



Annual Dialogue Report

The Grand Mufti
Shawky Allam Initiative

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& Roland Schatz**

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Preface: Overcoming terrorism needs all on board

How do we speak of peace after the series of brutal attacks in Lebanon, Egypt, France, Turkey, Nigeria, Israel, and Palestine - not to mention the daily bloodshed in Syria? In the face of these atrocities, an immediate definition comes to mind: peace is more than the absence of war.

Peace is deeply personal. It is not easily defined, nor explained. For some, peace is the freedom of movement, to attend football matches, concerts, and moments of pleasure without fear. For others, it is access to quality education, decent work, and effective justice systems. Or, it can be committing to a sustainable and safe planet for future generations.

Peace comes in many forms, shapes, and meanings, all based on individual perceptions, backgrounds, and experiences. For this reason, building and maintaining peace is complex and multi-faceted, especially as we face new threats – such as terrorism, violent extremism, climate change, epidemics, hunger, prolonged conflict, or finding a response to the world's mounting refugee crisis.

I have close friends and colleagues in Paris and Lebanon. Clearly shaken by the events that transpired last year, they are nevertheless determined to not let violence interrupt their daily lives. Their reaction to the attacks has been a fierce defense of peace. The UN Climate Summit in Paris at the end of November and the 2030 Agreement on Sustainable Development Goals in New York last September showed what can be achieved if all understand the need for resilient solutions. I am optimistic that the Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, launched on Jan 15 in New York, and the Initiative by the Grand Mufti of Egypt, announced on January 20 in Davos and reaffirmed at the United Nations in Geneva, are sending a clear message: we are all united in our efforts and desire to end violence. But for this to happen the willingness to open up and reinstall trust is a *sine qua non*.

Trust binds our world together, from the trust between family members and the trust between neighbors in a community to the trust between customers and enterprises and the trust between au-

thorities and citizens. But many have lost trust in their leaders, in political systems, in religious institutions and in the very notion that we are all in this world together and share a common future.

This is a problem, because trust is the essential element that allows us to build a world of agreed-upon rules, with a level playing field for all. We need trust in our religious establishments, governments, police and legal systems. As individuals, we need to trust our schools, our doctors our media and one another.

Our trust deficit is, to a large extent, the result of asymmetries in our world. The fact that so many are taking the trust bestowed on them for granted explains countless of these asymmetries. People in positions of authority abuse trust and break the rules, with no consequences. The deep sense of in-justice that many feel, the sentiment of being excluded and not having the same opportunities as others, drives mistrust. And mistrust is one of the underlying factors that lead to extremism, terror and other expressions of frustration.

If we do not honestly address the lack of trust as a basic driver of violence, we miss the point. We risk spiraling in the wrong direction when we respond to violence with more violence. By bombing those who have attacked us, we do not solve the problem but exacerbate it. This is what we need to correct now, because our future is at stake.

We need to rebuild trust through legitimate leadership, justice and accountability so we all have institutions, systems and processes we can trust. We need to re-build trust in individuals so that they feel they belong to our community, that they make a difference and that they matter. This is the fundamental step toward creating the necessary virtuous circle where trust leads to responsibility and response.

Creating trust is at the heart of what the United Nations does: from building trust between nations to building trust between people and their leaders, from building trust in public health and education programs to building trust in international treaties. Above all, the United Nations is the embodiment of the world's collective trust that we can all come together to address our biggest challenges.

Peace is a big word for all of us in Geneva. It is at the core of the work that we do and at the heart of the United Nations' mandate. We work every day around the globe to translate peace into, food, shelter, water, healthcare, education, decent work, as well as freedom, rights, and equality. In Geneva, organizations contribute to peace in all its different shapes and forms.

In light of the current events and given the initiatives by our Secretary-General and the Grandmufti, Dr. Shawky Allam, I am convinced that our work to promote peace is more relevant than ever. I feel hope knowing that there are far more people working for peace than the opposite.

Geneva, January 10, 2016 – Michael Møller

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1. Muslim Countries Should Lead by Example by Shawki Allam

Violent extremists, acting in the name of Islam, have struck many parts of the world and the recent Paris shooting and the tragic events of the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington are only a few examples. Western and eastern officials as well wonder, “Where are the moderates?” Many world leaders, seeing only the extremism perpetrated by a radical few, despair of finding progressive and peaceful partners of standing in the Muslim world.

We therefore are extremely grateful to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and his team, who have initiated just last Friday the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism at the General Assembly in New York. This Plan of Action and our proposal can work hand in hand in order to underline the fact, that the majorities around the globe, within the Muslim world as well from all other religions are part of the solution once they stand up and make sure, their opinion and respect to principles, standards and law are heard well above the awareness threshold.

Islamic renewal and reform is a process dating back to the 19th century, when centuries-old dynamics began to address the challenges of Western colonialism as well as the promise and perils of industrialization, economic development, and the Western nation state as a new post-imperial model for the organization and governance of Muslim societies.

At the Dar al Iftaa, Egypt's supreme body for Islamic legal edicts over which I preside, we wrestle constantly with the issue of Islam's critical engagement with modernity, much in the same way that the Roman Catholic Church underwent and is still immersed in this process. We issue thousands of fatwas or authoritative legal edicts – affirming women's rights to dignity, education and employment, holding political office, and condemning religiously motivated violence and terror. We have upheld the right of freedom of conscience and of freedom of expression within the bounds of human dignity. We have promoted the common history and beliefs that exists between Islam, Christianity, Judaism and other eastern

religions. We have underscored that governance must be based on justice and popular sovereignty. We are committed to human liberty and Islamic law. Nonetheless, we must make more tangible progress deepening understanding of Islam.

Since my appointment as the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Islamic leaders have made it a point to reach out to the whole world to promote peaceful coexistence and to build bridges of understanding and cooperation. To all of us it was a real pleasure to see the world community coming together to meet the challenges of global climate change, most recently in Paris to reduce emissions and to work toward the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that the international community debated for years among leaders involving the representatives from all religions. Islam has and must continue to play a key role in advocating human flourishing, something that ought to be a source of hope within Muslim-majority societies as well as those societies in which Muslims are minorities invited to contribute their many gifts for the sake of the common good.

The Muslim world today in both the east and the west is at the center of international debate, and I believe the time is ripe for further practical steps in order to build on recent successes to continue to build a sustained relationship of mutual trust and respect among world religions.

My message in Davos on behalf of the Muslim world is that Muslims are important participants in the Davos-started C100 initiative that has established the C1 Foundation back in 2008 in London with the support and guidance by their founders Prince Ghazi of Jordan and Roland Schatz, founder of Media Tenor, both co-chairs, the Bishop of London and the former Grand Mufti of Egypt, Dr. Ali Gomaa as well as all the thought leaders from academia such as Prof. John Esposito from Georgetown University, Prof. Miroslav Wolf from Yale and Prof. David Ford from Cambridge University, politicians such as Tony Blair and media leaders like the former Director of Al Arabia, Nakhle El Hage and the Editor in Chief of Europe's largest tabloid newspaper BILD, Kai Diekmann.

Muslim religious leaders, who have spent our lives in careful and intense study of our tradition, are charged with re-establishing the authority of our qualified religious leaders whose lives are dedicat-

ed to understanding, knowledge and expositing the truth of Islam as a way of life oriented toward peace and justice in the human family above all else. I have set out to publish an authoritative picture of Islam which, I hope, will give the world a better understanding of Islam and the Muslim world. That understanding will help us all to live together in peace, tranquility, and mutual cooperation.

As the American Muslim scholar and jurist Khaled Abou el-Fadl has pointed out, religious authority in Islam and other faith traditions is always threatened by authoritarian interpreters who have far less interest in preserving the integrity and vitality of traditional religious teaching than they do in using religion as a basis for their legitimizing and popularizing their claim to power. The most dangerous subset of these authoritarian interpreters is the violent extremists.

In both Islam and other religions we are witnessing a phenomenon in which extremists without a sound foundation in religious learning have asserted themselves as religious authorities, even though they lack scholarly qualifications for making valid interpretations of religious law and morality. It is this unfounded rebellious pretention towards religion that opens the way for extremist interpretations of Islam that have no basis in the Muslim faith.

Furthermore, and this is very important, extremists have, for the most part, not been educated in genuine centers of Islamic learning. Rather, the vast majority are young men and women who have been raised in troubled environments in which many of them have themselves been the victims of the violence of militarism, both domestic and foreign, and in which an even greater number have witnessed gross injustices perpetrated against relatively helpless and voiceless civilian populations. As a result, these young people fall to distorted and misguided interpretations of Islam that have no basis in traditional Islamic doctrine and are aimed at enlisting them in a crass political agenda wrapped in the thin veneer of so-called religious virtue. Such extremism creates havoc and chaos in the lives of these young people, in their societies, and in the lives of an increasing number of innocent people – first and foremost fellow Muslims, but increasingly encompassing non-Muslims living in the Muslim majority world and in Western societies.

Terrorist groups audaciously misinterpret Islam, citing from the Quran selectively to suit their own agendas and add a so-called “authoritative” dressing to their views. These deviant ideologies need to be fought by intellectual responses which debunk their erroneous ideologies. The international media as well as academic scholars are called to publish and broadcast the voices of authentic Muslim scholars who deconstruct the false claims and warped understanding of the Quranic exegesis.

We have to remember, however, that an ultimate defeat of violent extremists and terrorists cannot happen without revival and renewal, not only within Islam, but within the other major religious traditions of the world as they seek to be more faithful to their core teachings of peace and justice in a world suffering from the ills of materialism, militarism, poverty, and disease.

As a Muslim religious leader, my responsibility is to call for Muslim religious leaders to revisit with fidelity to traditional learning and openness to sound theories of modern critical analysis, the incredibly rich Islamic intellectual heritage. I also call for a renewed appreciation of the tremendous intellectual diversity in Islamic thought and recognition that the development and dissemination of Islamic thought has suffered a troubled history as a consequence of global political developments. This exchange of understanding Islam needs all of us to rededicate ourselves to creating a better world: in mosques, churches, synagogues, in politics, in schools, media, companies, sports and all walks of life. We will not reach this goal of understanding by excluding anyone.

It cannot be stated strongly enough that violent extremism, whether perpetrated by non-state actors, recognized nation states, or unrecognized “states” such as Da’esh, is opposed to everything Islamic law stands for. Islamic law is a sophisticated and humane system which mandates very precise rules that are designed to safeguard and advance core human dignity.

The purpose of Islamic Law is not to establish theocracies, to subjugate non-believers or to subject people to capital punishment. Rather, the Shari’ah, as God’s will for the flourishing of His human creation, aims to facilitate a believer’s attainment of God’s grace,

secure human wellbeing in this life and attain human salvation in the hereafter – ideals common to all Abrahamic faiths.

The sensationalism over so-called “Shari’ah law” that we see time and again, is uninformed fear mongering. Islamophobic extremists who spread hate are completely ignorant of the fact that U.S. American Muslims, for example, practice the core tenets of the Shari’ah every day when they operate soup kitchens, donate their time to community service, marry, practice professions, run businesses, have children, visit the sick, and respect human dignity.

Unfortunately, some media outlets report only the speech and actions of a small, but highly visible and disruptive minority of people within the Muslim world. They imply, by the disproportionate coverage of Muslim extremism, that this speech and these actions represent the belief and practice of the majority of Muslims. They also either imply or expressly state that Islam has been a violent religion from its beginning. This view is unfortunately reinforced through the presentation of Islam in the wider mass media.

The findings from the C1 World Dialogue Foundation, published in the Annual Dialogue Reports 2009, 2011 and 2015, demonstrate our efforts to overcome stereotypes that are predominant obstacles blocking acceptance of tolerance and respect for human dignity as we share this world together.

Allow me to be clear – authentic Islam is utterly against extremism. We must understand the underlying factors that provide a rationalization for terrorism and extremism in order to eradicate this scourge. It is imperative that we understand and address the underlying causes of extremism and terrorism in order to build a better future that can bring an end to this grave situation that is inflaming the world.

Finally, Muslim leaders need to present Islam in a deeper and more comprehensive manner. Islam needs to enlist supporters to correct the lack of understanding and return from bias to objectivity in both the media and in academia, especially in non-Muslim countries. And Muslim countries have to let the world see how the Islam is grounded in diversity and mutual respect.

On my recent visits to many countries across the globe, I called for the promotion of scholarly cooperation, building bridges of cooperation and understanding and supporting the existing and ongoing efforts of the Muslim community towards positive integration.

Although I believe that these recommendations were met with approval, I find it necessary to repeat them again today in the hope that you will assist me in making them a reality. There is no more powerful a weapon against extremism than truthful education.

I wish to tap the “Spirit of Davos” to create concrete steps towards a world in peace defined by respect for human dignity and wellbeing.

We are able to achieve peace in the beauty of God’s creation. We can ask our friends in the United Nations to take a leadership role to help build bridges. Here in Switzerland, in Geneva – an important UN locus genui – is the institutional base to prove that the desire for peace is more than only wishful thinking.

2. Who Can Adequately Represent Muslims? **by Ibrahim Negm**

One of the most important questions that has been raised repeatedly is what role religion and religious forces will play in the still emerging political scene in the MENA region. Because MENA remains a profoundly religious, the burning question is who can adequately represent the religious interests of the masses, and direct them towards peaceful and productive democratic ends? These are critical question. Both their number and significance underscore the very large challenges ahead in this important region.

The Muslim world has been particularly successful at creating institutions and bodies whose long-standing service to the community confer upon them legitimacy that cannot be had simply by someone with access to modern media. This is no time to abandon that example, for it is the only vehicle by which a humane understanding of Islam – opposed to terrorism, violence and discrimination – is possible. This understanding I speak of, and its attendant imperative to engage with the modern world, is not a new phenomenon. Rather it is part of the treasures of the cultural heritage of Arabs and Muslims.

This spirit of moderation, tolerance and flexibility is well reflected in the paradigm of al-Azhar university which has long served not only the Egyptian people but the Muslim world at large, by not only producing first-rate scholars, thinkers and intellectuals, but also by providing educational opportunities for men and women, instilling in them an ethic of integrity, leadership and service and devoting itself to spreading a balanced vision of Islam based on recognized and orthodox ideals infused with spiritual depth. We are confident in this great institution's ability to restore its status as a historical giant, and exert its influence on the articulation of Islam in Egypt and throughout the Muslim world. Now is the time to support institutions that seek to articulate an Islam suitable to the modern world, with impeccable scholarly credentials, and the worldwide prestige necessary to succeed in creating a better world.

In the modern context, the significance of the Azhar has been diffused into a variety of institutions. In addition to the University and the many informal teacher-student relationships that form amongst Azhari students and professors, the Azhari mission is supported by the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, which administers more than 120,000 mosques throughout the country staffed by more than 80,000 Imams, all graduates of the Azhar. Equally crucial to the administering of the Azhari paradigm is the Dar al-Ifta, the authoritative voice of Islamic legal interpretation in Egypt and the larger Sunni Islamic world. It has served for over a century as the premier body in Egypt tasked with the responsibility of responding to the many and often complicated matters (about half a million edicts issued per year in 10 different languages) confronting contemporary Muslims in terms of their religious responsibilities.

What is the Azhari methodology? Whence did it originate, and what is it composed of? Through an extensive analysis of its output, we are able to articulate some conclusions about the essential features of the Azhari approach. These features are representative of the spirit that inheres in the scholarly activities of its 'ulama, their works and scholarly positions. Below, we summarize and explain these features so as to delineate what constitutes a specifically Azhari approach, in contradistinction especially to Islamism and Salafism, the two other religious currents noticeable in Egypt and the MENA regions.

To say that this is a specifically Azhari approach is merely to acknowledge the superior standing accorded to the Azhar in the field of religious education and interpretation by the 'ulama themselves. This does not detract, however, from the fact that this approach is spread throughout the Muslim world, forming a truly authentic and traditional worldview. Indeed, we discover that these very elements are common, widespread and current in the curricula of the great learning centres like the University of Zaytuna in Tunis; the Ottoman School in Tripoli (the Uthman Pasha Madrasa); the University of Al-Qarawiyyin in Fez; the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus; Fatih University in Istanbul; the great learning centres such as those in Hadramawt, Sana'a, India, Mauritania; as well as the secondary schools and institutions that have developed from these primary ones.

FIRST FEATURE

The first component is for one to have a continuous and unbroken sanad (chain) with respect to transmission, cognitive understanding, and spiritual purification.

Amongst the special features of the Azhari approach is that its sciences and knowledge disciplines are passed down and transmitted from generation to generation, and which constitute a continuous and unbroken chain of religious scholars and practitioners. Every generation receives from the generation preceding it with a continuous chain and uninterrupted understanding. None of the students who follow this approach will venture to take up leading positions except after receiving knowledge and keeping long company with scholars until they grant him permission or a formal license in transmitting (especially hadith narrations), teaching, writing, and imparting knowledge. Should you enquire from one of them as to his teachers, he will mention a number of them, and should you ask him how long he has spent in the company of his teacher or teachers, he will say that he has spent a long time in their company until he understood and comprehended from them the methodology of understanding and the entries to knowledge.

This is contrary to other approaches which are broken and interrupted and in which a student will take a leading position without keeping company with the scholars. And should you ask one of them how much time did he spend in the company of his teacher, he will tell you that he had only met him once, or that he has only spent a limited number of hours with him. How is it possible for him to have obtained knowledge, and how can his understanding be trusted?

This feature underscores the importance of authority to the Azhari approach. Western observers have repeatedly commented that among the difficulties in restoring a sense of stability to the Muslim world is the fractured nature of religious authority. They deem this to be integral to Islamic tradition itself, arguing that because Islam has no conception of a central authority akin to a pope, that authoritativeness is alien to Islam. This is a far cry from the long-

standing structure of Islamic tradition found throughout the Muslim world for centuries before it was penetrated by Salafi and Islamist thought. In this traditional approach, the leading 'ulama acted as something of a magisterium who measured the intellectual output of Muslims against the welfare and interests of the Muslim community at large. This approach makes way for a capacity to reform, controlled by the judgment of leading men of learning, and neither lesser lights nor any unaccredited autodidact.

SECOND FEATURE

The second component is giving due care and importance to obtaining a mastery of the auxiliary sciences.

Furthermore, it is an approach that is concerned with the education and training of its students on the basis of mastering and developing a firm grasp of the auxiliary sciences such as: nahw(syntax); sarf (morphology); ishtiqaq (etymology and derivation); balagha (rhetoric and eloquence) in its three parts; usul al-fiqh(principles of Islamic legal theory); 'ulum al-hadith (sciences of hadith); as well as other auxiliary sciences and disciplines that assist the learner, develop in him the relevant capacities, and enable him to engage in a nuanced, contextual and humane reading of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Tradition, the Sunna, on the basis of knowledge, understanding and keen insight-while at the same time proceeding in the learning of all these sciences and disciplines on an approved methodology through which the student is able to rise from preliminaries to finer and subtle details.

It is as if the first feature – spending a lengthy portion of time in the company of religious scholars – is the one from which the second feature stems, since holding extended company with the 'ulama will enhance the learning of the sciences.

THIRD FEATURE

The third feature is having a thorough understanding of the higher objectives and purposes of the Shari'a

One of the outcomes of keeping prolonged company with the'ulama and obtaining knowledge of the auxiliary sciences, is the opening up, and development, of a keen insight into the understanding of the higher objectives and purposes of the Noble Shari'a, and the understanding that the religion (din) came to realize the following objectives: worshipping God; spiritual purification and growth; proper habitation of the earth; guiding nations to the good; inheriting knowledge from the Prophets; building the human being on godliness; spiritual insight; turning towards the Final Abode; obtaining honorable character traits; building civilization; producing spiritual revival until the Umma of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is itself a mercy Unto the worlds, just as the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is a mercy unto the worlds.

When a portion of the understanding of the Shari'a's higher objectives and purposes is made available to and placed within the reach of the student, his understanding of the religion is thereby broadened and enhanced and his insight into Islamic legal matters is thereby illuminated. Such training will enable him to avoid rigidity and harshness, teach those that lack knowledge or make mistakes with gentleness, and shape his character and personality according to the noble Prophetic model.

Other modern approaches often do not demonstrate any knowledge of and acquaintance with the higher objectives and purposes of the Shari'a. There is no mention of higher objectives and purposes in their discourse, nor is it manifest in their understanding and application.

FOURTH FEATURE

The fourth feature is the correct understanding of the Holy Qur'an, i.e. using Qur'anic verses in their appropriate and proper contexts.

One very important effect that results from prolonged company with the 'ulama, knowledge of the auxiliary sciences, and understanding of the higher objectives and purposes of the Shari'a is that the proponent and practitioner of this approach becomes grounded in the reading of the Qur'an, and is able to use and apply Qur'anic verses in their proper and appropriate contexts. He does not go to a verse that was revealed in response to a specific circumstance and apply it indiscriminately as we see today. Likewise, he does not take a verse that has been revealed concerning a general issue and then apply it to a specific issue, nor a verse that has been revealed concerning a specific issue and then apply it to a general issue, and so on and so forth.

Rather, he ensures that he has sound understanding of the Holy Qur'an and is able to properly apply the Qur'an to particular contexts without ambiguity and confusion, unlike many other methodologies in current fashion which delve into Qur'an without the most basic of understandings and which often lead to distorted and warped interpretations. The intellectual honesty, rigor and consistency of the Azhari approach is surprisingly well-known to even the most average Egyptian, whose genuine religious sensibilities often lead him to understand the political opportunism with which Islamists and Salafists approach primary texts.

FIFTH FEATURE

The fifth feature is a genuine regard for the affairs of Muslim community.

One of the results of what has been explained above is that the student of knowledge realizes how serious his responsibility is to his co-religionist Muslims., and that the umma (Islamic nation) is in fact the repository of Islam itself, and that it is an umma of

knowledge, guidance, tolerance and mercy, and not one of destruction, violence and terrorism. He thus realizes that it is incumbent to participate and contribute to the production of the global culture and civilization in a way that is beneficial, effective and sophisticated. This is to be accomplished by way of human cultural output in all its forms: sciences, arts and crafts, and the promotion of the values of knowledge and learning in the various fields of the human, empirical and rational sciences.

SIXTH FEATURE

The sixth feature is carrying a concern for all creation.

When the student has thoroughly acquainted himself with the above, his attention will be turned to the fact that the Prophetic example was so deeply concerned with the entire creation (including all of humanity and nature). This is manifested by a complete eagerness, tenderness and compassion for all of God's creation. Of the most significant features of the Azhari approach is that it cultivates this sublime meaning in the hearts of its students, unlike other approaches which do not have in their discourse any reference to the rights that other nations and nature have over us.

SEVENTH FEATURE

The seventh feature concerns the holistic nature of knowledge.

Throughout centuries of educating its students, the Azhari approach has maintained that knowledge is composed of three elements: the first is sources and proofs in the form of the Qur'an, Sunnah (Prophetic Practice), scholarly consensus, and analogical reasoning; the second is the approved and rigorous method of understanding the religious texts, the manner of analyzing them and extrapolating their meaning and significance; and the third is qualifications, attributes, competencies, skills and intellectual endowments, which must be present in the person becoming knowledgeable, learned and grounded in the Islamic religious sciences. The

sources alone do not constitute knowledge nor guidance unless it is accompanied, approved, and endorsed by a method of interpretation carried out by a competent and qualified individual.

Other approaches tend to tear knowledge apart and reduce it to fragments. Proponents of these methodologies do not understand what knowledge is but for the simplistic term *dalil* (proof or evidence). They demonstrate no knowledge of '*wajh al-dalala*' (angle of signification), that is to say, the more refined question of how the *dalil* signifies what it signifies and how it makes the particular point that it makes; nor of the method of compiling the disparate proofs on each issue, and the method of integrating, interpreting and analyzing them. Nor does it account for the state or condition of the person engaged in the interpretive process and the necessity to ensure that his intellectual capacities, skills and competencies are all suited for the task at hand. This results in a reductionist reading of Islamic sources, which in turn gives rise to a myopic worldview unable to interact with the modern world

Also, among the fullness of the elements of knowledge is that its bearer must be conversant with, and combine within himself, both the transmitted religious sciences (i.e. sciences that are primarily based on revelation, transmission and narration) and rational sciences (i.e. sciences that are primarily based on reason), such that he is able to interact with, understand and comprehend epistemological models of which the current state of global knowledge is composed, and he is thereby in a position to convey the salient and characteristic features of our religion to the world at large.

