built the Morjaniyya School, Khan Morjane and other khans and markets. Amine Eddine Morjane governed Baghdad until 775AH/1373AD and built many schools, mosques and markets in addition to palaces that are still in existence today. The most famous of these schools was the Morjaniyya, the Wafaiyya and the school of the 'Aqouli

mosque, along with mosques such as the mosque of Siraj Eddine, al-No'mani mosque, and the mosque of Sayyed Sultan Ali. With this architectural boom in Baghdad, the arts of decoration, engraving and gold leaf thrived.

In 785AH, Iraq was the victim of another wave of Mongol raids with the invasion by Timur Leng of Baghdad and the escape of the Jalairi sultan from the city and his murder along with his son Alaa Eddine. The city was looted and other Iraqi cities were destroyed. When the rule of Timur Leng came to an end in Iraq, the country fell under the yoke of the Black Sheep Turkomans (Aq Qoyunlu), and then under that of the white Sheep Turkomans (Qara Qoyunlu) until the Safavid Shah Ismail entered Baghdad in 914AH/1508AD, seizing the opportunity of its instability and weakness.

The covetousness of Iraq's neighboring provinces of this land never waned. The wealth of Iraq, its strategic position and its civilizational and political status led to many conflicts between the Savafids and the mighty Ottoman State which pounced upon any opportunity to bring the Safavid rule over Iraq to an end. After the death of Shah Ismail, the governor of Iraq rebelled against the Safavid shah Tahmasp and sent a call for help to the Ottoman sultan Suleiman. The latter marched to Baghdad in 941AH/1534AD bringing Iraq under Ottoman sovereignty for a period of time and until the Safavids regained control over it in 1033AH/1623AD. However, this reprieve did not last long since the Sultan Murad IV was successful in evicting them from Baghdad in 1048AH/1638AD and thus brought to an end Persia's rule over Iraq. Thus, and from 941AH to World War I, Iraq became a province of the Ottoman State, governed by a wali who was given the title of a vizier. These viziers reached 134 in number over the first and second phases and were appointed by the sultan in Istanbul. Some of these governors and sultans built mosques, mausoleums and schools of which some continue to stand today.

In view of the strategic importance of Iraq, the Ottomans' interest in it grew and they began appointing governors who fulfilled their ambitions and crushed the independence-aspiring principalities. During these times, the Ottoman state's interactions with neighboring countries grew and the Empire initiated reforms and administrative management. Journals began appearing and the first publication to appear in Iraq was 'Al Zawraa' as printing houses came into existence. Some military structures were also built such as Baghdad's fortress (currently the seat of the Ministry of Defense) in 1267AH/1850AD, and barracks for the army in 1278AH/1861 were started by the governor Mohamed Nameq Pasha but only completed during the mandate of Medhat Pasha. He also built a tower in the

square and topped it with a clock that awakened the soldiers in the morning. Furthermore, he built the Rashidiyya elementary school which subsequently became the seat of the faculty of law. The higher school built by governor Ali Pasha in 1276AH/1859AD was subsequently converted into a crafts school. This governor undertook many actions which cannot be fully listed here and of which some were left unfinished after he was removed from Baghdad's governorate 1289AH/1872AD. The governors who succeeded him tried to engage in some reforms but their attempts were in vain since they were themselves weak. Iraq remained part of the Ottoman Empire until British occupation in 1335AH/1917AD. The British military direct rule over Iraq lasted until the eruption of the Iraqi revolution in 1920, after which the monarchy came to power in 1921 and remained at the helm of the country until 1958.