EIGHTH FEATURE

The eighth feature is deriving benefit from the tradition of the Umma, opening oneself up to it, maintaining contact with it, and building on it

Among the most salient features of the Azhari way is that it is an approach that embraces the tradition of the umma (the Muslim world) with respect to the sciences and its fields, and interacts and engages with that tradition. It is an approach that acknowledges

this tradition's authentic nature and value and knows how to extrapolate and extract from it everything that is beneficial, meritorious and sublime. It also knows how to build on this tradition and how to add to it—contrary to other approaches that seek to abandon the tradition of the Muslim Umma and sever relations with it.

This is well-known to Muslims around the world, and is the reason why the tradition of the 'ulama is thought to be the most authentic, and connects them with the past in a way that is respectful of the positions of previous scholarship, while willing to engage with it in an acknowledgement that this engagement itself is in the best traditions of the Islamic scholarly tradition.

Conclusion

The Azhar has been blessed throughout the centuries to have met with the acceptance of the masses of Muslims, the umma or the Global Muslim Community at large. In addition, its central location between the Muslim East and West, and North and South has meant that many delegations of the Muslim world have passed through it. This has resulted in a cosmopolitan outlook, open-minded and respectful of the various particularities of Muslim scholarship in its various geographical areas, and thereby the expansion of the circle of knowledge at the Azhar. In this way, the teaching methodologies at al-Azhar became more refined, and its horizons expanded. This resulted in a very important outcome: embracing and accommodating the other, since students from all over the Muslim world set out to the al-Azhar. This is well-known, but what is less well understood is that non-Muslim students journeyed to al-Azhar to study, and the scholars of al-Azhar embraced and accommodated them as their own.

As a result, the Azhar has long demonstrated a capacity and willingness to monitor developments taking place in the worlds of people, events, ideas and things. In this way, al-Azhar was more perceptive of reality and the real world, and more conversant with the change that occurs in the domain in which Islamic legal rulings apply and which results in the particular legal ruling changing in its wake. One important outcome that occurred from this is the appli-

cation of the doctrine of juristic choice, or discretion, through which the scholars of al-Azhar would highlight the detailed manner in which Islam expands to accommodate the states and conditions of all its adherents. It can hardly be lost on anyone conversant with the current state of the Muslim world that this is precisely the sorts of commitments that are necessary for Islamic authorities to engage the modern world – not as rejectionist reactionaries but as intelligent and involved participants.

The events of the past few years in the Middle East and North Africa, though they have presented their own challenges, are reasons for optimism and hope. And indeed every good believer not God must remain hopeful, and maintain an attitude of optimism towards both humanity and the Divine.

In order to achieve this, however, we must confront the problems that we encounter with a sense of purpose and determination. It is with this in mind that the institution of the Dar al-Ifta, the premiere institution for Islamic Legal Interpretation in the Sunni Muslim world, feels a responsibility towards articulating the place of religion in the face of the new challenges developments. This has become especially important as in the past few years we have witnessed flare-ups of sectarian sentiment and indeed violence – both of which are deeply regrettable and run counter to the very notion of religious cooperation that both the Muslim and Christian faith encourage, uphold and indeed mandate.

It has long been the policy of the Dar al-Ifta and the office of the Grand Mufti that Egypt contains within itself a specific approach to the role of Islam in the current events which draws upon a centuries old tradition indigenous to our lands, expressed most clearly in what we may call the Azhar paradigm.

In contrast to the political parties who seek to invoke religion in order to engage in party politics, the Azhar paradigm envisions a very different, moderate and reasonable view on this topic. There is no doubt that Egyptians are a deeply spiritual people, marked by a profound sense of religiosity. But far from being a problem, this is a characteristic in which they should take pride. In the face of the way Islamic social and political participation is often thought of in

today's world, the Egyptian experience with Islam has been one of great tolerance and inclusion.

Our understanding of the role Islam is to play in Egypt is that of a custodian and advocate of the religious and social welfare of all Egyptians, and a representative of the Muslim community at large by acting as the moral conscience of political decision makers.

I mentioned earlier that the constant engagement with the world is a characteristic of a true Islamic vision. Indeed, the process of issuing fatwas – the primary role of the Dar al-Ifta – has long been understood to be integral to this process of engagement with the modern world. Flexibility is an integral part of the Islamic legal tradition; in fact, you could say it is one of the defining characteristics of Islamic law. Many in the Western world have come to identify the fatwa with some unfortunate pronouncements of political or self-appointed religious leaders. But fatwa-giving is in fact one of the most important institutions in the endeavor to properly understand the relationship between Islam and the modern world. In an attempt to provide Muslims with authoritative guidance about their religion, muftis look not only to the vast legal tradition, but must also conduct a proper examination of the lived reality of Muslims, in order to provide them with relevant rulings. In effect, fatwas and Muftis represent the bridge between the long-standing intellectual-legal tradition of Islam and the contemporary world in which we live. They are the link between the past and the present, the absolute and the relative, the transcendent and the contingent, the theoretical and the practical.

It is only when this deep awareness is lacking that this link is severed, and we witness the sorts of extremism we are witnessing today. When each and every person's unqualified opinion is considered a fatwa we lose a crucial tool in our capacities to reign in extremism and preserve balanced understandings of Islam. We may point to any number of declarations posing as fatwas from extremists and terrorists as examples of how grave the consequences are of not following the historical Islamic example of differentiating between those with scholarly standing and authority and those without.

**3. The Grand Mufti of Egypt Combats
Ideological Extremism
by Ibrahim Negm**

It is of no surprise to anyone that extremism and extremist violence are some of the most serious issues confronting civilization today.

Recent years have only seen an exacerbation of these phenomena. The tragic events of 9/11 constitute but one high-profile example of the ongoing problem posed by extremist ideologies to the image of Islam and the future of intercultural and interreligious relations.

The Grand Mufti of Egypt Dr Shawki Allam has been one of the most vocal proponents of the view that ideological extremism committed in the name of Islam is in fact a misreading of both the letter and spirit of the Islamic tradition, and an aberration from the great history of Islamic civilization.

In the view of Dr Shawki Allam , there is no religion worthy of the name that does not regard as one of its highest values the sanctity of human life. Islam is no exception to this rule. Indeed, Allah has made this unequivocal in the Qur'an by emphasizing the gravity of the universal prohibition against murder, saying of the one who takes even one life that "it is as if he has killed all mankind."

Terrorism, therefore, cannot be for Dr. Allam the outcome of any proper understanding of religion. It is rather a manifestation of the immorality of people with cruel hearts, arrogant souls, and warped logic. The great corruption and instability sown by their actions are therefore a source of great sadness and outrage to him. What further complicates the matter, and exacerbates his concern is the way in which those who in no way understand or represent the grand Islamic traditions of tolerance, mercy and understanding have been able to link their repulsive actions with the noble religion of Islam.

Sheikh Allam has thus been a consistent and outspoken critic of violence of every form, and its erroneous and rootless affiliation with Islam. He has explicitly stated that terrorists are not Muslim

activists, but outlaws who have been brainwashed and fed a mistaken interpretation of Quran and Sunnah.

More important than simple condemnations, however, Dr. Allam maintains the strong belief that Muslims, and especially their religious leadership, must actively counter the deviant beliefs that underpin such gross transgressions. Despite their confused claims, terrorists are miscreants who have no legitimate connection to the pure Islamic way, whose history and orthodox doctrine are testaments to the Islamic commitment to tolerance, compassion and peace.

Nor can one attribute blame to the grand tradition of Islamic law as responsible for such repulsive actions. As the Grand Mufti stated in a speech in Belgium 2014, it cannot be stated strongly enough that terrorism is opposed to

everything Islamic law stands for. Islamic law is a sophisticated and humane system which mandates very precise rules for warfare. These have been laid out very clearly in fatwas by the Grand Mufti which repudiate the actions of a misguided criminal minority . Those who undertake such activities not only commit crimes against their victims – many of whom are innocent women and children – and breach international agreements and treaties, but they overstep their boundaries, and place an unjustifiable burden on the rest of the Muslim community. As Grand Mufti, Sheikh Allam has repeatedly condemned the senseless acts of terrorism carried out by those falsely claiming to represent Islam. These include unequivocal and express condemnations of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the London bombings on 7/7/2005, the Bali terrorist attacks, as well as the horrific violence perpetrated by the self claimed Islamic State.

Unfortunately, the terrorists often invoke the Islamic concept of “jihad” to justify their crimes. This has led to much confusion and the tendency to misinterpret this important Islamic idea by linking it to violence and aggression. Dr. Allam has taken it upon himself to clarify this misconception.

To the contrary, the Islamic intellectual heritage is a repository for texts that clearly forbid murder while extolling the sanctity of human life, “We prescribed to the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul, unless it be for retaliation, or to spread corruption on earth, it would be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves a life, it would be as if he had saved the life of all mankind.” (5:32)

As such, it is clearly a mistake to label the terrorists practitioners of jihad, or mujahidin. This is a lofty Islamic concept which bears no resemblance to the lawlessness practiced by extremists and terrorists. But Dr. Ali is even more precise, arguing that the word commonly used in modern Arabic for terrorism, *irhab*, though an improvement, also poses its own set of problems. Indeed, *irhab* and the related Arabic root *r-h-b* often contain positive resonances for those conversant with the classical Islamic vocabulary.

As for example, the Qur’an uses a word in the semantic range spawned by *r-h-b* to explain the proper awe with which humans ought to relate to God. “O Children of Israel, remember my favor wherewith I favored you; and fulfill my covenant and I shall fulfill your covenant, and have awe of Me.” (2: 40). Relatedly, the Qur’an uses a related word (*rahban*) to refer to monks and monasticism (*rahbaniyya*), and their manner of interacting with the Divine.

Finally, and more concretely, the root *r-h-b* is used to refer to a praiseworthy deterrence against those enemies who would seek to aggressively intimidate the Muslim community. “Make ready for them whatever force you can and of horses tethered that you may thereby awe the enemy of God and your enemy.” (8: 60). This term therefore is often used to refer to a concept of deterrence aimed at securing an advantage that will lead to peace with an enemy that would otherwise aggress against the Muslim community.

Dr Allam favors the term *irjaf* as the proper translation into Arabic for terrorism. “This word, which denotes subversion and scare-mongering to bring quaking and commotion to society is derived from the root *rajafa*, which means to quake, tremble, be in violent motion, convulse, or shake.” This term occurs in the Qur’an in this context in one telling verse: “Now; if the hypocrites do not give

over, and those in whose hearts there is sickness and they make commotion (murjifun) in the city, We shall assuredly urge thee against them.” (33: 60). The reader of the Grand Mufti explains: “In the context of this verse, al-Qurtubi, the renowned thirteenth-century Qur’anic commentator and Maliki jurist, explains the meaning of irjaf with respect to “shaking of the hearts (tahrik al-qulub),” noting the root’s corresponding application to “the shaking of the earth (rajafat al-ard).” Within an Islamic context, connecting this metaphor of creating commotion on earth (murjifun) with that of shaking hearts (tahrik al-qulub) connotes that those who do wrong are in fact acting against the wishes of the divine.

Allam thus maintains that the term murjifun (singular, murjif), as well as the equivalent rendering irjafiyyun (singular, irjafi), is a far better translation of terrorists ... Of course, there are multiple ways to bring about such intense commotion to society, but all of these fall under irjaf, his recommended translation of the word terrorism. From a linguistic perspective, he points out that the term unambiguously connotes the cowardice, deceit, and betrayal associated with terrorism in striking from the back. The grand mufti’s discussion of the usage of murjifun not only deflates bin Laden’s pompous and grandiose ideology, but reduces him from monk to criminal.”

This represents a rhetorical attack that must be used to deconstruct the terrorist ideology. However, the attack against extremism must also consist of a viable alternative. Here, the Grand Mufti believes we are on firm ground because it is clear that the extremist readings maintained by the radicals represent unsustainable aberrations from traditional Islam. Traditional Islam in Egypt and around the world is heavily invested in the purifying and correcting role of Sufism, the spirituality of Islam. Sufism is necessary for the proper refinement of morals and the creation of pure hearts and civilized humans who work towards developing and building human society, and not destroying it. Therefore, it is a necessary component of any project to curb extremism.

Another component is a rigorous intellectual response to the sorts of philosophical arguments made by the intellectually impoverished extremists. Here again we are fortunate in being able to draw on the long history of Al-Azhar, its timeless tradition of moderation (wasatiyya), and its widespread acceptance among the people.

The concept of civil society is of course a modern one, and the organizations thought to constitute it are therefore of a certain type, especially non-governmental institutions intended to advocate for certain human rights. The role of interfacing between rulers and citizens, however, has an important precedent in Egypt, having long been fulfilled by the class of religious scholars (the 'ulama) indigenous to Egypt, and trained at the Azhar Mosque and University.

It is this historical example that can be exploited today in Egypt for its cultural legitimacy and ability to move forward into an era free of the phenomenon of extremism that we have seen over the past few years. The ulama have long held the position of intermediaries, often acting as the social conscience of Egypt and custodians of popular sentiment and tradition. The cultivation and strengthening of humane and democratic values, then, requires a legitimacy that is not on offer from any quarter but those that have continuously played this historic role in Egyptian society, that is the Azhari ulama. It is only then that a robust, vibrant and peaceful civil society will take root in the country.

The Azhar has been in continuous operation for over a millennium now, enduring the various dynasties that have ruled Egypt during that time. Established in the Fatimid era, it has witnessed the Ayyubid, Mamluk, Ottoman dynasties, as well as the upheavals of the modern Egyptian Republic. It is a truism to say that any institution which has flourished for so long contains within it an innate capacity to accommodate various social configurations, keep up with the changing times, and remain responsive to the ever-evolving Egyptian populace. The scholars of Azhar take pride in this capacity to remain agile and flexible.

Since its establishment, al-Azhar has been devoted to spreading a balanced vision of Islam based on the four Sunni Schools of Islamic law and orthodox theology infused with the spiritual depths. Students at al-Azhar are given a broad humanistic education. They are taught not only how to master the rational sciences of grammar, logic, and law, but they are also given instruction in ethics and spirituality as well, which are considered integral parts of effective religious leadership. Combined with an understanding of contemporary issues, this holistic approach protects from the radicalism

that sees in only black and white. This is why Egypt continues to draw students from all over the world to study at al-Azhar. These students return to their communities with not only knowledge, but also the example of a balanced religiosity that, while remaining true to its principles, is able to address the current needs of the Muslim community, and argue effectively against illegitimate impositions on the Islamic traditions of humaneness and tolerance. The Azhari paradigm is to train one eye on the past so as to learn from the rich Islamic heritage, and the other eye on the future and the current needs of the people.

As an example, consider that the officials of the Azhar establishment have come on record supporting peaceful democratic elections, and encouraging citizens to vote as a religious obligation. Similarly, they have played a crucial role in dampening sectarianism. Under the leadership of Dr. Allam, the Dar al-Ifta, part of the complex of institutions associated with the worldview of al-Azhar, has issued a lengthy fatwa affirming the right of Christians to build churches in Egypt, a contentious issue that has intermittently given rise to sectarian conflict in the past year.

In the modern context, the significance of the Azhar has been diffused into a variety of institutions. In addition to the University and the many informal teacher-student relationships that form amongst Azhari students and professors, the Azhari mission is supported by the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, which administers more than 110,000 mosques throughout the country staffed by more than 50,000 Imams, all graduates of the Azhar. Equally crucial to the administering of the Azhari paradigm is the Dar al-Ifta, the authoritative voice of Islamic legal interpretation in Egypt and the larger Sunni Islamic world. It has served for over a century as the premier body in Egypt tasked with the responsibility of responding to the many and often complicated matters confronting modern Egyptians in terms of their religious responsibilities, and promoting an authentic Islamic viewpoint opposed to extremism of all kinds.

The religious establishment, as represented by the approach of the Azhar, has long demonstrated a capacity and willingness to monitor developments taking place in the worlds of people, events, ideas and things, and remain flexible in their responses to their find-

ings. In this way, al-Azhar has been more perceptive of reality and the real world, and more conversant with the change that occurs in the domain in which Islamic legal rulings apply and which results in the particular legal ruling changing in its wake.

One important feature of this approach is the great significance accorded to the Objectives of the Sharia, and the well-being of not only the Muslim community, but indeed a concern for creation at large. Similarly, there is an awareness of the importance of the doctrine of juristic choice, or discretion, through which the scholars of al-Azhar are able to highlight the detailed manner in which Islam expands to accommodate the states and conditions of all its adherents. It can hardly be lost on anyone conversant with the current state of the Muslim world that this is precisely the sorts of commitments that are necessary for Islamic authorities to engage the modern world – not as rejectionist reactionaries but as intelligent and involved participants.

4. **Open Letter to Al Baghdadi by Prince Ghazi of Jordan**

Executive Summary

1. It is forbidden in Islam to issue *fatwas* without all the necessary learning requirements. Even then *fatwas* must follow Islamic legal theory as defined in the Classical texts. It is also forbidden to cite a portion of a verse from the Qur'an – or part of a verse – to derive a ruling without looking at everything that the Qur'an and *Hadith* teach related to that matter. In other words, there are strict subjective and objective prerequisites for *fatwas*, and one cannot 'cherry-pick' Qur'anic verses for legal arguments without considering the entire Qur'an and *Hadith*.
2. It is forbidden in Islam to issue legal rulings about anything without mastery of the Arabic language.
3. It is forbidden in Islam to oversimplify *Shari'ah* matters and ignore established Islamic sciences.
4. It is permissible in Islam [for scholars] to differ on any matter, except those fundamentals of religion that all Muslims must know.
5. It is forbidden in Islam to ignore the reality of contemporary times when deriving legal rulings.
6. It is forbidden in Islam to kill the innocent.
7. It is forbidden in Islam to kill emissaries, ambassadors, and diplomats; hence it is forbidden to kill journalists and aid workers.
8. Jihad in Islam is defensive war. It is not permissible without the right cause, the right purpose and without the right rules of conduct.
9. It is forbidden in Islam to declare people non-Muslim unless he (or she) openly declares disbelief.
10. It is forbidden in Islam to harm or mistreat—in any way—Christians or any 'People of the Scripture'.

11. It is obligatory to consider Yazidis as People of the Scripture.
12. The re-introduction of slavery is forbidden in Islam. It was abolished by universal consensus.
13. It is forbidden in Islam to force people to convert.
14. It is forbidden in Islam to deny women their rights.
15. It is forbidden in Islam to deny children their rights.
16. It is forbidden in Islam to enact legal punishments (*hudud*) without following the correct procedures that ensure justice and mercy.
17. It is forbidden in Islam to torture people.
18. It is forbidden in Islam to disfigure the dead.
19. It is forbidden in Islam to attribute evil acts to God ﷻ.
20. It is forbidden in Islam to destroy the graves and shrines of Prophets and Companions.
21. Armed insurrection is forbidden in Islam for any reason other than clear disbelief by the ruler and not allowing people to pray.
22. It is forbidden in Islam to declare a caliphate without consensus from all Muslims.
23. Loyalty to one's nation is permissible in Islam.
24. After the death of the Prophet ﷺ, Islam does not require anyone to emigrate anywhere.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds,
Peace and Blessings be upon the Seal of the Prophets
and Messengers

By the declining day, Lo! man is a state of loss, Save those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance. (Al-‘Asr, 103: 1-3)

Open Letter

To Dr. Ibrahim Awwad Al-Badri, alias ‘Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi’,

To the fighters and followers of the self-declared ‘Islamic State’,

Peace and the mercy of God be upon you.

During your sermon dated 6th of Ramadan 1435 AH (4th July 2014 CE), you said, paraphrasing Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq : ‘If you find what I say and do to be true, then assist me, and if you find what I say and do to be false, then advise me and set me straight.’ In what follows is a scholarly opinion via the media. The Prophet  said: ‘*Religion is [rectifying] advice*¹.’ Everything said here below relies completely upon the statements and actions of followers of the ‘Islamic State’ as they themselves have promulgated in social media – or upon Muslim eyewitness accounts – and not upon other media. Every effort has been made to avoid fabrications and misunderstandings. Moreover, everything said here consists of synopses written in a simple style that reflect the opinions of the overwhelming majority of Sunni scholars over the course of Islamic history.

¹ Narrated by Muslim in Kitab al-Iman, no. 55.

In one of his speeches², Abu Muhammad Al-Adnani said: ‘God bless Prophet Muhammad who was sent with the sword as a mercy to all worlds.’³ This statement comprises compounded confusions and a mistaken paradigm. Yet it is often repeated by followers of the ‘Islamic State’. Now God sent the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a mercy to all worlds: ‘*We did not send you, except as a mercy to all the worlds.*’ (Al-Anbiya’,22: 107). This is true for all time and place. The Prophet ﷺ was sent as mercy to people, animals, plants, to the heavens and to subtle beings – no Muslims disagree about this. It is a general and unconditional statement taken from the Qur’an itself. However, the phrase, ‘sent with the sword’ is part of a *Hadith* that is specific to a certain time and place which have since expired. Thus it is forbidden to mix the Qur’an and *Hadith* in this way, as it is forbidden to mix the general and specific, and the conditional and unconditional.

Moreover, God has prescribed mercy upon Himself: ‘... *Your Lord has prescribed for Himself mercy...*’ (Al-An’am, 6:54). God also states that His mercy encompasses all things: ‘... *My mercy embraces all things...*’ (Al-A’raf, 7:156). In an authentic *Hadith*, the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘*When God created Creation, He wrote in place above His throne, with Himself “Truly, My mercy is greater than My wrath*’⁴.’ Accordingly, it is forbidden to equate ‘the sword’ – and thus wrath and severity – with ‘mercy’. Furthermore, it is forbidden to make the idea ‘mercy to all worlds’ subordinate to the phrase ‘sent with the sword’, because this would mean that mercy is dependent upon the sword, which is simply not true. Besides, how could ‘a sword’ affect realms where swords have no effect, such as the heavens, subtle beings and plants? The Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ being a mercy to all the worlds cannot possibly be

² Published by SawarimMedia on YouTube on April 3rd, 2014.

³ Ibn Taymiyyah says in *Majmu’ Al-Fatawa* (Vol. 28, p. 270), ‘The Prophet ﷺ said, “*I was sent with the sword as a sign of the Final Hour so that none would be worshipped save God, alone, with no partner. My sustenance has been placed under the shadow of my spear. Lowliness and humiliation will come to those who disobey my teachings. Whosoever imitates people is one of them.*” Ahmad narrates this *hadith* in his *Musnad* [Vol. 2, p.50] on the authority of Ibn Umar, and Bukhari cites it.’ However, the *Hadith* has a weak chain of narrators.

⁴ Narrated by Bukhari in *Kitab al-Tawhid*, no. 7422, and by Muslim in *Kitab al-Tawbah*, no. 2751.

conditional upon his having taken up the sword (at one point in time, for a particular reason and in a particular context). This point is not merely academic. Rather, it reveals the essence of much of what is to follow since it erroneously equates the sword and Divine mercy.

1. Legal theory (*usul al-fiqh*) and Qur’anic exegesis: With regards to Qur’anic exegesis, and the understanding of *Hadith*, and issue in legal theory in general, the methodology set forth by God in the Qur’an and the Prophet ﷺ in the *Hadith* is as follows: to consider everything that has been revealed relating to a particular question in its entirety, without depending on only parts of it, and then to judge – if one is qualified – based on all available scriptural sources. God ﷻ says: ‘... *What, do you believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in part? ...*’ (*Al-Baqarah* , 2:85); ‘... *they pervert words from their contexts; and they have forgotten a portion of what they were reminded of...*’ (*Al-Ma’idah* , 5:13); ‘... *those who have reduced the Recitation, to parts*’ (*Al-Hijr* , 15:91). Once all relevant scriptural passages have been gathered, the ‘general’ has to be distinguished from the ‘specific’, and the ‘conditional’ from the ‘unconditional’. Also, the ‘unequivocal’ passages have to be distinguished from the allegorical ones. Moreover, the reasons and circumstances for revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*) for all the passages and verses, in addition to all the other hermeneutical conditions that the classical imams have specified, must be understood. Therefore, it is not permissible to quote a verse, or part of a verse, without thoroughly considering and comprehending everything that the Qur’an and *Hadith* relate about that point. The reason behind this is that everything in the Qur’an is the Truth, and everything in authentic *Hadith* is Divinely inspired, so it is not permissible to ignore any part of it. Indeed it is imperative to reconcile all texts, as much as possible, or that there be a clear reason why one text should outweigh another. This is what Imam Shafi’i explains in his *Al-Risalah*, with a universal consensus among all *usul* scholars. Imam al-Haramayn, Al-Juwayni, says in *Al-Burhan fi Usul Al-Fiqh*:

Regarding the qualities of a mufti and the disciplines that he must master: ... it is imperative that the mufti must be a

scholar of language, for the *Shari'ah* is [in] Arabic. ... it is imperative that he be a scholar of syntax and parsing ... it is imperative that he be a scholar of the Qur'an, for the Qur'an is the basis of all rulings ... Knowledge of textual abrogation is indispensable; and the science of the fundamentals of jurisprudence (*usul*) is the cornerstone of the whole subject ... He should also know the various degrees of proofs and arguments ... as well as their histories. [He should also know] the science of *Hadith* so that he can distinguish the authentic from the weak; and the acceptable from the apocryphal ... [He should also know] jurisprudence.... Moreover, having 'legal intuition' (*fiqh al-nafts*) is needed: it is the capital of anyone who derives legal rulings ... scholars have summarized all this by saying that a mufti is 'someone who independently knows all the texts and arguments for legal rulings'. 'Texts' refers to mastering language, Qura'nic exegesis and *Hadith*; while 'arguments' indicates mastering legal theory, analogical reasoning of the various kinds, as well as 'legal intuition' (*fiqh al-nafts*).

Al-Ghazali has said similar things in *Al-Mustasfa* (Vol. 1, p.342), as did Al-Suyuti in *Al-Itqan fi Ulum Al-Qur'an* (Vol. 4, p.213).

2. Language: As mentioned above, one of the most important pillars of legal theory is the mastery of the Arabic Language. This means mastering Arabic grammar, syntax, morphology, rhetoric, poetry, etymology and Qur'anic exegesis. Without mastery of these disciplines, error will be likely, indeed inevitable. Your declaration of what you have termed 'the Caliphate' was under the title 'This is God's Promise'. The person who phrased this declaration intended to allude to the verse: '*God has promised those of you who believe and perform righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors in the earth, just as He made those who were before them successors, and He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and that He will give them in exchange after their fear security. "They worship Me, without associating anything with Me". And whoever is ungrateful after that, those, they are the immoral.*' (*Al-Nur*, 24: 55). But it is not permissible to

invoke a specific verse from the Qur'an as applying to an event that has occurred 1400 years after the verse was revealed. How can Abu Muhammad Al-Adnani say that 'God's promise' is this so-called Caliphate? Even if it were supposed that his claim is correct, he should have said: 'this is of God's promise'. Moreover, there is another linguistic error; wherein he has appropriated the word '*istikhlaf*' (succession) to refer to the so-called caliphate. Proof that this is not the correct usage of the word can be seen in the following verse: '*He said, "Perhaps your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors (yastakhlifakum) in the land, that He may observe how you shall act".*' (Al-A'raf, 7:129). Succession (*istikhlaf*) means that they have settled on the land in place of another people. It does not mean that they are the rulers of a particular political system. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, there is no tautology in the Qur'an⁵. There is a difference between '*khilafah*' and '*istikhlaf*'. Al-Tabari says in his exegesis (*tafsir*) of the Qur'an: 'make you successors (*yastakhlifakum*): Meaning He will make you succeed them in their land after their destruction; do not fear them or any other people.'⁶ This proves that the meaning of '*istikhlaf*' here is not rulership but, rather, dwelling on their land.

⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah says in *Majmu' Al-Fatawa* (Vol. 13, p. 341, 'Tautology in [the Arabic] language is rare and in the Qur'an, it is even rarer or nonexistent.' Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani says in *Mufradat Al-Qur'an* (p. 55), 'This book is followed ... by a book that informs the use of synonyms and their subtle differences. By doing so, the uniqueness of every expression is distinguishable from its synonyms.'

⁶ *Tafsir Al-Tabari* (Vol. 9, p. 28).

3. Oversimplification: It is not permissible to constantly speak of ‘simplifying matters’, or to cherry-pick an extract from the Qur’an without understanding it within its full context. It is also not permissible to say: ‘Islam is simple, and the Prophet ﷺ and his noble Companions were simple, why complicate Islam?’ This is precisely what Abu Al-Baraa’ Al-Hindi did in his online video in July 2014. In it he says: ‘Open the Qur’an and read the verses on jihad and everything will become clear ... all the scholars tell me: “This is a legal obligation (*fard*), or that isn’t a legal obligation, and this is not the time for jihad” ... forget everyone and read the Qur’an and you will know what jihad is.’” People need to understand that the Prophet ﷺ and his noble Companions made do with as little material means as possible, without complicated technology, but they were greater than all of us in understanding, jurisprudence and intellect, and yet only a small number of Companions were qualified to issue fatwas. God ﷻ says in the Qur’an: ‘... Say: “Are those who know equal with those who do not know? ”...’ (*Al-Zumar*, 39: 9). God ﷻ also says: ‘... Ask the People of the Remembrance if you do not know.’ (*Al-Anbiya*, 21: 7); and: ‘... If they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them; those among them who are able to think it out, would have known it from them ...’ (*Al-Nisa*, 4: 83). Thus, jurisprudence is no simple matter, and not just anyone can speak authoritatively on it or issue *fatwas* (religious edicts). God ﷻ says in the Qur’an: ‘... But only people of cores remember.’ (*Al-Ra’d*, 13:19). And the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: ‘Whoever speaks about the Qur’an without knowledge should await his seat in the Fire⁷.’ It is also high time to stop blithely saying that ‘they are men, and we are men’; those who say this do not have the same understanding and discernment as the noble Companions and the imams of the Pious Forebears (*al-Salaf al-Saleh*) to whom they are referring.

⁷ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi in Tafsir Al-Qur’an, no. 2950.

4. Difference of Opinion: In regards to difference of opinion, there are two kinds: blameworthy and praiseworthy. Regarding blameworthy difference of opinion, God ﷻ says in the Qur'an: *'And those who were given the Scripture did not become divided, except after the clear proof had come to them.'* (Al-Bayyinah, 98: 4). As for praiseworthy difference of opinion, God ﷻ says: *'... then God guided those who believed to the truth, regarding which they were at variance, by His leave ...'* (Al-Baqarah, 2: 213). This is the opinion expressed by Al-Imam Al-Shafi'i in *Al-Risalah*, the other three imams and all the scholars for over a thousand years.

When there is a difference of opinion among eminent scholars, the more merciful, i.e. the best, opinion should be chosen. Severity should be avoided, as should the idea that severity is the measure of piety. God ﷻ says: *'And follow the best of what has been revealed to you from your Lord ...'* (Al-Zumar, 39: 55); and: *'Indulge [people] with forgiveness, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.'* (Al-A'raf, 7: 199). God ﷻ also says: *'[Those] who listen to the words [of God] and follow the best [sense] of it. Those, they are the ones whom God has guided; and those, they are the people of pith.'* (Al-Zumar, 39: 18). In an authentic *Hadith*, it is related that the Lady Aisha said: 'Whenever faced by more than once choice, the Prophet ﷺ always chose the easiest one⁸.'

The more severe opinion should not be considered more pious, religious or sincere to God ﷻ. Indeed, in severity there is exaggeration and extremism; God ﷻ says in the Qur'an: *'... God desires ease for you, and desires not hardship for you ...'* (Al-Baqarah, 2: 185). Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ said: *'Do not be severe with yourselves lest God be severe towards you. A people were severe with themselves and then God was severe towards them'*⁹. There is delusion and vanity in severity, because severe people naturally say to themselves: 'I am severe. Anyone less severe than me is deficient'; and thus: 'I am superior to them.' Herein lies an inherent attribution of ill-intention to God ﷻ, as if God ﷻ revealed the Qur'an to

⁸ Narrated by Bukhari in *Kitab al-Hudud*, no. 6786, and by Muslim in *Kitab al-Fada'il*, no. 2327.

⁹ Narrated by Abu Dawood in *Kitab Al-Adab*, no. 4904.

make people miserable. God says: '*Tā hā. We have not revealed the Qur'an to you that you should be miserable*'. (Ta Ha, 20: 1-2).

It is worth noting that most of the people who became Muslims throughout history, did so through gentle invitation (*da'wah hasanah*). God ﷻ says: '*Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and dispute with them by way of that which is best. Truly your Lord knows best those who stray from His way and He knows best those who are guided.*' (Al-Nahl, 16: 125). The Prophet ﷺ said: '*Be gentle, and beware of violence and foul language*¹⁰.' And while Islam spread politically from Central Asia (Khurasan) to North Africa due to Islamic conquests, the majority of the inhabitants of these lands remained Christian for hundreds of years until some of them gradually accepted Islam through gentle invitation, and not through severity and coercion. Indeed large countries and entire provinces became Muslim without conquest but through invitation (*da'wah*), such as: Indonesia; Malaysia; West and East Africa, and others. Hence, severity is neither a measure of piety nor a choice for the spread of Islam.

5. Practical Jurisprudence (*fiqh al-waq'i*): What is meant by 'practical jurisprudence' is the process of applying *Shari'ah* rulings and dealing with them according to the realities and circumstances that people are living under. This is achieved by having an insight into the realities under which people are living and identifying their problems, struggles, capabilities and what they are subjected to. Practical jurisprudence (*fiqh al-waq'i*) considers the texts that are applicable to peoples realities at a particular time, and the obligations that can be postponed until they are able to be met or delayed based on their capabilities. Imam Ghazali said: 'As for practicalities that dictate necessities, it is not far-fetched that independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) may lead to them [practicalities], even if there is no specific origin for them¹¹.' Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah said: 'Indeed, [a jurist] must understand people's propensity for plotting, deception and fraud, in addition to their customs and traditions. Re-

¹⁰ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Adab*, no. 6030.

¹¹ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustasfa fi Usul Al-Fiqh*, (Vol. 1, p. 420).

ligious edicts (*fatwas*) change with the change of time, place, customs and circumstances, and all of this is from the religion of God, as already elucidated.¹²

6. The Killing of Innocents: God ﷻ says in the Qur'an: '*And do not slay the soul [whose life] God has made inviolable, except with due cause ...*' (Al-Isra', 17: 33); and '*Say: "Come, I will recite that which your Lord has made a sacred duty for you: that you associate nothing with Him, that you be dutiful to parents, and that you do not slay your children, because of poverty – We will provide for you and them – and that you do not draw near any acts of lewdness, whether it be manifest or concealed, and that you do not slay the life which God has made sacred, except rightfully. This is what He has charged you with that perhaps you will understand."*' (Al-An'am, 6: 151). The slaying of a soul – any soul – is *haraam* (forbidden and inviolable under Islamic Law), it is also one of the most abominable sins (*mubiqat*). God ﷻ says in the Qur'an: '*Because of that, We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever slays a soul for other than a soul, or for corruption in the land, it shall be as if he had slain mankind altogether; and whoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind. Our messengers have already come to them with clear proofs, but after that many of them still commit excesses in the land.*' (Al-Ma'idah, 5: 32). You have killed many innocents who were neither combatants nor armed, just because they disagree with your opinions¹³.

7. Killing Emissaries: It is known that all religions forbid the killing of emissaries. What is meant by emissaries here are people who

¹² Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *I'lam Al-Muqi'een 'an Rabbil-'Alamin*, (Vol. 4, p. 157).

¹³ The Prophet ﷺ did not kill the hypocrites who disagreed with him, nor did he permit that they be killed. Indeed the Prophet ﷺ said: '*So that people do not say that Muhammad killed his companions.*' Narrated by Bukhari in *Kitab Tafsir al-Qur'an*, no. 4907, and by Muslim in *Kitab al-Birr wal-Silah*, no. 2584.

are sent from one group of people to another to perform a noble task such as reconciliation or the delivery of a message. Emissaries have a special inviolability. Ibn Masoud said: ‘The *Sunnah* continues that emissaries are never killed¹⁴.’ Journalists – if they are honest and of course are not spies – are emissaries of truth, because their job is to expose the truth to people in general. You have mercilessly killed the journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, even after Sotloff’s mother pleaded with you and begged for mercy. Aid workers are also emissaries of mercy and kindness, yet you killed the aid worker David Haines. What you have done is unquestionably forbidden (*haraam*).

8. Jihad: All Muslims see the great virtue in jihad. God ﷻ says: ‘*O you who believe, what is wrong with you that, when it is said to you, “Go forth in the way of God”, you sink down heavily to the ground*’ (Al-Tawbah, 9: 38); and: ‘*And fight in the way of God with those who fight against you, but aggress not; God loves not the aggressors.*’ (Al-Baqarah, 2: 190); and many other verses. Imam Shafi’i, the other three imams, and indeed all the scholars see that jihad is a communal obligation (*fard kifayah*) and not an individual obligation (*fard ayn*) because God ﷻ says: ‘*yet to each God has promised the goodly reward, and God has preferred those who struggle over the ones who sit at home with a great reward*’ (Al-Nisa’, 4: 95). The word ‘jihad’ is an Islamic term that cannot be applied to armed conflict against any other Muslim; this much is a firmly established principle. Furthermore, all scholars agree that jihad is conditional upon the consent of one’s parents. The proof for this is that a man came to the Prophet ﷺ asking him to permit him to perform jihad, upon which the Prophet ﷺ asked him: ‘*Are your parents alive?*’ to which he replied: ‘Yes.’ And the Prophet ﷺ told him: ‘*Then perform jihad (struggle) through [serving] them.*’¹⁵ Moreover, there are two kinds of jihad in Islam: the greater jihad, which is the jihad (struggle) against one’s ego; and the lesser jihad, the jihad (struggle) against the enemy. In regards to

¹⁴ Narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*, (Vol. 6, p. 306).

¹⁵ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Jihad*, no. 3004.

the greater jihad, the Prophet ﷺ said: *'We have returned from the greater jihad to the lesser jihad.'*¹⁶ If you say that this *Hadith* is weak or apocryphal, the answer is that evidence for this concept is in the Qur'an itself: *'So do not obey the disbelievers, but struggle against them therewith with a great endeavour [lit. a great jihad].'* (*Al-Furqan*, 25:52). 'Therewith' in this verse refers to the Qur'an, which is *'a healing for what is in the breasts'* (*Yunus*, 10: 57). This is clearly understood from the *Hadith* in which the Prophet ﷺ said: *"Shall I tell you about the best of all deeds, the best act of piety in the eyes of your Lord which will elevate your status in the Hereafter and is better for you than spending gold and paper and better than going up in arms against your enemy and striking their necks and their striking your necks?"* They said: "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Remembrance of God."*¹⁷ Thus, the greater jihad is the jihad against the ego and its weapon is remembrance of God and purification of the soul. Furthermore, God ﷻ has clarified the relationship between the two kinds of jihad in another verse: *'O you who believe, when you meet a host, then stand firm and remember God much, that you may succeed.'* (*Al-Anfal*, 8: 45). Thus, standing firm is the lesser jihad and is dependent on the greater jihad which is the jihad against the ego through the remembrance of God and purification of the soul. In any case, jihad is a means to peace, safety and security, and not an end in itself. This is clear from God's words: *'Fight them till there is no sedition, and the religion is for God; then if they desist, there shall be no enmity, save against evil-doers.'* (*Al-Baqarah*, 2: 193). In your speech of July 4th, 2014, you said: 'There is no life without jihad'. Perhaps this was based on Al-Qurtubi's exegesis of the verse: *'O you who believe, respond to God and the Messenger, when He calls you to that which will give you life...'* (*Al-Anfal*, 8: 24). True jihad enlivens the heart. However, there can be life without jihad, because Muslims may face circumstances where combat is not called for, or where jihad is not required, and Islamic history is replete with examples of this.

¹⁶ Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Kitab al-Zuhd*, (Vol. 2, p. 165), and by Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi in *Tarikh Baghdad*, (Vol. 3, p. 523).

¹⁷ Narrated by Imam Malik in *Al-Muwatta'*; *Kitab al-Nida' Lissalah*, no. 490, also narrated by Al-Tirmidhi in *Kitab al-Da'awat*, and by Ibn Majah in *Kitab al-Adab*, no. 3790, and corrected by Al-Hakim in *Al-Mustadrak* (Vol. 1, p. 673).

In truth, it is clear that you and your fighters are fearless and are ready to sacrifice in your intent for jihad. No truthful person following events – friend or foe – can deny this. However, jihad without legitimate cause, legitimate goals, legitimate purpose, legitimate methodology and legitimate intention is not jihad at all, but rather, warmongering and criminality.

- a. **The Intention Behind Jihad:** God ﷻ says: *‘and that man shall have only what he [himself] strives for’* (Al-Najm, 53: 39). Prophetic Tradition relates that on the authority of Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari, a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: ‘A man may fight out of zeal, out of bravery or out of pride. Which of these is in the path of God?’ The Prophet ﷺ replied: *‘Whoever fights for the Word of God to be supreme is in the path of God.’*¹⁸ The Prophet ﷺ also said: *‘The first to be judged on the Day of Resurrection is the man who died as a martyr. He will be brought forth and [God] will make His favours known to him, which he will recognize. He will be asked: “What did you do with them?” to which the man will reply: “I fought for your sake until I was killed.” He [i.e. God] will say: “You have lied. You fought so that it would be said that you are bold, and so it was said.” He will then be ordered to be dragged on his face and flung into the Fire...’*¹⁹.
- b. **The Reason behind Jihad:** The reason behind jihad for Muslims is to fight those who fight them, not to fight anyone who does not fight them, nor to transgress against anyone who has not transgressed against them. God’s words in permitting jihad are: *‘Permission is granted to those who fight because they have been wronged. And God is truly able to help them; those who were expelled from their homes without right, only because they said: “Our Lord is God”. Were it not for God’s causing some people to drive back others, destruction would have befallen the monasteries, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which*

¹⁸ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Tawhid*, no. 7458, and by Muslim in *Kitab al-Imarah*, no. 1904.

¹⁹ Narrated by Muslim in *Kitab Al-Imarah*, no. 1905.

God's Name is mentioned greatly. Assuredly God will help those who help Him. God is truly Strong, Mighty. ' (Al-Hajj, 22: 39-40). Thus, jihad is tied to safety, freedom of religion, having been wronged, and eviction from one's land. These two verses were revealed after the Prophet ﷺ and his companions suffered torture, murder, and persecution for thirteen years at the hands of the idolaters. Hence, there is no such thing as offensive, aggressive jihad just because people have different religions or opinions. This is the position of Abu Hanifa, the Imams Malik and Ahmad and all other scholars including Ibn Taymiyyah, with the exception of some scholars of the Shafi'i school²⁰.

- c. **The Goal of Jihad:** Scholars are in agreement regarding the goal of jihad, because God ﷻ says: *'Fight them till there is no sedition, and the religion is for God; then if they desist, there shall be no enmity, save against evildoers.'* (Al-Baqarah, 2: 193). The Prophet ﷺ further said: *'I have been ordered to fight people until they say: "There is no god but God", so whoever says: "There is no god but God" is safe in himself and his wealth except as permitted by law, and his reckoning is with God.'*²¹ This is the goal of jihad *once war has been waged on Muslims*. These texts specify what victory looks like in the case that Muslims are victorious, and that the *reason* for jihad must not be confused with the *goal* of jihad; all scholars are in agreement on this matter. The *Hadith* above refers to an event that has already taken place and is conditional upon God's words: *'It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all religion. And God suffices as witness.'* (Al-Fath, 48: 28). It took place in the Arabian Peninsula at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, for God ﷻ says: *'... and that you may warn the Mother of Towns [Um al-Qura] and those around it ...'* (Al-An'am, 6: 92); and: *'O you who believe, fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you ...'* (Al-Tawbah, 9: 123). The Prophet ﷺ also said: *'Evict the idolaters from the*

²⁰ Cf. Wahbi Al-Zuhayli's *Ahkam al-Harb fil-Islam*.

²¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Jihad*, no. 2946.

*Arabian Peninsula.*²² How could this not have come to pass when God ﷻ promises the Prophet ﷺ: *'It is He Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all [other] religions, though the disbelievers be averse.'* (Al-Saff, 61: 9). What is meant here must be the Arabian Peninsula since this is what happened during the life of the Prophet ﷺ. In any case, if the commanders of jihad see that it is in the best interest of Muslims, it is permissible for them to cease combat, even if this goal has not been achieved, because God says: *'... then if they desist, there shall be no enmity, save against evildoers.'* (Al-Baqarah, 2: 193). The circumstances and events of *Sulh al-Hudaybiyah* are proof of this.

- d. **The Rules of Conduct of Jihad:** The rules of conduct of jihad are summarized in the words of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: *'Wage war but do not be severe, do not be treacherous, do not mutilate or kill children...'*²³ The Prophet ﷺ also said on the day of the Conquest of Mecca: *'Those retreating are not to be killed, nor are the injured to be harmed, and whoever shuts his door is safe'*²⁴. Similarly, when Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq رضي الله عنه prepared an army and sent it to the Levant, he said: *'You will find people who have devoted themselves to monasteries, leave them to their devotions. You will also find others whose heads are seats for devils (i.e. armed deacons²⁵), so strike their necks. However, do not kill the old and decrepit, women or children; do not destroy buildings; do not cut down trees or harm livestock without good cause; do not burn or drown palms; do not be treacherous; do not mutilate; do not be cowardly; and do not loot. And truly God will support*

²² Narrated by Bukhari in his *Sahih, Kitab al-Jihad*, no. 3053, and by Muslim in *Kitab al-Wasiyyah*, no.1637.

²³ Narrated by Muslim in *Kitab al-Jihad*, no. 1731, and by Al-Tirmidhi in *Kitab al-Diyyat*, no. 1408.

²⁴ Narrated by Ibn Abi Shayba in *Al-Musannaf* (Vol. 6, p. 498).

²⁵ The deacons were armed, combatant priests.

those who support Him and His Messengers while not seeing Him. Truly, God is Strong, Mighty.²⁶

As for killing prisoners, it is forbidden in Islamic Law. Yet you have killed many prisoners including the 1700 captives at Camp Speicher in Tikrit in June, 2014; the 200 captives at the Sha'er gas field in July, 2014; the 700 captives of the Sha'etat tribe in Deir el-Zor (600 of whom were unarmed civilians); the 250 captives at the Tabqah air base in Al-Raqqah in August, 2014; Kurdish and Lebanese soldiers, and many untold others whom God knows. These are heinous war crimes.

If you claim that the Prophet ﷺ killed some captives in some battles, then the answer is that he only ordered that two captives be killed at the Battle of Badr: Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt and Nadr ibn Al-Harith. They were leaders of war and war criminals, and the execution of war criminals is permissible if the ruler orders it. This is also what Saladin did upon conquering Jerusalem, and what the Allies did during the Nuremberg trials after World War II. As for the tens of thousands of captives that fell under the jurisdiction of the Prophet ﷺ over a span of ten years and 29 battles, he did not execute a single regular soldier; rather, he entrusted that they be treated with kindness²⁷. The Divine Decree regarding captives and prisoners of war is in God's ﷻ words: '*...Thereafter either [set them free] by grace or by ransom...*' (Muhammad, 47: 4). God ﷻ commanded that captives and prisoners of war be treated with dignity and respect: '*And they give food, despite [their] love of it to the needy, and the orphan, and the prisoner.*' (Al-Insan, 76: 8). Indeed, the true *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ regarding captives is pardon and amnesty, as was demonstrated during the Conquest of Mecca when the Prophet ﷺ said: '*I say as my brother Joseph said:*

²⁶ Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra*, (Vol. 9, p. 90), and by Al-Marwazi in *Musnad Abi Bakr*, no. 21.

²⁷ Narrated by Ibn Abdullah in *Al-Isti'ab* (Vol. 2, p. 812), and by Al-Qurtubi in his *Tafsir* (Vol. 19, p. 129): 'Qatada said: "God ordered that prisoners be treated well."'

*“There shall be no reproach on you this day”. Go, for you are free!*²⁸

Finally, one of the most important principles when it comes to the manner of jihad is that only combatants may be killed; their families and non-combatants may not be killed intentionally. If you ask about the instance when the Prophet ﷺ was asked about bystanders and women being killed with idolaters and he said: *‘They are from them’*²⁹, this *Hadith* refers to the killing of innocents by accident and in no way indicates that the intentional killing of innocents – such as in bombings – is permitted. As for God’s ﷻ words: *‘... and be harsh with them...’* (*Al-Tawbah*, 9: 73); and: *‘... and let them find harshness in you...’* (*Al-Tawbah*, 9: 123), this is during war, not after it.

9. Declaring People Non-Muslim (takfir): Some misunderstandings about *takfir* are a result of the exaggeration of some Salafi scholars in matters of *takfir* (declaring people non-Muslim), and in their exceeding of what Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Al-Qayyim have said in many important aspects. In brief, *takfir* can be summarised correctly as follows:

- a. Quintessentially in Islam, anyone who says: ‘There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God’ is a Muslim and cannot be declared a non-Muslim. God ﷻ says: *‘O you who believe, when you are going forth in the way of God, be discriminating and do not say to him who offers you peace: ‘You are not a believer, desiring the transient goods of the life of this world. With God are plentiful spoils. So you were formerly, but God has been gracious to you. So be discriminating. Surely God is ever Aware of what you do.’* (*Al-Nisa’*, 4: 94). The meaning of *‘be discriminating’* in the above verse is to ask them: ‘Are you Muslims?’ The answer is to be taken at face-

²⁸ Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra*, (Vol. 9, p. 118); Cf Fayd Al-Qadeer *Sharh al-Jami’ al-Sagheer*, (Vol. 5, p. 171).

²⁹ Narrated by Muslim in *Kitab al-Jihad*, no. 1745.

value without questioning or testing their faith. Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: *'Woe to you! Look! After I die, do no return to being non-believers, striking each other's necks'*³⁰. The Prophet ﷺ also said: *'... so whoever says: "There is no god but God" saves himself and his wealth except as permitted by law, and his reckoning is with God.'*³¹ Ibn Omar and the Lady Aisha also said: *'Declaring the people of the Qiblah as non-Muslim is not permissible'*³².

- b. This issue is of the utmost importance because it is used to justify the spilling of Muslim blood, violating their sanctity, and usurping their wealth and rights. God ﷻ says: *'And whoever slays a believer deliberately, his requital is Hell, abiding therein, and God is wroth with him and has cursed him, and has prepared for him a mighty chastisement.'* (Al-Nisa', 4: 93). Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ said: *'Whoever says to his brother "O disbeliever", it will certainly be true of one of them'*³³. God has warned, in the strongest terms, against killing anyone who verbally declares his Islam: *'... And so if they stay away from you and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then God does not allow you any way against them.'* (Al-Nisa', 4: 90). The Prophet ﷺ warned against accusing people of polytheism and of taking up the sword against them; he said: *'The person I fear for you the most is the man who has read the Qur'an ... cast it off and thrown it behind him, and taken up the sword against his neighbour and accused him of polytheism'*³⁴.

It is not permissible to kill any Muslim, (nor indeed any human being), who is unarmed and a non-combatant. Usamah Ibn Zayd narrated that, after he killed a man who

³⁰ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Maghazi*, no. 4403, and by Muslim in *Kitab al-Iman*, no. 66.

³¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Jihad*, no. 2946.

³² As related in Al-Hafiz Al-Haythami's *Majma' Al-Zawa'id*, (Vol. 1, p. 106).

³³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Adab*, no. 6104.

³⁴ Narrated by Ibn Habban in his *Sahih*, (Vol. 1, p. 282).

had said: ‘There is no god but God’, ‘the Prophet ﷺ asked: “*He said: ‘There is no god but God’ and you killed him?!’*” I replied: “O Messenger of God, he only said it out of fear of [our] arms.” He said: “*Did you see inside his heart to know whether or not he meant it?*”³⁵”

Recently, Shaker Wahib – who was affiliated with what was known at the time as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – appeared in a YouTube video where he stopped unarmed civilians who said they were Muslims. He then proceeded to ask them the number of prostrations (*rak’ahs*) in specific prayers. When they answered incorrectly, he killed them³⁶. This is absolutely forbidden under Islamic Law and is a heinous crime.

- c. Peoples’ deeds are tied to the intent behind those deeds. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘*Actions are but by intention, and every person will have what they intended...*’³⁷. Furthermore, God ﷻ says: ‘*When the hypocrites come to you they say: ‘We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of God’. And God knows that you are indeed His Messenger, and God bears witness that the hypocrites truly are liars. ’* (Al-Munafiqun, 63: 1). God ﷻ thus describes the words of the hypocrites regarding the Prophet’s message – an indisputable fact – as lies, because their intention when saying it was to lie even though it is true in itself. It is a lie because they uttered with their tongues a truth that God ﷻ knows their hearts reject. This means that disbelief requires the intention of disbelief, and not just absentminded words or deeds. It is not permissible to accuse anyone of disbelief without proof of the intention of disbelief. Nor is it permissible to accuse anyone of being a non-Muslim without ascertaining that intention. It is, after all, possible that the

³⁵ Narrated by Muslim in *Kitab al-Iman*, no. 96. Another narration reads: “*Did you kill him after he said: ‘There is no god but God’*”. I said: “He was trying to save himself”. [The Prophet] kept repeating his words...”. Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Maghazi*, no. 4369.

³⁶ YouTube video, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yrVPE_-f9I, June, 2014.

³⁷ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab Bad’ al-wahy*, no. 1; also narrated by Muslim in *Kitab al-Imarah*, no. 1907.

person was coerced, ignorant, insane or did not mean it. It is also possible that he misunderstood a particular issue. God ﷻ says: *'Whoever disbelieves in God after [having affirmed] his faith—except for him who is compelled, while his heart is at rest in faith—but he who opens up his breast to unbelief, upon such shall be wrath from God, and there is a great chastisement for them.'* (Al-Nahl, 16: 106).

It is forbidden to interpret the implications of a person's deeds; only the person himself or herself may interpret their own deeds – particularly when there is a difference of opinion among Muslims regarding that particular deed. It is also forbidden to declare others non-Muslim (*takfir*) based on any matter in which there is a difference of opinion among Muslim scholars. It is forbidden to declare an entire group of people non-Muslim. Disbelief applies only to individuals depending on their deeds and intentions. God ﷻ says: *'No laden soul will bear another's load.'* (Al-Zumar, 39: 7). Finally, it is forbidden to declare people who do not doubt the disbelief of others, or refuse to declare them non-Muslim, as non-Muslim.

The reason this point has been discussed in such detail is because you distributed the books of Muhammad bin Abdel-Wahhab as soon as you reached Mosul and Aleppo. In any case, scholars – including Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah – distinguish between the actions of a disbeliever (*kafir*) and declaring people non-Muslim (*takfir*). Even if a person performs a deed that has elements of disbelief, this does not necessitate that that person be judged as a disbeliever for the reasons presented earlier. Al-Dhahabi³⁸ related that his teacher, Ibn Taymiyyah, used to say near the end of his life: 'I do not declare any member of the ummah non-Muslim... The Prophet ﷺ said: "Anyone who maintains his ablution is a believer", so whoever observes the prescribed prayers with ablution is a Muslim.'

³⁸ Al-Dhahabi's *Siyar A'lam Al-Nubala'*, (Vol. 11, p. 393).

This is a crucial point; the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Subtle shirk [i.e. associating partners with God] is when a man stands to pray and embellishes his prayer for an onlooker³⁹.’ He thereby described ostentation in prayer as ‘subtle shirk’, which is minor shirk. This minor shirk, which some worshippers fall into, is not considered major shirk and cannot lead to takfir or to being cast out of the fold of Islam. For other than prophets and messengers, everyone else worships God ﷻ according to their capacity, and not as God ﷻ deserves. God ﷻ says: ‘*They measured not God with His true measure ...*’ (Al-An’am, 6: 91); and: ‘*And they will question you concerning the Spirit. Say: “The Spirit is of the command of my Lord. And of knowledge you have not been given except a little”.*’ (Al-Isra’, 17: 85). Nevertheless, God ﷻ accepts such worship. And people are not able to conceive of God ﷻ, because: ‘*...There is nothing like Him...*’ (Al-Shura, 42: 11); and: ‘*Vision cannot attain Him, but He attains [all] vision...*’ (Al-An’am, 6:103). Nothing is known of Him ﷻ except for what He has revealed through revelation (*al-wahy*) or He imparted to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: ‘*... He casts the Spirit of His command upon whomever He will of His servants...*’ (Ghafir, 40: 15). So how can anyone take up a sword against others just because he or she believes that they do not worship God ﷻ as He deserves? No one worships God as He deserves except by His ﷻ permission. More fundamentally, the issue of shirk among the Arabs is moot, as the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘The Devil has lost hope that those who pray in the Arabian Peninsula will worship him, but [aims] to sow discord among them⁴⁰.’

10. People of the Scripture: Regarding Arab Christians, you gave them three choices: *jizyah* (poll tax), the sword, or conversion to

³⁹ Narrated by Ibn Majah, *Kitab al-Zuhd*, no. 4204.

⁴⁰ Narrated by Muslim in *Kitab Sifat al-Qiyamah wal-Jannah wal-Nar*, no. 2812.

Islam. You painted their homes red, destroyed their churches, and in some cases, looted their homes and property. You killed some of them and caused many others to flee their homes with nothing but their lives and the clothes on their backs. These Christians are not combatants against Islam or transgressors against it, indeed they are friends, neighbours and co-citizens. From the legal perspective of *Shari'ah* they all fall under ancient agreements that are around 1400 years old, and the rulings of jihad do not apply to them. Some of their ancestors fought alongside the Prophet's ﷺ army against the Byzantines; and thus have been citizens of the State of Medina since that time. Others are under agreements that were guaranteed to them by Omar ibn Al-Khattab, Khalid ibn Al-Walid, the Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Ottomans and their respective states. In short, they are not strangers to these lands, but rather, of the native peoples of these lands from pre-Islamic times; they are not enemies but friends. For the past 1400 years they have defended their countries against the Crusaders, colonialists, Israel and other wars, how, then, can you treat them as enemies? God ﷻ says in the Qur'an: *'God does not forbid you in regard to those who did not wage war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes, that you should treat them kindly and deal with them justly. Assuredly God loves the just.'* (*Al-Mumtahanah*, 60: 8).

As for jizyah, there are two types of jizyahin *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law). The first type is that which is levied while the subjects are *'readily being subdued'*. This applies to those who fought Islam, as is understood from God's ﷻ words: *'Fight those who do not believe in God, nor in the Last Day, and who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, nor do they practise the religion of truth, from among of those who have been given the Scripture, until they pay the jizya tribute, readily being subdued.'* (*Al-Tawbah*, 9: 29). As is clarified by a preceding verse in this Surah (chapter of the Qur'an), those intended by this verse are parties who preemptively attacked Muslims: *'Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and intended to expel the Messenger – initiating against you first? Are you afraid of them? God is more worthy of your fear if you are believers.'* (*Al-Tawbah*, 9:13)⁴¹. The second

⁴¹ Al-Tabari says in his Tafsir (Vol. 6, p. 157): 'I God's ﷻ words: "Fight those who do not believe in God, nor in the Last Day..." There is no negation of the me-

type of *jizyah* is levied on those who do not wage war against Islam; it is levied on them instead of *zakat* (which only Muslims pay and which is higher in percentage than the *jizyah*) through a covenant and without harshness. Omar ibn Al-Khattab agreed to call it 'charity' (*sadaqah*). The *jizyahis* then deposited to the state treasury and is distributed among citizens, including needy Christian citizens as Omar did during his caliphate.⁴²

11. Yazidis: You fought the Yazidis under the banner of jihad but they neither fought you nor Muslims. You considered them satanists and gave them the choice to either be killed or be forced into Islam. You killed hundreds of them and buried them in mass graves. You caused the death and suffering of hundreds of others. Had it not been for American and Kurdish intervention, tens of thousands of their men, women, children and elderly would have been killed. These are all abominable crimes. From the legal perspective of *Shari'ah* they are Magians, because the Prophet ﷺ said: '*Treat them as you treat People of the Scripture*⁴³.' Thus they are People of the Scripture. God ﷻ says: '*Truly those who believe, and those of Jewry, and the Sabaeans, and the Christians, and the Magians and the polytheists – God will indeed judge between them on the Day of Resurrection. Assuredly God, over all things, is Witness.*' (*Al-Hajj*, 22: 17). Even if you doubt that they are People of the Scripture, from the legal perspective of *Shari'ah*, many scholars of the Pious Forebears considered them to be commensurate with Magians based on the aforementioned *Hadith*. The Umayyads even considered Hindus and Buddhists to be *dhimmis*. Al-Qurtubi said: 'Al-Awza'i said: "*Jizyah* is levied on those who worship idols and fire, as well as on unbelievers and agnostics." This is also the

anings of pardon and amnesty... If they agree to being subdued and pay the *jizyah* after combat, it is permissible to order that they be pardoned for intended treachery or oaths they planned to break as long as they do not wage war without paying the *jizyah* or refuse to follow laws that apply to them.

⁴² Jurists permitted the lifting of the *jizyah* if some of them joined the Muslim army, as happened in the time of Omar bin Al-Khattab.

⁴³ Narrated by Al-Imam Malik in *al-Muwatta'*, in *Kitab al-Zakat*, no. 617, and by Al-Shafi'i in his *Musnad*, no. 1008.

Maliki position, for Imam Malik's opinion was that *jizyah* is levied on all idol worshippers and unbelievers, be they Arab or non-Arabs ... except for apostates⁴⁴.

12. Slavery: No scholar of Islam disputes that one of Islam's aims is to abolish slavery. God ﷻ says: '*And what will show you what the obstacle is?, the freeing of a slave, or to give food on a day of hunger*' (*Al-Balad*, 90: 12-14); and: '*... then [the penalty for them is] the setting free of a slave before they touch one another ...*' (*Al-Mujadilah*, 58: 3). The Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Sunnah is that he freed all male and female slaves who were in his possession or whom had been given to him⁴⁵. For over a century, Muslims, and indeed the entire world, have been united in the prohibition and criminalization of slavery, which was a milestone in human history when it was finally achieved. The Prophet ﷺ said regarding the pre-Islamic 'League of the Virtuous' (*hilf al-fudul*) during the time of *Jahiliyyah*: '*Had I been asked to fulfil it in Islam, I would oblige*⁴⁶.' After a century of Muslim consensus on the prohibition of slavery, you have violated this; you have taken women as concubines and thus revived strife and sedition (*fitnah*), and corruption and lewdness on the earth. You have resuscitated something that the *Shari'ah* has worked tirelessly to undo and has been considered forbidden by consensus for over a century. Indeed all the Muslim countries in the world are signatories of anti-slavery conventions. God ﷻ says: '*... And fulfil the covenant. Indeed the covenant will be enquired into.*' (*Al-Isra*', 17: 34) You bear the responsibility of this great crime and all the reactions which this may lead to against all Muslims.

⁴⁴ Al-Qurtubi's *Tafsir*, (Vol. 8, p. 110).

⁴⁵ Cf Ibn Kathir's *Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah* (Vol. 5, p. 284) in which he says: 'The Prophet ﷺ freed male and female slaves... and after the Prophet ﷺ died, there were absolutely no slaves of his to be inherited.'

⁴⁶ *Ma'rifat as-Sunan wa Al-Athar*, Bayhaqi (Vol. 11, p. 135); *As-Sunan Al-Kubra*, Bayhaqi (Vol. 6, p. 596); *Sirah Ibn Hisham* (Vol. 1, p. 266).

14. Women: In simple terms, you treat women like detainees and prisoners; they dress according to your whims; they are not allowed to leave their homes and they are not allowed to go to school. Despite the fact that the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘The pursuit of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim⁴⁷’, and despite the fact that the first word revealed of the Qur’an was: ‘*Read*’. Nor are they allowed to work or earn a living; nor allowed to move about freely and they are forced to marry your fighters. God ﷻ says: ‘*O people, fear your Lord, Who created you of a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered many men and women; and fear God by whom you claim [your rights] from one another and kinship ties. Surely God has been watchful over you.*’ (Al-Nisa’, 4: 1). And the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Treat women well⁴⁸.’

15. Children: You have made children engage in war and killing. Some are taking up arms and others are playing with the severed heads of your victims. Some children have been thrown into the fray of combat and are killing and being killed. In your schools some children are tortured and coerced into doing your bidding and others are being executed. These are crimes against innocents who are so young they are not even morally accountable. God ﷻ says: ‘*What is wrong with you, that you do not fight in the way of God, and for the oppressed men, women, and children who say, “Our Lord, bring us forth from this town whose people are evildoers and appoint for us a protector from You, and appoint for us from You a helper”*.’ (Al-Nisa’, 4: 75).

16. Hudud (Punishment): *Hudud* punishments are fixed in the Qur’an and Hadith and are unquestionably obligatory in Islamic Law. However, they are not to be applied without clarification,

⁴⁷ Narrated by Ibn Majah, no. 224, and by Al-Tabarani in *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir* (10/195).

⁴⁸ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Nikah*, no. 5186; and by Muslim in *Kitab al-Rida’*, no. 1468.

warning, exhortation, and meeting the burden of proof; and they are not to be applied in a cruel manner. For example, the Prophet ﷺ avoided *hudud* in some circumstances, and as is widely known, Omar ibn Al-Khattab suspended the *hudud* during a famine. In all schools of jurisprudence, *hudud* punishments have clear procedures that need to be implemented with mercy, and their conditions render it difficult to actually implement them. Moreover, suspicions or doubts avert *hudud*; i.e. if there is any doubt whatsoever, the *hudud* punishment cannot be implemented. The *hudud* punishments are also not applied to those who are in need or deprived or destitute; there are no *hudud* for the theft of fruits and vegetables or for stealing under a certain amount. You have rushed to enact the *hudud* while, in reality, conscientious religious fervour makes implementing *hudud* punishments something of the utmost difficulty with the highest burden of proof.

17. Torture: Your captives and some of those who were under your control have said that you tortured and terrorized them through beatings; murder and various other forms of torture, including burying people alive. You have decapitated people with knives, which is one of the cruellest forms of torture and is forbidden in Islamic Law (*Shari'ah*). In the mass killings you have committed –which are forbidden under Islamic Law – your fighters mock those they are about to kill by telling them that they will be killed like sheep, bleating and then indeed butchering them like sheep. Your fighters are not satisfied with mere killing, they add humiliation, debasement and mockery to it. God ﷻ says: ‘*O you who believe, do not let any people deride another people: who may be better than they are ...*’ (*Al-Hujurat*, 49: 11).

18. Mutilation: Not only have you mutilated corpses, you have stuck the decapitated heads of your victims on spikes and rods and kicked their severed heads around like balls and broadcast it to the world during the World Cup – a sport that is permissible in principle in Islam and which allows people to relieve stress and forget their problems. You jeered at corpses and severed heads and broadcast these acts from the military bases you overran in Syria.

You have provided ample ammunition for all those who want to call Islam barbaric with your broadcasting of barbaric acts which you pretend are for the sake of Islam. You have given the world a stick with which to beat Islam whereas in reality Islam is completely innocent of these acts and prohibits them.

19. Attributing crimes to God in the name of humility: After tying Syrian soldiers of the 17th Division in North-eastern Syria to barbed wire, you cut off their heads with knives and posted a video of this on the internet. In the video you said: ‘We are your brothers, the soldiers of the Islamic State. God has favoured us with His grace and victory by conquering the 17th Division; a victory and favour through God. We seek refuge in God from our might and power. We seek refuge in God from our weapons and our readiness.’ You thus attributed this heinous crime to God ﷻ, and made as if this were an act of humility to God ﷻ, by saying that He ﷻ did it and not you. But God says: *‘And when they commit any indecency they say, “We found our fathers practising it, and God has enjoined it on us”. Say, “God does not enjoin indecency. Do you say concerning God that which you do not know?”’* (Al-A’raf, 7: 28).

20. Destruction of the graves and shrines of Prophets and Companions. You have blown up and destroyed the graves of Prophets and Companions. Scholars disagree on the subject of graves. Nevertheless, it is not permissible to blow up the graves of Prophets and Companions and disinter their remains, just as it is not permissible to burn grapes under the pretext that some people use them to make wine. God ﷻ says: *‘... Those who prevailed regarding their affair, “We will verily set up over them, a place of worship”.’* (Al-Kahf, 18:21); and: *‘... Take to yourselves Abraham’s station for a place of prayer...’* (Al-Baqarah, 2: 125). The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘I had previously prohibited you from visiting graves. Permission has been granted for Muhammad to visit his mother’s grave, so visit them [i.e. graves] for they remind [one] of

death and the Hereafter⁴⁹.’ Visiting graves reminds people of death and the Hereafter; God ﷻ says in the Qur’an: ‘*Rivalry [in worldly things] distracts you until you visit the graves.*’ (*Al-Takathur*, 102: 1-2).

Your former leader, Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi said: ‘In our opinion, it is obligatory to destroy and remove all manifestations of *shirk* (idolatry) and to prohibit all means that lead to it because of Muslim’s narration in his *Sahih*: on the authority of Abu Al-Hiyaj Al-Asadi, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib ؑ said: “Should I not tell you what he [i.e. the Prophet] ﷺ sent me to do: not to leave a statue without obliterating it nor a raised grave without levelling it.”’ However, even if what he said were true, it does not apply to the graves of Prophets or Companions, as the Companions were in consensus regarding burying the Prophet ﷺ and his two Companions, Abu Bakr and Omar, in a building that was contiguous to the Prophet’s Mosque.

21. Rebelling against the leader. It is impermissible to rebel against the leader who is not guilty of declared and candid disbelief (*al-kufr al-bawwah*); i.e. disbelief that he himself admits to openly and where all Muslims are in consensus regarding such a person being a non-Muslim – or by his prohibiting the establishment of prayers. The evidence of this is in God’s ﷻ words: ‘*O you who believe, obey God, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you ...*’ (*Al-Nisa*, 4: 59). The Prophet ﷺ also said: ‘*Listen and obey even if an Abyssinian whose head is like a raisin is given authority over you*⁵⁰.’ The Prophet ﷺ also said: ‘*The best of your rulers are those whom you love and who love you, who invoke God’s blessings upon you and you invoke His blessings upon them. And the worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you and whom you curse and who curse you.*’ It was asked (by those present): “Shouldn’t we overthrow them by the sword?” He said: “*No, as long as they establish prayer among you. If you then find anything detestable in them, you should hate their administra-*

⁴⁹ Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*, no. 977, and by Al-Tirmidhi, no. 1054 and by others.

⁵⁰ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Adhan*, no. 693.

tion, but do not withdraw yourselves from their obedience⁵¹.” As for a ruler who is a reprobate or corrupt, he is to be removed by those qualified to elect or dispose a caliph on behalf of the *Ummah* (nation) (*ahl al-hall wal- ‘aqd*) – if possible – without sedition (*fitnah*), armed rebellion or bloodshed. However, he is not rebelled against. It is forbidden to rebel against a leader even if he does not implement the Shari’ah or a portion of it, for God ﷻ says: ‘... *Whoever does not judge according to what God has revealed – such are the disbelievers.*’ (Al-Ma’idah, 5: 44); and: ‘... *Whoever does not judge according to what God has revealed, those are the evildoers.*’ (Al-Ma’idah, 5: 45); and: ‘... *Whoever does not judge according to what God has revealed – those are the wicked.*’ (Al-Ma’idah, 5: 47). So, there are three levels of those who do not implement the Shari’ah: disbelief (*kufir*), evildoing (*fusuq*) and wickedness (*dhulm*). Whoever prevents the *Shari’ah* from being practiced at all in a Muslim country is a disbeliever, but one who does not implement part of it or only implements its higher purposes is merely an evildoer or wicked. In some countries, the implementation of Shari’a is restricted due to matters of sovereignty on which national security depends, and this is permissible. In summary, Ibn Abbas⁵² says that whoever does not implement *Shari’ah* is a wicked evildoer, but he is not a disbeliever and rebelling against him is forbidden. Ibn Abbas ؓ said that ruling by other than God’s commandments is ‘disbelief short of disbelief.’ He also said: ‘It is not the disbelief that they mean; it is not a disbelief that casts one from the fold of religion.’

22. The Caliphate: There is agreement (*ittifaq*) among scholars that a caliphate is an obligation upon the *Ummah*. The *Ummah* has lacked a caliphate since 1924 CE. However, a new caliphate requires consensus from Muslims and not just from those in some small corner of the world. Omar ibn Al-Khattab ؓ aid: ‘Whosoever pledges allegiance to a man without due consultation with Muslims has fooled himself; and neither he nor the man to whom

⁵¹ Narrated by Muslim in Kitab al-Imarah, no. 1855.

⁵² Narrated by Al-Hakim in *Al-Mustadrak ‘ala as-Sahihayn*, (Vol. 2, p. 342).

he pledged allegiance should be followed for he has risked both their lives⁵³.’ Announcing a caliphate without consensus is sedition (*fitnah*) because it renders the majority of Muslims who do not approve it outside of the caliphate. It will also lead to many rival caliphates emerging, thereby sowing sedition and discord (*fitnah*) among Muslims. The beginnings of this discord reared its head when the Sunni imams of Mosul did not pledge allegiance to you and you killed them.

In your speech you quoted the Companion Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq : ‘I have been given authority over you, and I am not the best of you.’ This begs the question: who gave you authority over the ummah? Was it your group? If this is the case, then a group of no more than several thousand has appointed itself the ruler of over a billion and a half Muslims. This attitude is based upon a corrupt circular logic that says: ‘Only we are Muslims, and we decide who the caliph is, we have chosen one and so whoever does not accept our caliph is not a Muslim.’ In this case, a caliph is nothing more than the leader of a certain group that declares more than 99% of Muslims non-Muslim. On the other hand, if you recognize the billion and a half people who consider themselves Muslims, how can you not consult (*shura*) them regarding your so-called caliphate? Thus, you face one of two conclusions: either you concur that they are Muslims and they did not appoint you caliph over them – in which case you are not the caliph – or, the other conclusion is that you do not accept them as Muslims, in which case Muslims are a small group not in need of a caliph, so why use the word ‘caliph’ at all? In truth, the caliphate must emerge from a consensus of Muslim countries, organizations of Islamic scholars and Muslims across the globe.

23. National affiliations: In one of your speeches you said: ‘Syria is not for Syrians and Iraq is not for Iraqis⁵⁴.’ In the same speech, you called on Muslims from across the globe to immigrate to lands under the control of the ‘Islamic State’ in Iraq and the Levant. By

⁵³ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Hudud*, no. 6830.

⁵⁴ BBC news online, 1st July 2014.

doing so, you take the rights and resources of these countries and distribute them among people who are strangers to those lands, even though they are of the same religion. This is exactly what Israel did when it invited Jewish settlers abroad to immigrate to Palestine, evict the Palestinians and usurp their ancestral rights and lands. Where is the justice in this?

Simply, patriotism and loving one's country does not contradict Islam's teachings, rather, loving one's country stems from faith, being both instinctual and a Sunnah. The Prophet ﷺ said, addressing Mecca: 'How goodly a land you are, and how beloved you are to me. Were it not that my people forced me to leave, I would not have lived anywhere else⁵⁵.' Patriotism and love for one's country have many proofs from the Qur'an and Sunnah. God ﷻ says in the Qur'an: '*And had We prescribed for them: "Slay yourselves" or "Leave your habitations", they would not have done it, save a few of them...*' (Al-Nisa', 4: 66). Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi commented: 'Leaving one's land is equal to slaying oneself⁵⁶.' And on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ 'would, upon seeing the walls of Medina when returning from travel, hasten the pace of his she-camel. If he was riding a mount, he would move it out of love for [Medina]⁵⁷.' Ibn Hajar said: 'This Hadith is proof of the virtue of Medina, and of the legal validity of loving one's country and longing for it⁵⁸.'

24. Emigration. You invited Muslims from across the globe to immigrate to lands under the control of the 'Islamic State' in Iraq and the Levant.⁵⁹ Abu Muslim Al-Canadi, a soldier of the 'Islamic State', said: 'Come and join us [in Syria] before the doors close⁶⁰.'

⁵⁵ Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi in *Kitab al-Manaqib*, no. 3926; and in *Sahih Ibn Hibban* (Vol.9, p. 23).

⁵⁶ Mafatih Al-Ghayb, *Al-Razi* (Vol. 15, p. 515) in the exegesis of *Al-Anfal*, 8:75.

⁵⁷ Fath Al-Bari, *Ibn Hajar* (Vol. 3, p. 621).

⁵⁸ Fath Al-Bari, *Ibn Hajar* (Vol. 3, p. 621).

⁵⁹ BBC news online, on 1st July 2014.

⁶⁰ He appeared in a recruitment video produced by Hayat Media Center, August, 2014.

It suffices to repeat the words of the Prophet Muhammed ﷺ who said: ‘There is no emigration after the Conquest [of Mecca], but jihad and [its] intention [remain]. And when you are called to war, march forward⁶¹.’

Conclusion

In conclusion, God has described Himself as the ‘Most Merciful of the merciful’. He created man from His mercy. God ﷻ says in the Qur’an: ‘The Compassionate One has taught the Qur’an. He created man’ (*Al-Rahman*, 55: 1-3). And God ﷻ created man for His mercy: ‘Had your Lord willed, He would have made mankind one community, but they continue to differ, except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and that is why He created them...’ (*Hud*, 11: 118-119). Linguistically, ‘that’ refers back to the closest noun, which is ‘mercy’, not ‘differ’. This is the opinion of Ibn Abbas, who said: ‘He created them for mercy⁶².’

The soundest way to attain this mercy is the worship of God ﷻ. God says: ‘And I did not create the jinn and mankind except that they may worship Me.’ (*Al-Dhariyat*, 51: 56). Worshipping God is not a favour that one bestows upon God ﷻ, but rather, sustenance from Him: ‘I do not desire from them any provision, nor do I desire that they should feed Me. Indeed it is God Who is the Provider, the Lord of Strength, the Firm.’ (*Al-Dhariyat*, 51: 57-58). Furthermore, God ﷻ revealed the Qur’an as a mercy from Him: ‘And We reveal of the Qur’an that which is a cure, and a mercy for believers...’ (*Al-Isra*, 17:82). Islam is mercy and its attributes are merciful. The Prophet ﷺ, who was sent as a mercy for all the worlds, summarized a Muslim’s dealings with others by saying: ‘He who shows no mercy, will not be shown mercy⁶³’; and: ‘Have mercy and you will

⁶¹ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in *Kitab al-Jihad*, no. 2783.

⁶² Cf Mafatih Al-Ghayb, *Al-Razi* (Vol. 18, p. 412).

⁶³ Narrated by Bukhari in *Kitab al-Adab*, no. 5997, and by Musim in *Kitab al-Fada'il*, no. 2318.

be shown mercy⁶⁴.’ But, as can be seen from everything mentioned, you have misinterpreted Islam into a religion of harshness, brutality, torture and murder. As elucidated, this is a great wrong and an offence to Islam, to Muslims and to the entire world.

Reconsider all your actions; desist from them; repent from them; cease harming others and return to the religion of mercy. God ﷻ says in the Qur’an: ‘Say [that God declares]: “O My servants who have been prodigal against their own souls, do not despair of God’s mercy. Truly God forgives all sins. Truly He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”’ (*Al-Zumar*, 39:53).

And God knows best.

24th Dhul-Qi’da 1435 AH / 19th September 2014 CE

⁶⁴ Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (Vol. 2, p. 160).

The Saying of Ali bin Abi Talib (k.)

Nu'aym ibn Hammad narrates in *Al-Fitan*, that the 4th Caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib said:

When you see the black flags, remain where you are and do not move your hands or your feet. Thereafter there shall appear a feeble insignificant folk. Their hearts will be like fragments of iron. They will have the state. They will fulfil neither covenant nor agreement. They will call to the truth, but they will not be people of the truth. Their names will be parental attributions, and their aliases will be derived from towns. Their hair will be free-flowing like that of women. This situation will remain until they differ among themselves. Thereafter, God will bring forth the Truth through whomever He wills⁶⁵.

People are asking: does this narration by Ali bin Abi Talib (k.) – that is related by Al-Bukhari's teacher (Nu'aym bin Hamad) over one thousand two hundred years ago in his book *Al-Fitan* – refer to the 'Islamic State'?

Is it possible to understand the narration as follows?

'When you see the black flags': The flags of the 'Islamic State' are black.

'Remain where you are': i.e., stay where you are, O Muslims, and do not join them.

'And do not move your hands or your feet': i.e. do not help them financially or with equipment.

'Thereafter there shall appear a feeble insignificant folk': i.e. 'weak' and 'insignificant' in terms of understanding of religion, morality and religious practice.

'Their hearts will be like fragments of iron': i.e. they will ruthlessly kill prisoners of war and cruelly torture people.

⁶⁵ Narrated by Nu'aym ibn Hammad in *Kitab Al-Fitan*, *Hadith* no. 573.

‘They will have the state’: For almost a century, no one has claimed to be an Islamic Caliphate other than the current ‘Islamic State’ in Iraq and the Levant.

‘They will fulfil neither covenant nor agreement’: The ‘Islamic State’ did not fulfil its agreement with the Sha’etat tribe after the tribe pledged allegiance to them; indeed the ‘Islamic State’ slaughtered them by the hundreds. They also killed journalists.

‘They will call to the truth’: The ‘Islamic State’ calls to Islam.

‘But they will not be people of the truth’: The people of the truth are merciful. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: ‘Have mercy and you will be shown mercy.’

‘Their names will be parental attributions’: Like: ‘Abu Muthanna’, ‘Abu Muhammad’, ‘Abu Muslim’ and so on.

‘And their aliases will be derived from towns’: Like: ‘Al-Baghdadi’, ‘al-Zarqawi’, ‘al-Tunisi’ and so on.

‘Their hair will be free-flowing like that of women’: ‘Islamic State’ fighters have hair precisely like this.

‘Until they differ among themselves’: Like the differences between the ‘Islamic State’ and its parent, the al-Nusra Front (al-Qaeda in Syria). The fighting between these two has led to around ten thousand deaths in a single year.

‘Thereafter, God will bring forth the truth through whomever He wills’: through a clear and correct Islamic proclamation (like this open letter).

The sage Luqman says in the Qur’an:

‘O my son! Even if it should be the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and [even if] it be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, God will bring it forth. Truly God is Subtle, Aware.’ (Luqman, 31: 16)

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(in alphabetical order)

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15. Sheikh Mohammad Ahmad Al-Akwa'
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16. Prof. Mohammad Al-Amir
Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies for Girls, Al-Mansoura
University, Egypt
17. Dr. Majdi Ashour Fatwa Council (Dar al-Ifta'), Egypt
18. Prof. Dr. Abdul-Hai Azab
Dean of the Faculty of Shari'ah and Law, Al-Azhar University,
Egypt
19. Azhar Aziz
President of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), USA
20. Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway
The Integral Professorial Chair for the Study of Imam Ghazali's
Work, Jerusalem
21. Prof. Bakr Zaki Awad
Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Al-Azhar University, Egypt
22. Nihad Awad
National Executive Director of the Council on American Islamic
Relations (CAIR), USA
23. Dr. Sheikh Osama Mahmoud Al-Azhari
Islamic Preacher, Egypt
24. Dr. Jamal Badawi
Executive Director of the Fiqh Council of North America, USA
25. Dr. Ihsan Bagby
Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Ken-
tucky, and Council Member of the Fiqh Council of North Ameri-
ca, USA
26. Naeem Baig
President of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), USA
27. Prof. Osman Bakr
International Centre for Islamic Studies, Malaysia

28. Sheikh Abu Bakr Baldi
Head of the African community in Portugal, Portugal
29. Dr. Hatem Bazian
Chairman of American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), USA
30. Dr. Mohammed Bechari
Member of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, and President of the French National Federation of Muslims, France
31. HE Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah
Leading Muslim Scholar and President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, Abu Dhabi
32. HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad
Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan
33. Al-Habib Muhammad Luthfi bin Ali bin Yahya
Islamic Preacher, Indonesia
34. HE Sheikh Dr. Ra'ed Abdullah Budair
Member of the Body of Scholars and Preachers, Jerusalem
35. Dr. Mohammad Abdul Sam'i Budair
Fatwa Council (Dar al-Ifta'), Egypt
36. Dr. Sameer Budinar
Muslim Scholar and Director of the Centre for Humanities and Social Studies, Morocco
37. Dr. Zahid Bukhari
Executive Director of the Center for Islam and Public Policy (CIPP), USA
38. HE Prof. Mustafa Cerić
Former Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina
39. HE Mr. Ibrahim Chabbouh
Tunisian Scholar, Tunisia
40. Prof. Caner Dagli
Professor of Islamic Studies, USA
41. Prof. Jamal Farouq Al-Daqqaq
Professor at Al-Azhar University, Egypt
42. Seyyed Abdullah Fadaaq
Islamic Preacher and Scholar, Saudi Arabia

43. Sheikh Wahid Al-Fasi Al-Fahri
Head of the Federation of Italian Muslims, Italy
44. Prof. Mohammad Nabil Ghanayim
Professor of Shari'ah, Dar al-Ulum College, Cairo University,
Egypt
45. Sheikh Dr. Ali Gomaa
Former Grand Mufti of Egypt, Egypt
46. HE Dr. Ahmad Abdul-Aziz Al-Haddad
Head of the Fatwa Department, Dubai, UAE
47. Dr. Abdullah Hafizi
Secretary-General of the International Association for Idrisid
Sherifs and their Cousins, Morocco
48. HE Sheikh Mustafa Hajji
The Mufti of Bulgaria, Bulgaria
49. Sheikh Ali Al-Halabi
Author and Islamic Preacher, Jordan
50. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson
Founder and Director of Zaytuna College, USA
51. Sheikh Farouq Aref Hasan
The Integral Professorial Chair for the Study of Imam Fakhr Al-
Din Al-Razi's Work, Jordan
52. HE Sheikh Ali bin Abdul Rahman Aal Hashem
Advisor to HH the Head of State for Judicial and Religious Affa-
irs, UAE
53. Dr. Ahmad Hassan
Professor of Da'wah and Irshad, Yemen
54. Sheikh Musa Hassan
Secretary-General of Majma' al-Ummah, Sweden
55. HE Prof. Mohammad Al-Hifnawi
Professor of Usul al-Fiqh at the Faculty of Shari'ah and Law at
Al-Azhar University,
Tanta branch, Egypt
56. Prof. Sami Hilal
Dean of the College of the Holy Qur'an, Tanta University, Egypt
57. Prof. Sa'd al-Din Al-Hilali
Head of the Department of Comparative Jurisprudence at Al-
Azhar University, Egypt

58. Ed Husain
Senior Fellow in Middle Eastern Studies, (CFR), UK
59. Imam Monawar Hussain
Founder of the Oxford Foundation, UK
60. HE Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Hussein
Mufti of Jerusalem and All Palestine, Palestine
61. HE Sheikh Ibrahim Saleh Al-Husseini
Head of the Supreme Council for Fatwa and Islamic Affairs, Nigeria
62. Dr. Jabri Ibrahim
Head of the Preaching and Guidance Department at the Yemeni Awqaf Ministry, Yemen
63. Dr. Khaled Imran
Fatwa Council (Dar al-Ifta'), Egypt
64. Prof. Salah al-Din Al-Ja'farawi
Assistant Secretary-General of the European Islamic Conference, Consultant for the Ibn Sina Institute in France, and Consultant to the Muhammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum Charitable Foundation, Germany
65. Dr. Omar Jah
Head of the Sheikh Abdullah Jah Charity Foundation, Gambia
66. Oussama Jammal
Secretary-General of the U.S. Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), USA
67. Sheikh Muqbil Al-Kadhi
Islamic Preacher, Yemen
68. Prof. Muhammad Hashem Kamali
Founding Chairman and CEO of the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies, Afghanistan
69. Prof. Enes Karic
Bosnian Scholar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
70. Yusuf Z. Kavakci
Prof. Dr. (Emeritus), USA
71. Sheikh Ahmad Wisam Khadhr
Fatwa Council (Dar al-Ifta'), Egypt
72. Sheikh Muhammad Wisam Khadhr
Fatwa Council (Dar al-Ifta'), Egypt

73. Sheikh Abdul-Majeed Khayroun
Union of Mosques, the Netherlands
74. Sheikh Mohammad Yahya Al-Kittani
Preacher & Imam, Egypt
75. Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Kumein
Professor of Da'wah, Yemen
76. Sheikh Amr Mohamed Helmi Khaled
Islamic Preacher and Founder and President of the Right Start
Global Foundation, Egypt
77. Prof. Judge Maher Alyan Khudair
Supreme Shari'ah Court Judge and member of the Body of Scholars and Preachers in Jerusalem, Palestine
78. Shaykh Prof. Ahmad Al-Kubaisi
Founder of the 'Ulema Association, Iraq
79. Prof. Joseph E. B. Lumbard
Professor at Brandeis University, USA
80. HE Sheikh Mahmood As'ad Madani
Secretary-General of Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind, India
81. Prof. Dr. Abdul Hamid Madkour
Professor of Islamic Philosophy, Dar al-Ulum College, Cairo
University, Egypt
82. Sheik Mohamed Magid
ADAMS Center, USA
83. Prof. Mohammad Mukhtar Al-Mahdi
Professor of Islamic Studies, Al-Azhar University and President
of the Shari'ah Society, Egypt
84. Imam al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi
Chairman of the National Umma Party, Sudan
85. Sheikh Ahmad Mamdouh
Fatwa Council (Dar al-Ifta'), Egypt
86. Prof. Bashar Awad Marouf
Iraqi Scholar, Author and Historian, Iraq
87. Mr. Bakkay Marzouq
French National Federation of Muslims, France
88. Sheikh Moez Masoud
Islamic Preacher, Egypt

89. Prof. Mohammad Abdul Samad Muhanna
Advisor to the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, Egypt
90. Sheikh Mukhtar Muhsen
Fatwa Council (Dar al-Ifta'), Egypt
91. Professor Fathi Awad Al-Mulla
Pundit and consultant for the Association of Islamic Universities,
Egypt
92. Sheikh Hussein Al-Obeidi
Sheikh of the Al-Zaytuna Grand Mosque, Tunisia
93. Dr. Yasir Qadh
Professor of Islamic Studies, Rhodes College, USA
94. Dr. Muhammad Tahir Al-Qadri
Founder of Minhaj-ul-Qur'an International, Pakistan
95. Sheikh Mohammad Hasan Qarib-Allah
Muslim Scholar, Sudan
96. Mr. Abdul Hadi Al-Qasabi
Grand Sheikh of the Sufi Tariqahs in Egypt, Egypt
97. Prof. Saif Rajab Qazamil
Professor of Comparative Jurisprudence, Al-Azhar University,
Egypt
98. Sheikh Faraz Rabbani
Islamic Scholar and Founder of SeekersGuidance, Canada
99. Sheikh Ashraf Sa'ad
Muslim Scholar, Egypt
100. Sheikh Dr. Hmoud Al-Sa'idi
Islamic Preacher and Undersecretary at the Yemeni Ministry of
Awqaf, Yemen
101. Sheikh Hasan Al-Sheikh
Head of Religious Affairs at the Salah Mosque, the largest mos-
que in Yemen, Yemen
102. Sheikh Mahmoud Al-Sharif
Head of the Association of Sherifs in Egypt, Egypt
103. HE Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sheikh Sae'eed
Head of the Association of Islamic Scholars in Kurdistan, Kur-
distan
104. Dr. Mohamad Adam El Sheikh
Executive Director of the Fiqh Council of North America, USA

105. Dr. Mohammad Sammak
Secretary-General of the National Committee for Christian-Muslim Dialogue, Lebanon
106. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah
Secretary General of the Fiqh Council of America, USA
107. Prof. Ismail Abdul-Nabi Shaheen
Vice President Al-Azhar University and Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Islamic Universities, Egypt
108. Dr. Omar Shahin
Secretary General of the North American Imam Federation, USA
109. Imam Talib M. Shareef
President of the Nation's Mosque, Masjid Muhammad, USA
110. Dr. Ahmad Shqeirat
Member of the North American Imams Federation, USA
111. Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi
Chairman of the Fiqh Council of North America, USA
112. Dr. Muddassir H. Siddiqui
Council Member of the Fiqh Council of North America, USA
113. Prof. Nabil Al-Smalouti
Professor of Sociology and former Dean of the Department of Humanities, Al-Azhar University, Egypt
114. HE Prof. M. Din Syamsuddin
President of Muhammadiyah, and Chairman of the Indonesian Council of Ulama, Indonesia
115. Dr. Mohammad Tallabi
Muslim Scholar and leader in the Tawhid and Islah Movement, Morocco
116. Eng. Salmann Tamimi
Founder of the Muslim Association of Iceland, Iceland
117. HE Sheikh Na'im Ternava
The Mufti Kosovo, Kosovo
118. Dr. Muhammad Suheyl Umar
Director of Iqbal Academy, Pakistan
119. Mr. Mohammad Wadgiri
Head of the Muslim community in Belgium, Belgium
120. HE Dato' Wan Zahidi bin Wan Teh
Former Mufti of Malaysia's Federal Territories, Malaysia

121. Dr. Amr Wardani
Fatwa Council (Dar al-Ifta'), Egypt
122. HE Prof. Muhammad Al-Mukhtar Wuld-Abah
President of Chinguitt Modern University, Mauritania
123. Sheikh Muhammad Al-Yacoubi
Islamic Preacher, Syria
124. Sheikh Mohammad Mustafa Al-Fakki Al-Yaqouti
Minister of State in the Sudanese Ministry of Awqaf, Sudan
125. HE Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf
Former Grand Mufti of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan
126. Prof. Zaki Zaidan
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5. Islam in the Public Sphere by John L. Esposito

The study of world religions and the role of religion in politics and the public square have been transformed by the globalization of communications and travel. Our governments, societies, schools, universities, and the Academy have felt its transformative impact. In light of my scholarship and my experiences in the public understanding of religion, I want to address the impact of the globalization of communications and global conflicts on the development of Islamic studies, in particular, and on attitudes and behaviors toward Islam – and Muslims.

Where we are today is very much affected by the religious landscape of the late twentieth century. In 1955, the landscape of America was reflected in Will Herberg's book *Protestant, Catholic, and Jew* – full stop. But by 1965, theologians were talking about the impact of secularization on religion and theology. It was signaled by Harvey Cox in *Religion In the Secular City* and reflected in what popularly came to be called the "God is dead" theology, discussed in Gabriel Vahanian's book *The Death of God*, and the writings of other authors like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thomas Altizer, Paul Van Buren, Richard Rubenstein, and others. The same impact and sense could be seen in the social sciences, which reflected the triumph of secularization. This was embodied in modernization and development theory, which conflated modernization with the westernization and secularization of societies.

One is mistaken to think that idea is dead: Take a look at a good deal of the discourse about the Arab Spring and the transition of governments in Egypt and Tunisia. Liberal and leftist academics, right after Mohamed Morsi was elected, were on websites discussing whether or not there might be circumstances when a democratically elected president could be removed. This was long before we were seeing widespread opposition percolating in Egypt itself. The belief, one might say dogma, of modernization and development theory reared its head once more: modernization and progress necessitates the secularization and wes-

ternization of society, and the adoption or adaptation of western inspired models and institutions of political, economic, educational development. Religion should decline, so it's said, in the public realm, should be marginalized, limited to private life, and even, as one anthropologist of religion (Anthony F.C. Wallace) noted: magic, witchcraft, the development of religion, would be succeeded by science. For Islam and Muslims, as Daniel Lerner characterized it, Muslims would have a choice between Mecca and "Mechanization." This was to be all part of the passing of traditional societies. That belief had and continues to have a tremendous impact on questions such as: "Is Islam compatible with modernity and democracy?", "Can Muslims or Islamic movements embrace a democratic process?", and more recently "Can Muslims integrate and be loyal citizens in North America and Europe?"

For forty years I have been asked the same questions: What is Islam? Is it a particularly violent religion? How can it be religion if it had a prophet who was a warrior? I had a big conversation on the radio regarding these questions and had to remind the audience that the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament also had prophets who were warriors. The only difference is that today I get paid for continuing to answer these questions or, as I like to put it – I almost said this in Iran one time when I was speaking there – I owe my career and my Lexus to the Ayatollah Khomeini! So where did Islam, Muslims, and Islamic studies fit into this landscape?

It's difficult for many today to remember what it was like only a few decades ago in the United States and Europe, and today I am primarily interested with the United States. If you grew up in cosmopolitan New York as I did, Muslims were invisible. It's not as if there weren't Muslims in the country. Islamic centers and mosques were absolutely invisible. In fact the oldest mosques in the United States, ironically, were in places like Iowa and outside of Boston (Quincy), not in Boston.

Mosques and Islamic centers were few and invisible, and coverage of Islam and Muslims in the media, and most universities and colleges, let alone in secondary education, was negligible. Scholars of Islam were few and far between, and most of

the time they were seen as people who dealt with texts – not so much texts in contexts, but people who dealt with language and literature. And our professional associations – it was the American Oriental Society (AOS), the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), and the American Academy of Religion (AAR) – had little to no coverage. The AAR did not get a task force on Islam until the mid-1970s. It's a very interesting phenomenon that took place, let alone what occurred after the Iranian Revolution. Three members of Georgetown's Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (myself, John Voll, and Yvonne Haddad) became presidents of MESA. Temple University was the first university, at least that I know of, to introduce the study of Islam in 1968 and offer a degree in a religion department. Before that, colleagues (professors of Islamic Studies) were trained at the University of Chicago and many other universities, usually in history or history of religion programs.

The response of colleagues and family to my chosen career was interesting: Why study Islam, they asked. When I began to speak publicly, both Muslims and Christians asked why I studied Islam, but they had very different agendas in their mind. The best comment I heard was "You'll never get a job!" At that time I was a young Catholic theologian teaching scripture and theology, and there would always be theology and religion departments.

When I was looking for a job in 1972, only one job advertised was narrowly in Islamic Studies, and the other was in World Religions at the College of the Holy Cross. When interviewed by the incoming chair at Holy Cross, I noted that Hinduism and Buddhism were my minors (in addition to an MA in theology) and that my major was Islam. He pointedly answered, "We are not looking for somebody in Islam," and even worse, he said, "I prefer somebody in Japanese and Chinese."

Training in Islam was totally absent for the military and foreign service officers. And not only that, our foreign service officers in the field were not encouraged to look at religion. When the Iranian Revolution came along, a friend who had been in the embassy said that there was no contact with the ulama, no going into the universities and dealing with faculty or the students in

Islamic studies. Indeed, when you talked to analysts in the field reporting back to Washington or consultants on risk assessment in countries, they never looked at the religion factor. And so when Iran came along, people saw it as an epi-phenomenon.

But, in reality, for ten years before the Iranian Revolution, Islam was being used by Gaafar Nimeiry in Sudan, by Anwar Sadat in Egypt, by Muammar Gadhafi in Libya, and by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan to legitimate their form of nationalism and to mobilize support. And in Pakistan, before Iran, both secular socialist Bhutto and religious parties were calling for *Nizami Islam*, an Islamic system of government. All of that was under the radar.

What about book proposals? I sent out reams of book proposals. No answers. Three people, including Oxford University Press, responded “Great idea. No market.” After the Iranian Revolution, in five weeks, I received three book contracts. Books on Islam? The general consensus was “No need to produce another one, we already have H. A. R. Gibb and Fazlur Rahman,” books which were originally cast in the early 1960s. The great reformers were seen as Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad Iqbal. Abduh died in 1905. Iqbal died in 1938. And those were the last people being talked about even when I did my graduate work in the 1970s.

The turning point, then, was the Iranian Revolution and fear of its export. That raised American and European interests in the Middle East, all of which had to do with oil, oil, oil, and the safety and security of Israel. These interests put Islam on the front burner both with publishing and with the media. But what was the state of knowledge of Islam in popular culture? I remember that during the Iranian Revolution, every morning we’d get a report on our hostages. Barry Serafin would go to the gate to talk to spokeswoman, Maryam (Mary). She would begin with *Bismillahi al-Rahman al-Rahim* and then recite a short passage from the Quran. By about the third day, Barry was telling her, in effect, could you skip the opening? So here we were worrying about what they might be doing to our hostages, but we didn’t realize how insulting it was to say “Let’s cut to the chase here!” Our levels of ignorance were also illustrated by Tom

Brokaw, who explained, “For our viewers I should mention that Islam is one of the world’s religions. It has a scripture called the Quran and its prophet is named Muhammad.” Think about that! So we faced big challenges.

What were they? To broaden more traditional notions of Islamic studies and scholarship and to pursue a more multidisciplinary approach in analysis of modern contexts as well as texts, and indeed many of our colleagues have done that. The challenge created a market for experts, a subject of vital interest for media, government, and congressional briefings. But there was a problem. Most of us were not educated to deal with the modern context, given the traditional curriculum for Islamic studies. And most of us did not deal with Shi’a Islam. One of the really first-rate Iran scholars, Jim Bill, told me that he never took Islam seriously, that it was only studied as something in the distant past in his Ph.D. program at Princeton. It was only when he did field research in Iran that he realized he didn’t know anything about modern Shi’ism. So I literally can say that the advantage of answering machines at that time was that when the *New York Times* called you didn’t have to answer their questions immediately but could scurry to look up a relevant answer instead! How many scholars at the time could talk about what an ayatollah was, or how the ayatollah system functioned? In briefings that Fazlur Rahman, Michel Fischer, Bill Beeman, and I did together for the Secretary of State (we were asked to go to the National Security Council during the hostage crisis), it was appalling to discover how little was known. When someone said you have to be concerned about the influence of Khomeini and Ali Shariati, a Foreign Service officer who had been in the Middle East for twenty-five years, said, “Good, then we have to get to Shariati, the youth leader, to intervene for us.” “Where can we find him?” At first, I didn’t answer him, but when he pressed I explained. “Actually, he was buried in Damascus quite a few years ago.” Another challenge was trying to really understand how Khomeini, this bearded mullah who had been out of Iran for more than twenty years and lived in exile, could come back and be the head of a government, or that this revolution could take place without a bullet being fired; all of that was incredible for people to understand. Just as it was incredible that, after the Arab Spring, Islamists who were not involved in

that first surge of the uprisings suddenly won the elections. All these years later, we still do not understand the dynamics that are taking place.

A common belief in government at that time – and for younger people this will be completely off your radar – was that you don't discuss or deal with religion. The State Department developed a program right after the Iranian Revolution that generated a great deal of debate. The AMPART (American Participant Program of the United States Information Agency) was intended to send out scholars in American Studies, lawyers, to speak at U.S. cultural centers. The idea of having someone going out to talk about Islam was very controversial. I went out, and fortunately it was successful and then they launched a program of non-Muslim scholars and Muslim scholars. Parenthetically, years later I discovered that I was entitled to see my reviews. I had been lecturing in many different countries and my review stated that I had had "intimate relations" with seventy-eight people in Karachi. The reviewer was so excited because he had all these Muslims showing up. When I went to give a talk, people from the embassy would ask to come with me because they were nervous about meeting people who were seen as mullahs!

All of that has changed. The good news is the explosion of interest and coverage of Islam as well as development of a multidisciplinary study of the role of religion and religious movements and its broad dissemination. The bad news is that the primary lens, through which we began to see Islam, was through the Iranian revolution, the assassination of Sadat, all the way down to Saddam Hussein and the first invasion and Osama Bin Laden. Throughout all of this, we have had good media coverage and then we've had problematic media coverage. The primary lens through which Islam and Muslims were viewed and understood focused on the threat from "radical Islamic fundamentalism."

In the 1980s, this was an issue, and in the 1990s with the fall of the Soviet Union, you suddenly had both our senior government leaders and the media talking about the passing of the red menace, and debating whether or not there was now a green menace. The morning that I signed the contract for my book *The Is-*

lamic Threat: Myth or Reality? I was literally at the State Department to talk to the Assistant Secretary of State who dealt with human rights. His first question to me was, "Is Algeria another Iran?" I explained, "They're two different countries and the last thing we want to do is develop this idea that Algeria is another Iran. Demographics are different; the role of the military is different." "Oh, I understand that," he said, "but you do realize that Islam could be the next global threat because it's a global religion, it's so large in numbers, and so it could be a global threat." Shortly after that, we began to see writings describing Islam as a triple threat.

Historically, the threat was defined as political and civilizational, in effect a clash of civilizations for over fourteen centuries. More recently, we have been hearing of a demographic threat: "The Muslims are coming, the Muslims are coming." The last chapter of *The Islamic Threat* had this stale title, so I thought, let me just characterize it as, "The Muslims Are Coming, the Muslims Are Coming." Well, I could have been nailed for plagiarism, because those stereotypes of the desert, Arabia, and A Thousand and One Nights were replaced by images of the Quran and the Kalashnikov rifle. One lecture I gave was supposedly advertised by what the Dean described as "a terrific piece of art for the stage." As I walk in to deliver my lecture, I see a Quran, I see Bismillah, and then this vague image. As I get closer, I see this arm holding a Kalashnikov! This kind of sets you up terrifically when you are going to be a speaker with this symbol right behind you. So, this was the kind of message that was beginning to emerge. We saw it with Bernard Lewis' "The Roots of Muslim Rage" article, in which he used the words "clash of civilizations," and in Samuel Huntington's article "Clash of Civilizations."

But: "For the general public of America and Europe today, Islam is news of a particularly unpleasant sort. The media, the government, the geo-political strategists, and although they are marginal to the culture at large, the academic experts on Islam are all in concert. Islam is a threat to Western civilization; now this is by no means the same as saying that only derogatory or racist characters of Islam are to be found in the West. What I am saying, is that negative images of Islam are very much more

prevalent than any others and that such images correspond not with what Islam is, but to what prominent sectors of a particular society take it to be. Islam and the West: A Clash of Civilizations? Those sectors have the power and the will to propagate that particular image of Islam and this image, therefore, becomes more prevalent, more present than all others.”

Edward Said in 1981, ten years before Bernard Lewis wrote his piece. I discovered that dating only when I was putting these comments together, and I thought, “Oh my God.”

So charges of that triple threat then emerge, and in Samuel Huntington it was seen clearly, because Sam used the phrase in his article “Islam has bloody borders.” When his book *The Clash of Civilizations* came out, he left that sentence in. When Sam and I did a TV program, both the moderator and I said “You still use the phrase ‘Islam has bloody borders,’ rather than ‘Muslim countries’ or ‘some’ or even ‘many have bloody borders.’” “Would you wish to change it?” There was no change, and I think Sam reflected where lots of folks were coming from, but he was much more out front about it.

The war on global terrorism ratcheted up media coverage. 9/11, 7/7, and other attacks exacerbated Islam’s negative image in popular culture and fed an irrational fear of the religion of Islam and mainstream Muslims, not just of extremists and terrorism. Domestically, this fear, called Islamophobia in the United Kingdom, was never referred to as such in the U.S. media in any significant way, until Park 51. *Time* magazine was the first publication to do a cover story that said, “Is America Islamophobic?” by Bobby Gosh. If you read the article, you’ll know what the answer is. I have done long programs with media like CNN, or with the *New York Times*, and when we would take a break from recording, they would literally say, “What is this? What’s going on at Park 51, this so-called mosque? Where’s this all coming from, this charge that this building of a mosque is a monument to terrorism?” And I said, “It’s the tip of the iceberg.” Since we never had a name for this irrational fear, it was difficult to describe Islamophobic language as negative and unacceptable. There was a time when you could say anything you wanted about African Americans, but as soon as we begin to

apply the word “racism” to this language, to be called a racist becomes a problem, just as to be called an anti-Semite is a problem, and one backs off. Baroness Warsi just spoke at Georgetown on religious freedom; most of it had to do with the threat to Christians in the Middle East, but she also talked about Islamophobia. Her speech was covered wonderfully by one of the newspapers in the United Kingdom that is very anti-Muslim in approach. Although the reporter said, “What a great speech and what courage it took to talk about Christianity,” on the other hand, he couldn’t help questioning her use of the term Islamophobia. “Is that really a reality? Does that really exist?” he asked.

A phobia, according to the dictionary, is an exaggerated, illogical, or unfounded fear of a particular class of objects, people, a particular situation. It may be hard for those afflicted to sufficiently determine or communicate the source of this fear, but it exists. I am not talking about criticism of Islam that is reasoned and empirical/verifiable. I am not talking about criticism of Muslims. I am talking about hate speech. I am talking about a speech that engages in exceptionalism. So, what are the kinds of things that Islamophobes believe?

Islam, not just a small minority of Muslims and terrorists, is the problem and threat to the West. The religion of Islam has no common values with the West. Islam and modernity are incompatible. Islam is an inherently violent religion with an extremist, political ideology. Phillip Jenkins and Bishop Spong have written very interesting books on violence in the Bible and the degree of violence. Talking comparatively here, Phillip Jenkins said there’s a way you can look at certain passages in the Bible and see God ordering genocide. If you don’t understand the Biblical context, that’s what you would interpret. And yet when we deal with Quranic texts, wherever I go, people will ask, “What about the passage ‘slay the unbelievers wherever you find them’?” without looking at what is said in the verse after that: “When the enemy stops fighting you, you must stop.” We must also ask, who were the unbelievers at the time? The “unbelievers” weren’t Christians or Jews, they were the Meccans. But the irony is that hardline Christian Zionists or some of our Islamophobes and Neo-Cons talk just the way that the Bin La-

dens of the world do; they distort the meaning of the text. They don't interpret a text within its context.

We need to think about the impact of Islamophobia in the United States. There are the 2008 presidential elections, as well as the 2010 and 2012 congressional elections to look at. In 2008, when President Obama visited Dearborn, his people did not want him to be photographed with young women wearing hijab, who were asked to move out of the picture. If that's not astonishing, we know that today, six years into his presidency, Mr. Obama has never visited a mosque, has never even been photographed near one, and yet he has been at mosques overseas. What does that tell you if he has not visited the religious institutions of the second largest world religion?

David Cole of Georgetown Law School commented on events right after 9/11 in his great book *Less Safe, Less Free*. By its own account, he says, the U.S. government immediately after 9/11 locked up over 5,000 foreign nationals in preventive detention; in the first two years after 9/11, they sought out 8,000 Arab and Muslim men for FBI interviews and called in 80,000 Arab and Muslim foreign nationals for special registration fingerprinting and photographing (including the current editor of the *JAAR*). The idea was that we might find a terrorist, but the government's record in this regard was zero out of 93,000. Not one of these men, at the time Cole wrote his book, had been convicted of a terrorist act. Now that's not to deny that we don't have a problem with domestic terrorism, but I am talking about that extreme reaction. And yet, in a discussion I had on National Public Radio, someone who runs a major center on democracy at a major West Coast university responded to these numbers by saying, "But at the end they were all free. That should be good news for Muslims."

How significant is the influence of the media on popular culture? A major study by Media Tenor, called "A New Era of Arab Western Relations," reviewed 975,000 news stories in U.S. and European media outlets and reported that they demonstrated an astonishing imbalance. What does that mean? In 2001, two percent of all news stories in Western media presented images of Muslim militants, while just over 0.1 per-

cent presented stories portraying ordinary Muslims. Jump ten years later. In 2011, militant images go from two percent in 2001 up to 25 percent in 2011. Yet coverage of ordinary Muslims – would you care to guess? It remains the same as 2001, at 0.1 percent.

Most recently, there is another study by Media Tenor (and we just had the fellow who runs it, Roland Schatz, at Georgetown). It reveals that in the past three years, coverage of Islam, Muslims, and Islamic organizations has decreased notably. Islam is portrayed primarily as a source of violence. What does that mean quantitatively? On balance, three out of four reports painted a negative image of Muslims.

A major force in recent years is social media. Social media played an enormous role with Park 51, which wasn't a major issue while it was being planned for a year or two; it was approved in New York, but then people like Robert Spencer and Pam Gellar, who run a host of websites including "Jihad Watch" and "Islamization of America," mobilized media, and particularly social media, and what did we see? A tsunami wave of anti-mosque activities from New York to California: campaigns stopping mosque buildings, stopping expansions, hate crimes against mosques. And then, the sharia frenzy. So far attempts have been made in some twenty-nine states to pass anti-sharia laws to prevent its implement, when in fact it's impossible to do so under our Constitution.

But why do they attempt to pass such legislation? Because people like Newt Gringrich, Michelle Bachman, Rick Santorum, and others rush to judgment and foster irrational fears. In the last presidential debate, every republican candidate either at that debate, or in the two years before, had engaged in this kind of rhetoric of Islam and Muslim exceptionalism: domestic terrorism, the need to ban sharia law, and loyalty to America and thus questioning whether a Muslim could serve in the cabinet.

Over the past decade, what we have seen is an emergence of an organized "Islamophobia Network." It is a cottage industry that has been meticulously cultivated by anti-Muslim polemicists and their resourceful funders, who master the domain of the in-

ternet with dozens of highly visible blogs and websites supported by hundreds of user blogs they link. So it's not just things called "Jihad Watch," which then gets picked up and linked to things like "Pajama Media," "American Thinker," or "Family Security," which are not primarily concerned with Muslims but happen to be neo-conservative, anti-Obama, and anti-immigrant, and therefore also get into the Islam and Muslim issues. If you look at ALEXA, which rates websites globally, approximately two years ago, those websites ranked very high. Twenty-five thousand there is very high. Any anti-Islamophobia website ranked in the four hundred thousands. How could that happen? Obviously, you need both brains and funds. The 2011 study by the Center for American Progress found that during a ten-year period, 42.6 million dollars, I'll repeat that, 42.6 million dollars flowed from seven major foundations over ten years to these Islamophobic authors and websites – and that information is taken from IRS returns, so it's not a claim but a fact. A recent study by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, with information taken from IRS returns, showed that between 2008 and 2011, \$119,662,000 dollars total revenue were given to U.S.-based Islamophobia networks. Now why are they influential? Not only because of the reasons mentioned above. Read the Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik's manifesto and he cites many of these people and websites, some of them 112 times. I am proud to tell you that Breivik devotes a whole page attacking myself and the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding – quoting a writer from the other side on just how bad we are.

And short overview of the effects: More than four out of ten Americans admit that they have prejudice toward Muslims, some forty- three percent, and that's twice the feelings of prejudice, twice than that toward Christians and Jews. Thirty-three percent of Americans disclose that they believe that Muslim Americans are more sympathetic to terrorists. Sixty percent of those polled have negative feelings about Muslims.

Significant numbers, something like forty percent, believe in things like special IDs for Muslims. Not only are Muslims more prone to negative rankings, but Islam itself gets an even more negative ranking, which is kind of interesting because what they

are saying is Islam is the problem. But on the other hand, what do we know about these American Muslims? Who are they? They are totally integrated educationally, economically, and increasingly politically. We've got all the data out there from Pew from Gallup. Muslims, one of the most racially, politically, and economically diverse populations, come from sixty-eight countries. In terms of education in religious communities, they are second to American Jews in terms of education. So they are among the most educated. Forty percent have college degrees versus 29 percent of Americans over all. Muslim women are statistically as educated as Muslim men with college and post-graduate degrees. They span the socioeconomic spectrum: doctors, lawyers, you name it, all the way to cab drivers, NGO leaders, and so on. Thirty-one percent are full-time students, compared with ten percent in the general population. There is an incredible youth bulge; 59 percent of adult Muslims are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-nine. The number of senior people who are Muslim is so small that Gallup couldn't even do a significant study of them. Regarding religion, 77 percent of Muslims surveyed say they worship the same God as Christians and Jews. Eighty-four percent said Muslims should strongly emphasize shared values.

But, despite what real statistics tell us about the Muslim population in America, Islam and Muslims continue to be viewed through the lens of "the other," and both mass media and social media continue to be major players. And this is the important thing: I believe that social media is most important today. Social media frames popular culture. And indeed now the driver for TV and print is social media. If you can get social media generating a whole mess of stories, then they are worthy of being put on television. And that happens regularly.

How do we respond to all these? Let's look at it on a positive note. It's true that we continue to make strides in developing reliable scholarly coverage and media coverage. Looking at Muslim politics and societies and communities in the West, first of all, internet access to authoritative resources needs to be provided and this is occurring. You have Diana Eck's Pluralism Project, you have Karen Armstrong's Compassion Project, in terms of understanding religions including Islam, and you have

Oxford Islamic Studies Online. This website gives users access to major reference works, encyclopedias, dictionaries, artwork, Quranic materials, primary sources, and now interviews with major Muslim activists and players.

On another level, AAR members have shown an interest in the public understanding of religion, and many of them have reached out. The Academy itself got involved in the Tariq Ramadan visa situation. But secondly, there is clearly an expanding acceptance of and response to the concept of Islamophobia. And indeed, many projects dealing with Islamophobia have been developed, among them by The Center for American Progress, by our Center at Georgetown, and at the University of California, Berkeley.

But much more needs to be done. Media Tenor just came out with another study that basically says that Islamophobia is growing in America and Europe, and if you talk to Europeans, that's the case. You have major projects like "A Common Word," which brought together 138 religious leaders, and then another total of 400 signed on and basically said to Christians, "We are the two global religions. We need to work together because we share an interest both religiously and also in issues of the security of our populations. And what do we share in common? What Jews, Muslims, and Christians share in common: love of God, love of neighbor."

Historically the problem that most of those religious traditions have is answering the question, "Who is the neighbor?" And that needs to be readdressed today in terms of the question of pluralism. Our scholarship of religion, all religions, and we scholars have special responsibilities as scholars and as citizens, and that's why the public understanding of religion is not just something that happens out there. I remember when I first was asked to get involved in doing what we might call the public understanding of religion, I went to a reception here for one of the major universities and mentioned it to colleagues, and they all said "You can't touch that," because academics always felt they should have nothing to do with government. "That's not what we do," they said. As scholars, we provide data that's important in order for people to understand the context, and as ci-

tizens we should be out there applying that data too and raising issues related to real life situations. We're not the go-to place; we are still not there; the media does not immediately call the AAR as if we are the privileged place for information, even though we have that kind of bureau setup. We need to address that.

Thomas Jefferson said, "An educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people." AAR scholars have been moved to lend their expertise to speak out, to engage in the public square. As an organization, we took a position on Tariq Ramadan, but we need to move significantly beyond that and to ratchet up our concerns.

Scholars continue to be needed to speak out publically at conferences, at workshops run by domestic and international organizations, to speak to governments, NGOs, religious and civic organizations, to participate in media, to serve as expert witnesses. I'm not saying that everybody has to do this; many of us don't work in a field that is relevant. Many of us don't have the disposition, so we can contribute in terms of the kind of things that we chose to write, but we may not want to speak out because there is a cost. And one has to be aware of the fact that there's a cost. If you stick your head up, there will be those who want to shoot it off. I mean that's simply a reality, but we need to be out there, because if we are not speaking out, we leave it to those people who have no training, like Robert Spencer, who is a best-selling author. If you go to Amazon.com, depending on when you do it sometimes out of the top five books on Islam, four of them will be books written by people who need to be responded to, who are making claims that only we scholars can say is simply a distortion of reality; this is not true.

The White House under both Presidents George W. Bush and Obama has been told, and members of government have been told consistently, that eighty percent of our mosques are a threat. There is no hard data for it, but in Washington, they say if you throw it up on a wall three times, it sticks, and it does stick. So, we need to be out there, we need to be concerned and responding, because more recently the current example of the Arab Spring, Islamist victories in Egypt and Tunisia, and then in

Egypt a military coup and its overthrow of a democratically elected president raise many issues. Whatever side we want to take, we need to be bringing to bear whatever we believe are principles that we know about the role of religion, politics, civil liberties, attitudes toward torture, and so on. We are the ones needed to lead the way. With the words of Archbishop Tutu: “It is my conviction that if we are neutral in situations of injustice we have chosen the side of the oppressor. The world must learn about respect, listening, and forgiveness.”

6. Mandating Reports on Tolerance and Human Dignity by James D. Bindenagel

Grand Mufti Shawki Allam calls on Muslim religious leaders to renew appreciation of the tremendous intellectual diversity in Islamic thought as well as to recognize the development and dissemination of Islamic thought has suffered a troubled history as a consequence of global political developments. He notes the ‘ultimate defeat of violent extremists and terrorists cannot happen without revival and renewal, not only within Islam, but within the other major religious traditions of the world as they seek to be more faithful to their core teachings of peace and justice in a world suffering from the ills of materialism, militarism, poverty, and disease. This exchange of understanding Islam needs all of us to re-dedicate ourselves to creating a better world: in mosques, churches, synagogues, in politics, in schools, media, companies, sports and all walks of life. We will not reach this goal of understanding by excluding anyone.’

His call comes at a time when Henry Kissinger warns that the international order established after the Second World War is in crisis. The liberal international order has underpinned the modern era for generations and maintaining it will require a strategy that celebrates universal principles and recognizes the reality of other regions’ histories, cultures and views of their security.¹ “It is this international order that has underwritten unparalleled advances in human liberty and prosperity,” President Obama declared at the UN General Assembly in September 2015.

We need to work together in accordance with international norms, principles and law that offer legitimacy to our efforts to defeat the ideas that drive different communities in a country like Iraq into conflict.

¹ Kissinger, Henry, “The Assembly of A New Global Order”, The Wall Street Journal, August 30-31, 2014, p. C3.

The United Nations, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, ‘deplores and condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist acts of ISIL and its violent extremist ideology, and its continued gross, systematic and widespread abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law.’² Next, a United Nations action plan to prevent violent extremism is needed to defend the international order.

The United States, while recognizing military power is necessary in the fight against extremist terrorism, any order that militaries can impose will be temporary without international efforts and “a continued rejection by Muslims of those who distort Islam to preach intolerance and promote violence, and it must also a rejection by non-Muslims of the ignorance that equates Islam with terror.”³

The media has a special responsibility to ensure its own standards to follow the international community’s UN call to take “measures as may be necessary and appropriate and in accordance with their obligations under international law to counter incitement of terrorist acts motivated by extremism and intolerance perpetrated by individuals or entities associated with ISIL, ANF and Al-Qaida and to prevent the subversion of educational, cultural, and religious institutions by terrorists and their supporters...”

The academic community is well-placed to research, report and inform parliamentarians of progress on the principles of respect for human dignity, tolerance and reconciliation in accordance with the UN Charter and such a report, mandated by parliaments, could help lead to preventive politics of tolerance.

At the same time the Grand Mufti’s call is not to turn a blind eye on the need for international norms and law that still need to be

²Security Council Resolution 2170 (2014) Condemning Gross, Widespread Abuse of Human Rights by Extremist Groups in Iraq, Syria, SC/11520, 15 AUGUST 2014. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11520.doc.htm>

³ Obama, Barack, UN General Assembly Speech, September 28, 2015. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/28/remarks-president-obama-united-nations-general-assembly>

achieved in Egypt and within the Muslim countries, but in respect for this very fact, that somebody from his part of the world reminds us all of the need to abide by universal standards. Extremists need perpetual war to survive and gain adherents because of a poisonous ideology and Albert Einstein reminds us that 'Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.' The international community should endorse and embrace Grand Mufti Al-lam's call.

7 Response and Support for Call of Grand Mufti Allam by Alon Goshen-Gottstein

Grand Mufti Allam is practicing his responsibility as a world religious leader in taking a stance on one of the world's most burning issues, one that touches his own religion as well as all world religions. AT the heart of the Grand Mufti's appeal is the recognition of a crisis of authority, which is itself a function of a more fundamental crisis – a crisis of knowledge. As he suggests in the case of Islam, there has been a loss of some fundamental critical thinking, historically founded, that has led to a distortion of Islam. As Grand Mufti puts it, it is the challenge of religious leaders to speak out not simply in apologetic terms but to engage in constructive theological, legal and historical work in order to establish what they consider the true nature of their religions, such that will support global peace, justice and a harmonious society.

The novelty of Grand Mufti Allam's calling is that it is not an answer to a question posed. Rather, it poses a call to which others must respond. That call is addressed to religious leaders, and principally to Muslim religious leaders. If Grand Mufti's words are to have any credibility and if the word is to believe that what we see presented in the media, in forms of religious violence manifesting globally, is not true Islam but a perversion of it, there must be a strong gathering of Muslim voices who have authority and who are able to resound a clear message of what they consider to be true Islam. Thus, gathering of religious leaders and providing them with a common voice is crucial for the credibility of this important call.

It is significant that Grand Mufti Allam's words are addressed to religious leaders of all religions, not only to Muslim leaders. In this capacity, I would like to respond on behalf of the Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders, that brings together some of the world's foremost religious leaders, of all faith traditions. The Elijah Board of World Religious Leaders is committed to the ideals expressed in Grand Mufti Allam's statement. We would therefore like to identify concrete ways in which we might be able to collaborate with this call and to help deliver a global message wherein religion is a solution to the problem, rather than the cause of problems globally.

Specifically, on behalf of the dozen or so Muslim world religious leaders who are members of this body, and who represent diverse forms of Islam, globally, we wish to join an initiative that would gather Muslim leaders worldwide in creating a body that can speak for what for lack of better term might be called “moderate Islam”. The world needs a body of peace-seeking, moderate, dialogical, learned and recognized Muslim religious leaders to which it can turn as it seeks to make sense of Islam and to identify its true, or higher, manifestations from the violent manifestations that are regularly encountered in the news. Only with the establishment of such a body will there be a common voice to respond, condemn, guide, direct and point to a better future for the Muslim world and for the global community at large.

We welcome Grand Mufti Allam’s statement and are eager to help move forward in concrete initiatives to make this voice a broader representative reality for the sake of Islam and the whole world.

Let this be a moment of a blessed beginning!

8. It is All About Dignity and Respect! **by Jovan Kurbalija**

Dignity and respect are two echoing messages in the call of Grand Mufti Dr. Shawki Allam. Dignity and respect are the core of our humanity; they are the basis of trust, and an essential step towards a more peaceful world.

It is not surprising that terrorism targets dignity. The brutal beheading of a hostage in front of a camera aims to violate the dignity of the victim, and of humanity as a whole. If we can build dignity and respect, in particular towards the Muslim world, it will bring us a step closer to a world without terrorism.

I come from the Balkans, where respect for others (and the lack of it) has repeatedly represented the narrow line between peace and war, between prosperity and misery. In my lifetime, I experienced this turn from respect to disrespect. In a matter of a few years, during the 1990s, a country where people respected each other, and which was respected by others, turned into a place of unthinkable atrocities.

We lost the respect of others, and for others. Our dignity was shaken. We experienced this not through harsh words or drastic actions, but during our day-to-day interactions: the cold reception of a consular officer while we were waiting for a visa; the subtle distancing of others, during chance encounters.

After the traumatic experience of the 1990s, the physical infrastructure of the country was re-built quickly, but regaining dignity and self-respect has taken much longer. In this process, it was important to find anchors in our shared history, such as Nikola Tesla, the founder of our electricity-driven era.

Today, the struggle for a more peaceful world coincides with the struggle to ensure respect for the dignity of the Muslim world. It will be a long journey. One anchoring point might be the great Arab thinker Ibn Khaldun. He wrote the *Muqaddimah*, one of the first

texts on sociology, long before the discipline was established by European thinkers such as Durkheim and Weber.

Ibn Khaldun lived in the 14th century, during the last phase of the great cohabitation of Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Andalusia. Ibn Khaldun was a diplomat who enjoyed widespread respect, even among his opponents. The Christian monarch, Pedro, even asked Ibn Khaldun to be his advisor. Ibn Khaldun's impressive life and works, symbolising his great appreciation of dignity and respect for others, inspired me to suggest two activities in response to Grand Mufti Allam's call.

First, I propose the 'Ibn Khaldun Dignity Award', to recognise acts which respect the dignity of others. Nominations would be open to all people in the world.

Second, I suggest an 'Ibn Khaldun Dignity Scholarship', awarded to young researchers who study dignity and respect.

While the journey towards restoring dignity and respect will be long, the first steps must be taken now. I look forward very much to the forthcoming Geneva Lecture. Both the Grand Mufti and Michael Moller will share the feedback they received not only in Davos, but also in European countries both large and small, afterwards. The journey is not only about good words, but about walking the talk and keeping the spirit of listening and implementing.

**9. Protection of Religious and Ethnic Minorities
Must be a Priority
by Prince Michael of Liechtenstein**

In every human community, but especially states, the respect and protection of minorities was always important. In most instances we talk about either ethnic or religious minorities.

Minorities either live in clear areas or can be mixed with other groups, the latter being frequently the case with religious minorities.

We see two kinds of problems, either prosecution or discrimination. Both are frequently overlapping and unfortunately we see a large number - and even worse – an increasing number of such incidences.

The history of the last 200 years, promoted by the system of national states becoming totalitarian, has also seen prosecutions of even religious majorities by the state, such as Christians during the French Revolution and the Communists in Russia and its dependant states. German Nazis not only tried to exterminate Jews and to enslave other ethnics but in Germany prosecuted and discriminated also Christians, especially Catholics.

The widespread oppression of religion, whether discrimination or prosecution, is today unfortunately widely neglected. It happens all over the globe and for instance Christians are discriminated if not prosecuted in China, North Korea but also in a number of other countries. Christian minorities are in danger to disappear in the Middle East. But this happens also to other denominations, although Christianity is the most oppressed religion in the world, by number of believers being prosecuted or discriminated.

A problem is certainly that Europe, proud to be laicistic, is not ready anymore to protect its Christian brothers and sisters in the world and with this neglect also closes its eyes to prosecution and discrimination of other religions.

It needed the atrocities by Daesh to Christians, Yesidis and other Muslims to open eyes. Unfortunately, public perception sees Daesh as a religious movement and do not realise that in the case of Daesh Islam is misused for the purposes to create an authoritarian state. It is proven that most of the “fighters” joining Daesh have little ideas about Islam, but are rather fascinated by the dark sides of violence.

Generally, it can be seen that so called religious wars or conflicts are normally fought for reasons of power, the religion being misused as a pretext. It can however motivate a majority to justify the oppression of a minority.

Discrimination of ethnic minorities is unfortunately also common in the world. Not even Europe is an exception. Prosecution can still be seen in a number of countries, especially in Africa. The artificial states after decolonization offer all possibilities. Cases from Western Africa through Central Africa, Congo, Burundi to Zimbabwe are well known. But we also see Chechens and Kurds being prosecuted to name just some.

In the Western Balkan we see discriminations between Serbs and Albanians. These are just a few of unfortunately many examples.

The essential principle of self determination of people, the only guarantor of sustainable internal coherence is either ignored or fought by the national states, even by European democracies.

The United Nations was so far not successful in limiting discrimination and prosecution of religious and ethnic minorities. The UN is at unease handling the right of self determination inside existing member states. Democracy, if purely seen as the rule of the majority, is not a solution, but can even be counterproductive. Centralised democracies have frequently problems with rights of selfdetermination of ethnic or regional minorities.

Religious Leaders have here to play a big role. Religious Leaders, independent whether Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hinduist etc. can have authority and influence.

Pope Benedict XVI. started during World War I the only valid and just peace initiative, which unfortunately was with the exception of Austria widely ignored by the warring powers. Its acception would have spared the world a lot of sorrow. Meetings such as repeatedly organised by John Paul II. of leaders of different religions in Assisi helped easing tensions and promoted understanding of peace. There are a lot more examples of similar and also succesful religious initiatives. Religious leaders can calm conflicts fought under religious context but are also ideal mediators in cases of ethnic conflicts, prosecution and discrimination. They are not selfinterested but act by their responsibility to God.

Therefore, the initiatives of Shawki Ibrahim Abdel-Karim Allam, Grand Mufti of Egypt condemning violence in the name of Islam and promoting freedom of religions is that important. His courageous personality and wise explanation of the essence of the teachings of Islam is a valuable contribution to peace and protection of minorities.

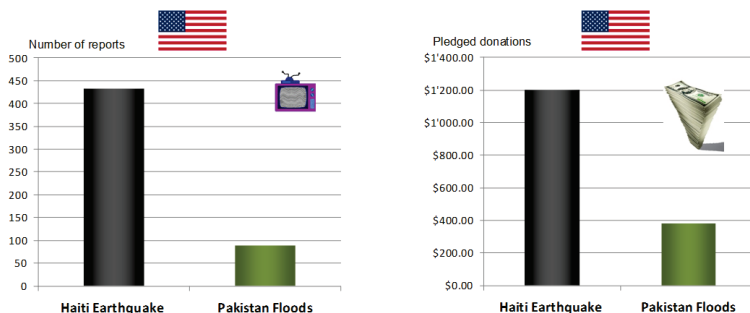
10. The Changing Role of the Media in Covering Terrorism: Are Reporters Only Observers or More? by Roland Schatz

Of all the challenges that journalists face reporting on violence, terror attacks, and military conflicts represent the greatest challenge. In the face of extreme emotional tension, a neutral position is as difficult to maintain as meeting the fundamental journalistic standard *audiat et altera pars*.

Last year the number of terror attacks, of mass killings in the U.S., of kidnappings, and of attacks on refugee homes across all continents were increasing such that by December 2015 we all had the sense that the threat to almost everyone on every continent had reached a level which could no longer be ignored, as had been done for too long. The increase in violence left us with more question marks than answers. Do we really understand what is going on and what is causing these trends?

The media is often not only able to provide information on disasters through prompt and comprehensive reporting, but also motivate audiences to act. The intensity of the images on the Haitian earthquake at the beginning of 2010 was strong enough for everyone in America to perceive the suffering of the people, leading many to ask themselves what they could do to alleviate some of that suffering. Donation willingness correlated strongly with the volume of reporting.

Impact of reporting volume on pledged donations, U.S. TV 2010

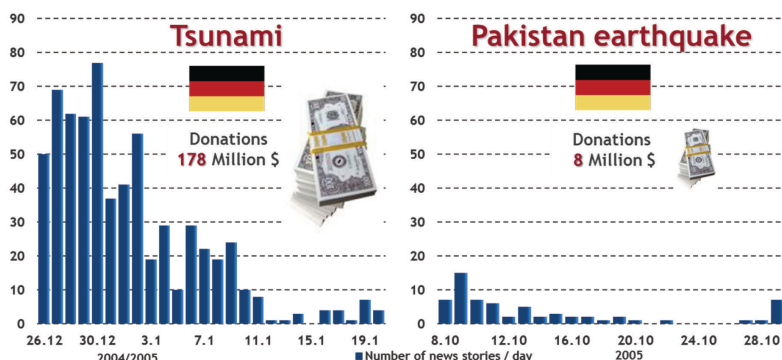


Basis: 432 reports on Haiti, 2010 / 88 reports on Pakistan Aug. 2010, donation figures reliefweb.int

In contrast, less coverage of violence, such as the killings in Mexico or human suffering in other regions of the world, triggers fewer donations from the same audience. The victims in Haiti were reported on approximately six times as much by ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC, while the intensity of reporting by the same TV news bulletins on those suffering in locations perceived to be farther away Pakistan was markedly less. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon had to appear before the world press with increased frequency in order to inform them of the suffering there. Donations by private individuals were less and corresponded with the reduced media coverage.

The graph below shows that this is not just an American phenomenon. In 2005, several Germans were amongst the victims of the Boxing Day tsunami, and the reporting on the catastrophe was also likened to a media tsunami. No one could escape the images - first, not the TV journalists, but then also not the general public at home. This triggered a wave of willingness to help. As a direct consequence, 80 million Germans alone donated USD 178 million for the victims. But when in autumn of the same year an earthquake in Pakistan took the lives of large numbers of people and robbed them of their basic livelihoods, it was difficult to persuade journalists to report on this suffering.

Volume of coverage and donations in Germany, 2005



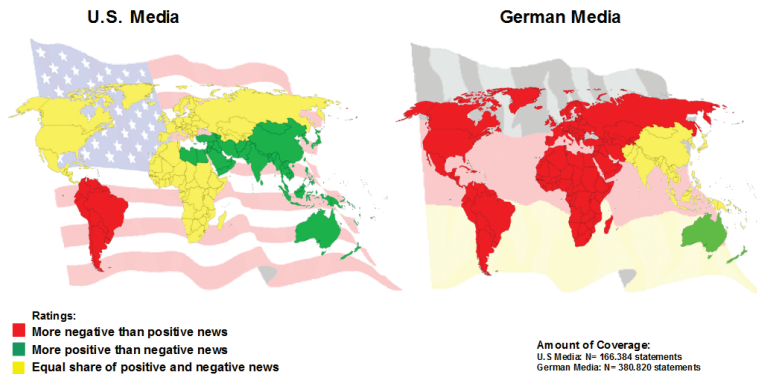
Basis: Stories in ARD, ZDF, RTL, SAT.1 and ProSieben

Kofi Annan had to give press conference after press conference mentioning the expected death toll in the upcoming winter before even the odd TV newscast reported on the calamity. Due to the low level of reporting, the suffering in Pakistan remained below the perception threshold of Germans and, as a result, a large amount of private donations could not be expected. Only 1 percent of the total donated by the Germans at the beginning of the year for unknown strangers in Asia (USD 178 million) could be collected 10 months later for those suffering in Pakistan (USD 8 million).

Thus, by deciding whether or not to report on a particular topic, journalists are on occasion not only non-participating observers, but also direct contributors to a situation where conflicts and suffering are not only perceived, but where these reports trigger actions.

It must be noted that not all media are the same, but follow cultural identities. For example, if a completely unemotional topic is selected, such as the way American journalists portray the economic world, this is fundamentally different to the reporting style of their German colleagues. In the period between January 1, 2001 and September 30, 2003, the editors of *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *ABC*, *CBS*, and *NBC* had equal access to the same balance sheets, quarterly figures, and ad hoc announcements as their colleagues at *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Spiegel*, *Focus*, and the TV newscasts of *ARD* and *ZDF*. Nevertheless, they reported on business activities around the globe to their audiences in America and in Germany in diametrically opposed ways. While the media in America, in the context of entrepreneurial activities, reported solely on the risks in South America (red) based on strikes and currency issues and presented the rest of the world as neutral for business activities (yellow) or even attractive (green), the German media, on the basis of the same companies' annual reports, quarterly figures, and ad hoc announcements, presented business activities as primarily risky for the same period. Financial performance appears to be promising only in Australia and New Zealand; the rest of the world, including their home country, is presented as risky.

Tone of coverage of international business in U.S. and German media, 2001-2003



If, for a unemotional, numbers-driven topic like finance, the media are able to arrive at such completely different assessments depending on the cultural context in which they select their news, how much more of a role could these factors play when the reporting subject matter is no longer business figures but conflicts or even war?

Conflict and war are topics where access to responsible parties at all levels is limited - not only on the ground in conflict regions - but also in the respective capital cities of the warring parties. In particular, this can happen when democracies participate in hostilities and still have to project to the outside world that day-to-day parliamentary activities with their journalistic basic principles are not affected by this particular situation.

Although everyone knows that terror and war must be different than public sector negotiations on health care reform or collective bargaining disputes, the images portrayed through press conferences, supposedly open Q&A sessions, and interviews with governors all suggest a normality which cannot do justice to the special circumstance of terror or war. This creates a paradoxical impression in homes, which, at the end of the day, calls into question the credibility of the media. Subconsciously, it is clear to everyone that the usual journalistic standards cannot be applied here. However, the images give exactly this impression with the usual interview positions, charts, and supposed expert discussions. The public must

therefore assume that the same performance is delivered on news programs as in articles published before and after, only to find out afterwards that the journalists could have had no access to the subject matter on which they supposedly reported. This dilemma is reflected in the annually dropping percentages of the global population that still trusts editors. Gallup surveys indicate a new low in 2015.

And this, despite that since the first Iraq war most media make every effort to, time and again, inform their public that all the protagonists must, especially in conflicts, have an extremely personal interest to not make information available to the public and thereby the other side. Journalists on all continents are therefore aware that, in the event of war, they must take particular care in checking their sources when presenting supposed facts and in selecting images, documents, interview partners, etc.

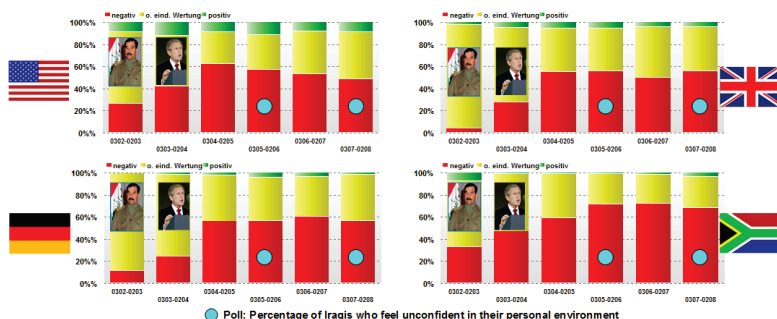
Research on media impact, on the basis of the second Iraq war, showed that above all the public follows the views which are transmitted to them every evening, in particular TV news broadcasts, when forming their judgements. The detailed analysis prepared on behalf of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of American, German, British, South African, and Czech main news broadcasts concluded that in 2003 the population held the opinions which they were exposed to in their national newscasts regarding the events in Iraq. This meant that the war in Iraq was presented completely differently in Germany by ARD and ZDF than in America on ABC, CBS or NBC or in the U.K. on BBC and ITV. In principle, the image, text, and expert selection during the war followed the relevant editorial policy which had already been espoused by the respective TV stations before the war.

In the U.S. or U.K., Saddam Hussein's renewed violation of the U.N. resolution was presented on the evening news in a manner that portrayed all diplomatic means having been exhausted, but in Germany the matter was portrayed somewhat differently. Renewed talks with Saddam Hussein would ensure that he would keep the promises made to the U.N. and military action was not necessary. When war then broke out, experts were called into TV studios in the U.S. and the U.K. to comment on the selected images giving the impression that Saddam Hussein's troops would be beaten in a

few weeks. In contrast, on German TV generals commented on the images selected by the Germans stating that the military conflicts would last several months at least, and that a second Vietnam could be expected, as the U.S. troops were not used to fighting in the heat. When, contrary to expert opinion on German TV, Baghdad fell after just three weeks, no apologies were made to the public. Reporting in the following months and years focused on every resistance against the allied troops, as a confirmation, as it were, that, on hindsight, the reporting had been correct after all.

Selective reporting on the elections in Iraq was, particularly by German TV newscasts, clearly presented as not possible initially and then, on election day, as a meaningless event. Surveys from Iraq, carried out annually since 2004, have always just shown one result: The clear majority of Iraqis are satisfied and grateful to no longer live under a dictatorship. These surveys were shown on German TV as seldomly as the images of the construction of schools, the infrastructure already destroyed in the Iraq-Iran war, or the prospering economy.

Coverage of the situation in Iraq in international TV news, 3/2002-2/2008



Basis: 3,705 stories on Iraq in 2 U.K. media, 3,336 stories in 5 ZA media, 11,342 stories in 7 German media, 15,132 stories in 3 U.S. media, poll: ARD Tagesthemen

The reason for the lack of images of these facts cannot rest with scarce editorial space, because as soon as a bomb exploded anywhere in Iraq it was immediately worthy of a report, whereas bombs killing people in Africa, Asia, or South America were re-

ported on less frequently. Who knows that, in 2015 alone, more people were murdered by the drug mafia in Mexico than civilians in Iraq since 2004?

The key question of media impact research in relation to reporting on terror and wars is therefore this: From which point of view are the events presented? Is the focus of the presentation on one party or are all participants given more or less the same amount of time? How do presenters/correspondents handle the victim/offender perspective on the ground? Which “independent” voices are presented?

In the Iraq war under George W. Bush, Tony Blair and other participating nations, broadcasters such as the BBC had a double challenge to master. They had to meet the requirements of their own journalistic principles and, at the same time, provide information during the war to their own nations about their own troops. This is different from the task of a broadcaster whose country is more neutral - to the extent that this is possible in conflicts with U.N. participation.

People form their judgements about processes beyond their personal experiences primarily on the basis of information gained from the media. TV newscasts have a special function here as they have a form of credibility through the combination of words and images which is generally derived from the consistency between words and images. Whether the presented images and text on the matter are correct – or whether important components are missing – cannot be checked by the average news consumer during the newscast. Few read the daily newspaper the following day to find out whether the events seen yesterday were, in fact, presented correctly. And even then, for many the feeling that they saw it with their own eyes takes precedence...

For this reason, TV news has a special responsibility in the selection of its images and texts. The sequence leads the viewer. Therefore, when reporting on the Lebanon War in 2006, the question was raised as to what would argue against alternating the reporting of a lead story. The victims in Lebanon would sometimes be shown first, and sometimes the newscast would start with the victims in Israel. In particular, in the week beginning July 31, 2006, the U.N.

confirmed that Hezbollah was at times was firing more than 160 missiles at Israel per day. In the main news broadcasts by ARD and ZDF, however, this information was not used as the lead story. If it was mentioned at all, it was mentioned as supposed proof that the actions of the Israeli army were meaningless because, despite the use of troops in Lebanon, just as many missiles could still be fired.

For conflicts in the Middle East, a greater variety in the institutions reported on would also do justice to the events. The U.N. is not only an institution which can be used to pass resolutions – such as by France on August 3, 2006 – but the U.N. is also an institution which is responsible for the execution of the resolved measures. TV viewers have the right to know why these are not successful. Similar to Iraq, the TV audiences of most newscasts were not provided with this information to the extent needed to make independent judgements possible.

If the actions of the Israeli army were allocated a certain amount of time on the news this should have been in relation to the actions of Hezbollah's army. But an imbalance of 5:1 against the Israeli army resulted, at least on German television and in the Federal Republic the majority of those surveyed classed Israel as the major aggressor.

In the Iraq war, the introductory sentence was important for presenters of many TV news broadcasts in the sense of that each of the parties involved had their own interest in the provision of information. An introductory sentence to this effect could have possibly served to lend objective perspective to the subsequent visuals if some journalistic standards were also upheld.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Provide the context | • Show changing perspectives |
| • Same time for both sides | • Show both armies |
| • Show the balance in cease-fires | • The same time for all victims |
| • Present individual actions as such | • U.N. state of the respective resolutions |
| • Correct false reports | • Where is there democratic control? |
| • Point out the problem of receiving correct information during wartime on a daily basis | • Integrate judgements |

As another open war broke out between Israel and Palestine in 2008 from the ongoing skirmishes, Andre Marty, a longstanding and highly experienced correspondent for *Schweizer Fernsehen* (the Swiss broadcaster) in the region, summarised his experiences and challenges as a local correspondent in an article for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* on January 13, 2009 in the following 13 points:

1. We are excluded from the actual battle.
2. Independent reporting is impossible.
3. AP mixes up HAMAS with Hezbollah – the speed and the pressure take their toll.
4. What concrete facts do we journalists know from the front line about military actions, number of victims, diplomatic activities? Not many.
5. There is a jealous relationship between the correspondents “out in the field” and the editors “at home.” Those in their warm armchairs have their special problems, that’s what we in the field say. The people outside are difficult, comes the response.
6. The newsroom wants to see soldiers: Get uniforms. But even Israeli TV does not come anywhere near to their troops.
7. Even more silly, if a Qassam missile hits nearby just when the journalists want to talk about civilian victims with his boss in Germany.
8. We are exposed to a propaganda concert. It’s astonishing how many spokespersons are created by the war, just give them a microphone. The Army, the Foreign Department, the Government Press Office, lobby organizations like The Israel Project, civilians, religious organizations.
9. You can have them in German, Russian, Spanish, English or French, but almost none of the journalists speaks Hebrew.
10. From HAMAS you get sometimes some tapes with pure propaganda statements. Interviews are only possible in Beirut.
11. And so in the end you realize again that 1:40 is not sufficient to put things into context. One minute, forty seconds, to speak about death, politics, and failure – be fluid, neutral, and balanced.

12. You are amazed, how many journalists seem gladdened by death.
13. My cameraman insists on listening to the CD of Spiel mir das Lied vom Tod – the main theme of “Once upon a time in the West”.

Whoever believes that people in extreme situations act normally is obviously in the happy position of never having personally been exposed to such experiences. All the books written about all wars have, at the end of the day, one result. The inhuman suffering caused by people like you and me affects everyone. This applies not only to soldiers and countless victims, it also certainly applies to doctors in hospitals, the clergy, the representatives of various NGOs, and, last but not least, to journalists, cameramen, and photographers.

Reporting on women who have been just been raped, as happened most recently during the New Year’s celebrations in Cologne, is somewhat fundamentally different to a press breakfast at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Whoever has to record images of burnt out children’s bedrooms reacts differently than the person doing the usual photo shoot ahead of the Miss America competition. Anyone who has to hold a microphone for a 12-year-old who has just lost his parents and younger sister due to a bombing, does something different to the colleague who records an interview with a Goldman Sachs manager. Everyone is actually aware of this. But on TV newscasts these stories are lined up one after the other and are effectively comparable due to the professionalism of the images.

The German sociologist Niklas Luhmann in his analysis *The Reality of the Mass Media* touched a sore spot when he pointed out that each individual report on the TV news actually only has to fulfil a certain function. The politics segment has to give Democrats the feeling that they are fulfilling the work they were mandated to do (although two to three reports per news programme, out of necessity, are only able to give an appearance thereof); sport coverage fulfils the need for entertainment; and the weather report prepares us for tomorrow. But what is the function of reports which, from one second to the next, bring blood and violence into our home for 90 seconds before the broadcast switches to a newly elected wine queen? If the point isn’t just exposure to daily horror, but infor-

mation and maybe even a basis for action, such as the examples of reporting on the suffering in Haiti or on the aftermath of the tsunami in 2005 mentioned earlier, then wouldn't the experiences that Andre Marty describes regarding war reporting in the Middle East, at some time, have to lead to consequences in editorial offices?

With the Annual Dialog Report 2016, we move to the next level. Grand Mufti Shawki Allam's initiative is aiming for a better understanding regarding the motives for extremism and for a clear call to accept principles, standards, and laws. Not in the sense of cheap obedience in order to maintain injustice for the sake of the ruling party. But in the full comprehension of Immanuel Kant's sensitivity, who 300 years ago tried to alert his friends to take into account change and that the weakest of the weak in each society need to be considered before calling for any revolution. As he witnessed the high price paid by the innocent during the Revolution in Ireland he came to the conclusion that reforms are best in 99 of 100 cases, the ultimate ratio. This says a lot about the inspiring master of civil disobedience.

It is of key importance that Martin Chungong, the Secretary General of the International Parliamentary Union picked up on the initiative of the Egyptian Grand Mufti by offering the idea to all his member parliaments and asking for something like an annual tolerance report. Having members of parliament briefed once a year on the current status and how their society is dealing with racial, religious, and other minorities, Prof. J. D. Bindenagel, the Henry Kissinger Professor on International Conflicts underlined the capacity of academia in today's world to provide parliaments with reports of this kind.

But the question remains: What contribution can be delivered explicitly by the media? After last year's terror attack on the editorial team of Charlie Hebdo in Paris we immediately published our Annual Dialog Report 2015, providing again data driven background on how public sentiment towards religions is stimulated, if not driven by, the way people in each country are framed by their national media and how they select facts and interviews to run. The preface one year ago was headlined, "After Paris is before Paris," not because I wanted to be cynical, but because after 22 years of ongoing media analysis I've started to understand the power of ste-

reotyped driven news selection. Therefor it was logical to invite the Grand Mufti after the second terror attack in Paris to come up with an initiative in the spirit of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. They are developing their power by no longer seeing the UN in charge of making sure them reality by 2030, but by making sure all member states understand that the success is the responsibility of each individual country, their ruling party as well as their opposition, and their representatives of religious, media, corporates, and educational entities. Grand Mufti Shawki Allam very much highlights the fact that he himself and his colleagues around the world need to walk the talk. He further underlines that Islam will only regain trust, if all countries around the world headed by Muslim governments lead by example and proof that the Koran is about tolerance and loving minorities, something which can be seen in countries such as Jordan, Morocco, and Oman – only to name few. At the same time, we are all aware how difficult it is in light of the war in Syria and the conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia, to come up with a request like the one from the Grand Mufti.

Therefore, I think the time is ripe for all media to understand this simple principle. That by already by watching a subject, this subject is changing. So imagine, how much a subject is changing if it is not only watched, but put in the limelight? In Europe it has become standard to no longer mention if somebody committed suicide yesterday by throwing himself in front of the local train as it caused many copy-cat attempts from other depressed individuals who took reading about it sort of as a stimulus to do the same. Since this research was shared with responsible editors it became a new standard to no longer use the term committed suicide and media now express it differently. Another basic standard is to not mention the full name of someone taking to court until he or she is proven guilty.

What if editors-in-chief all around the world agreed to no longer publish the pictures and biographies of those who commit suicide terror attacks? All the research on converts who turn in to extremists show how much they desire at least once in their life to receive public awareness. The highest version of public awareness for them is having their face printed or even shown on the evening news. Back in the '90s, Media Tenor did research trying to under-

stand why the amount of right-wing crime tripled during summer months to then fall back to more typical numbers of approximately 290 crimes per month committed in Germany. These vast majority of these crimes were attacks of Jewish cemeteries. Looking into the Media Tenor database, a shocking coincidence was made plain. These misled right-wing criminals saw that on one day in June that one of them was shown on prime time news because he had put Nazi symbols on Jewish gravestones and was caught by the police. The pure fact that TV journalists showed his face stimulated others to try to reach the same goal, so crimes went up in June to 900. This caused a reaction in a lot of newsrooms – “We have a story; let’s continue reporting.” Consequently, the high number of right-wing crimes committed stayed on the unusual amount of 900, which triggered more reports. But in September, journalists no longer covered the crime – although it continued to take place – because the government, MPs, and business leaders came back from their holidays and offered enough other material to report on. So, with no more reports showing the faces of the right-wing criminals, the amount of right-wing crime went back to the normal number of 290. Prof. Pfeifer from the Institute for Crime at the university in Hannover and Media Tenor were not loved by the media for creating transparency about these effects caused by media. But the research helped to show that journalism can cause effects in two directions: Stimulating people to donate large amounts of money triggered by the fact that people in need become visible due to media coverage, but also the other side of the coin. People can feel as well a negative trigger-effect if criminals like terrorists or mass murderers get their faces printed in newspapers or shown on TV. I am not asking the media to ignore crime, all I suggest is that we can show the pictures of victims, but never, ever in the future the picture of a terrorist or serial killer.

After the horrible killing of innocents in Norway, journalists managed to avoid printing his photograph. Up to the day until he was in front of the court. Then some printed his face and put him on the front page. What was the reaction of the people in Norway? They went to the newsstands, turned those newspapers upside down.

This year’s Annual Dialog Report is a first attempt at coming up with concrete proposals for religious leaders, politicians, and journalists to enable as many as possible to form their own judgement

as to who makes what contribution to the participants in conflicts, terror, or even war. These enable the people on the ground and beyond their respective bunkers, walls, and borders to form a picture as to what happens (or doesn't happen) where. In order to start the dialogue, first impressions and experiences of journalists, scientists, and practitioners wrestling with peace processes after terror attacks were also obtained, in addition to the initiative started by Grand Mufti Shawki Allam and all the data presented here.

11. Can We Measure Faith?**The Religion Monitor, a Bertelsmann Stiftung Project
by Martin Rieger and Ferdinand Mirbach**

Emotions tend to run high when the topic turns to religion. Few issues in society so predictably set tempers aflame. Indeed, the events of recent weeks have again made clear just how divisive religious sensibilities can be. Plans to build an Islamic cultural center and mosque near ground zero in New York unleashed an often vitriolic debate, in which some portrayed the proposal as unalloyed provocation, while others saw it as a much-needed attempt to dissociate Islam from terrorism. Though canceled at the last minute, plans in Florida to publicly burn copies of the Quran raised fears of violent reprisals throughout the Muslim world. And during the first days of the Pope's visit to England and Scotland, irreconcilable differences divided his loyal followers from skeptical atheists. Each of these events displays the polarization in today's environment. Whereas some denounce religion as evil or as no longer relevant in today's high-tech society, experts such as Hans Joas instead see a "renaissance of religion" underway, in which belief in God is (and will continue to be) a key factor in many lives.

What is actually happening? Is religion growing increasingly relevant or is it fading? Just how relevant is religion for us as individuals or as a society? Do people still believe in God, or do they believe in some form of life after death? Is contemporary religiosity comprised of clear belief structures or has it been replaced by diffuse spiritual paradigms? Do deep-rooted religious beliefs lead to divisive acts and hatred, or do they in fact facilitate greater tolerance toward those of other faiths? And can these beliefs serve as a foundation for dialogue between adherents of different creeds?

These are just a few of the questions addressed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in the Religion Monitor, a broad academic study of religiosity and spirituality. The 2007 study was based on a representative survey of more than 21,000 people around the world, which yielded an enormous body of data that provide considerable insight into the religious practices and beliefs of people of diverse backgrounds. In what follows, we discuss the context in which the Re-

ligion Monitor emerged and the methodology behind the project. In addition, we draw on the Religion Monitor's findings to shed a modicum of light on the questions posed above, citing several of the project's case studies as examples.

Measuring faith – the Religion Monitor

The Religion Monitor is grounded in an interdisciplinary body of knowledge that includes sociology, theology, religious studies and psychology. As an instrument designed to measure religiosity in a variety of contexts, with the help of a 100-item questionnaire, the Religion Monitor is based on a definition of religion that considers the experience of transcendence to be a key feature. In 2007, the Religion Monitor conducted a survey incorporating aspects of all major world religions in 21 countries around the world. One year later, we conducted a survey of Muslims in Germany, asking them about their religiosity in exploratory interviews.¹ Conscious of the heterogeneity of religious attitudes and practices around the world, the Religion Monitor draws both on theistic and pantheistic spiritual paradigms in order to capture expressions of the broadest possible spectrum of religious faith and experience. In other words, we had to cast a wide net in order to compare widely varying forms of religion – and personal religiosity of both an institutionalized and patchwork nature – in a thorough manner.

The Religion Monitor is unique as a tool in assessing religiosity in that its analytical framework extends well beyond the self-assessment of those surveyed. Indeed, its survey questions target issues outside respondents' religious self-understanding, which is likely to be shaped by cultural contexts and personal experiences. In many societies, for example, declaring oneself to be religious is expected as a matter of propriety. In other societies, seeing oneself as religious is understood to imply active church attendance or ties to an institutionalized form of religion. Thus, respondents often affirm or deny their own religiosity in terms of local social codes. They situate questions or conceptions of religiosity within a

¹ See Religion Monitor 2008 – Muslim Religiousness in Germany, Bertelsmann Stiftung

framework that is based on local – and not necessarily well-informed – conceptions of religious diversity.

The Religion Monitor aims to combat stereotypes and cultivate greater understanding by providing the tools for a closer look at religiosity. It does so by outlining not only the subjective features of religious self-understanding but also those aspects of religious views and praxis that can be identified in objective terms. The Religion Monitor can address both of these facets of religiosity due to its focus on exogenous factors, such as public religious praxis, alongside endogenous factors such as personal attitudes toward religious practices or personal religious experiences.

Organizational chart for the Religion Monitor

Sociology theology psychology		General intensity	Specific topics
Core dimensions	Intellect	Interest in religious topics	Religious reflexivity; religious search; meaning; theodicy; spiritual and religious books
	Ideology (belief)	Belief in God or something divine Belief in life after death	Notion of God; world views; religious pluralism; religious fundamentalism; other religious ideas
	Public practice	Church service; congregational prayer; attending temple	Interreligious practice
	Private practice	Prayer – Meditation	Prescribed prayer; house altar
	Experience	Personal experience; Experience of being at one	Religious feelings
	Consequences	General relevance of religion to everyday life	Relevance of religion to various aspects of life (e.g. family, politics); religious commandments
Centrality		Non-religious Religious Highly religious	Religious and spiritual self-perception

| BertelsmannStiftung

The Religion Monitor distinguishes between the concrete expressions of religiosity on the one hand, and the intensity of religious attitudes and praxis on the other. Its catalogue of questions targets diverse religious practices by drawing upon six core dimensions of religiosity as defined in the field of the sociology of religion (see Charles Glock 1962). Questions pertaining to the “intellectual” di-

mension address issues regarding one's spiritual quest, the extent to which one reflects on his or her beliefs, and one's interest in scripture. The "ideological" dimension of the Religion Monitor explores beliefs in God and life after death. Grounded in principles of religious pluralism, the Religion Monitor captures a broad spectrum of worldviews and concepts of God. A third dimension of "public practice" explores manifestations of religious affiliation through questions on issues such as the importance attributed to worship services. The meaning of prayer and meditation is addressed by the dimension of "private practice." Because religiosity is experienced in ways that are not limited to the cognitive, the questions based on the core dimension of religious "experience" focus on how people experience religion emotionally. Finally, the core dimension of "consequences" explores the overall relevance of religion in 11 areas of everyday life. These six core dimensions are expressed in all religious cultures around the world. They therefore provide a solid foundation for the Religion Monitor as a tool for analyzing representative data on religiosity across different cultural and religious contexts. However, these six dimensions can play a widely varying role in individual lives. For example, individuals who regularly attend church or a mosque do not necessarily engage in equally intensive private rituals, while those with an active but private spiritual life may avoid expressing this in public settings. In fact, there are no interdependencies among the core dimensions within any given individual. In order to maintain a sufficiently complex understanding of religiosity, it is important to consider – at least initially – the intensity of each dimension separately.

In a second step, the project seeks to distinguish between the actual presence of religiosity within an individual and the consequences this presence may have in an individual's everyday life. The intensity of five of these dimensions (i.e., ideology, intellect, private practice, public practice and experience) is expressed in an individual's attitudes toward religion, or the structure of their personality. By contrast, the responses to questions related to the sixth core dimension, consequences for everyday life, point to the social relevance of personal religiosity.

As an instrument with application in religious psychology, the Religion Monitor features several novel characteristics, one of which

is an ability to assess the role religiosity plays within an individual's psychic organization or personality. It does this by combining the results of the first five "intrinsic" core dimensions to construct a "centrality index." The concept of centrality here refers to the potency of religiosity or the intensity of its presence within the personality. The more central religiosity is within a person's psychic organization, the more it will shape and influence their experience and behavior. The scores derived for the centrality index can be plotted on a scale broken into three categories: the highly religious, the religious and non-religious.²

For those individuals classified as highly religious, religiosity is a key factor in their daily life. More often than not, their faith is critical in shaping their experiences and behavior. Their religiosity structures the coordinates of their private life. By contrast, non-religious individuals hold (at most) only weak or sporadic religious beliefs, and rarely (if at all) engage in religious practices. The third group, the "religious," lie somewhere in between the two aforementioned groups. These individuals are receptive to religious ideas and practice a more or less personally defined religiosity. In contrast to the highly religious individual, religiosity occupies a subordinate position within this personality's cognitive and emotional structures.

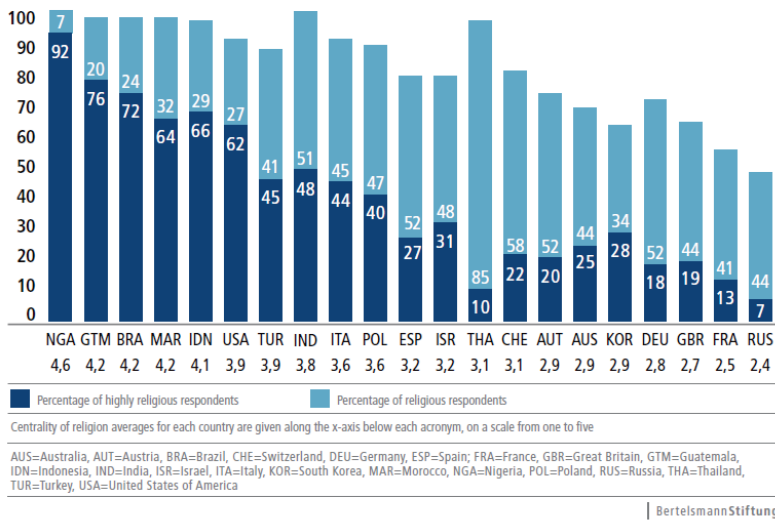
What the Religion Monitor tells us about religiosity around the globe

What concrete findings does the Religion Monitor have to offer? Given the large body of data yielded by a survey of more than 21,000 people around the world, we limit our discussion here to a select few examples. In order to capture an extensive overview of current religious trends globally, the Religion Monitor addresses all major religious traditions and investigates a broad array of cultural environments in a diverse group of countries. This list includes: Austria, Brazil, France, Germany, Great Britain, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Nigeria, Poland, Russia,

² See Stefan Huber, "Structuring Principles, Operational Constructs, Interpretive Strategies," In *What the World Believes*, Religion Monitor 2008, pgs. 17-51. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung: 2009.

Spain, South Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and the United States.

Percentage of highly religious and religious respondents for 21 countries



Unsurprisingly, assessments of religiosity among populations within these states vary substantially. A comparison of findings for individual countries shows most European countries ranking at the low end of the centrality index. Russia, where barely 7 percent of respondents are classified as highly religious, has the smallest share of individuals attaching great personal importance to religion. The traditionally secular countries of France, Great Britain and Germany show somewhat larger percentages of highly religious respondents, though compared to the global average the share of devout believers in these countries is small. Switzerland poses an interesting case, because the degree of religiosity varies considerably across the country's linguistic regions, with each canton's values echoing those of the respective neighboring country. In other words, while respondents in the western French-speaking cantons show a low level of commitment to religion, respondents in the Italian-speaking canton of Tessin generally attach greater importance to religiosity. Italy and Poland, as predominantly Catholic countries, stand out as the most religious of the European countries surveyed.

Muslim, Latin American and African states show the highest percentages of devout believers. In Nigeria, for example, an impressive 92 percent of respondents are classified as highly religious, and another 7 percent as religious. These findings are emblematic of the profound extent to which religion permeates daily life in many sub-Saharan countries. The United States, where 62 percent of respondents are classified as highly religious and 27 percent as religious, is the only western post-industrial country in the group of high scorers for the centrality index. These results can be attributed to two key factors: North America's historical role as a safe haven for those fleeing religious persecution, and the region's broad spectrum of religious denominations and associated religious pluralism.

The Christian Occident and Islam—what we can learn from stereotypes

As noted, religiosity varies significantly across cultural and religious environments. But the degree of religiosity can also vary significantly across a given continent or within a shared religious tradition. The example of Europe illustrates this well. First, let us briefly address the issue of whether continued references to a “Christian Occident” within the context of Europe are justified.

In terms of confessional affiliation, the Religion Monitor found that between 60 percent (Great Britain) and 97 percent (Poland) of respondents in Europe consider themselves to be Christian. Christianity therefore continues to play an important role in Europe, at least in a formal sense. At the same time, however, the percentage of Europeans not affiliated with a religious community is significant. In fact, more than one-third of respondents in Great Britain and France respectively have no religious affiliation. Nevertheless, Religion Monitor data shows that 74 percent of respondents in the European countries surveyed are religious, and of that group, 25 percent are highly religious. However, 23 percent of Europeans surveyed are not at all religious. Religion in Europe is also increasingly heterogeneous, a development in part due to the demographics of migration.

In sum, the Religion Monitor demonstrates that despite Europe's growing religious diversity, Christianity continues to play an important role across the continent. The degree of importance differs

from one country to another, with traditionally Catholic countries showing the greatest intensity of religiosity. The findings show that church membership – even in religious societies – is increasingly less important. But this does not necessarily mean that classical forms of religiosity are being replaced by a diffuse spirituality. Instead, religiosity and spirituality are likely fueling each other.

What about Islamic societies? Do the findings for the Muslim world differ? Are patterns of religious behavior specific to a given country or Islam itself? The Religion Monitor conducted an additional study in three countries – Indonesia, Morocco and Turkey – with large Muslim populations, and in which the form and historical context of Islamization differs. As countries with significant Muslim populations, Israel and Nigeria were also included. Whereas Muslims in Israel represent a minority (10%), in Nigeria their numbers equal that of Christians.

Within this group, there are notable differences from country to country in terms of religious practice. For example, more than 80 percent of respondents in Nigeria, Indonesia and Morocco report that they pray several times a day, whereas only one in two individuals do so in Turkey. This suggests that particularly among Turks of the middle and upper classes, secularized practices are common. The Religion Monitor also finds that for Muslims in all of the countries surveyed, mosque attendance and participation in congregational prayer are significantly less important than the private practice of personal prayer, although here too, we see significant differences from country to country. In Israel, for example, only one-third of the Muslims polled attend weekly congregational prayers. The low degree of Muslim participation in communal rituals there is presumably related to their minority status in Israel.

Another example illustrating considerable differences within Islam and from country to country is the belief in angels. The belief that angels are at work on Earth is not only a central tenet of the Islamic faith, but is generally also deeply rooted in folk beliefs. Unsurprisingly, 90 percent of respondents in Nigeria, Morocco and Turkey believe strongly in angels. Only 72 percent of Muslims in Indonesia, however, believe in the power of angels. This can be attributed

to the fact that the concept of angels is a religious import to Indonesia, with no parallel in pre-existing local faiths.³ In Israel, even fewer Muslims (44%) believe in angels. Given the importance of belief in angels in Judaism, Israeli Muslims' lower rate of belief in angels might be explained by an attempt to distance themselves from the majority population.

Religiosity and heterogeneity in immigration societies—creating a framework for inter-religious dialogue

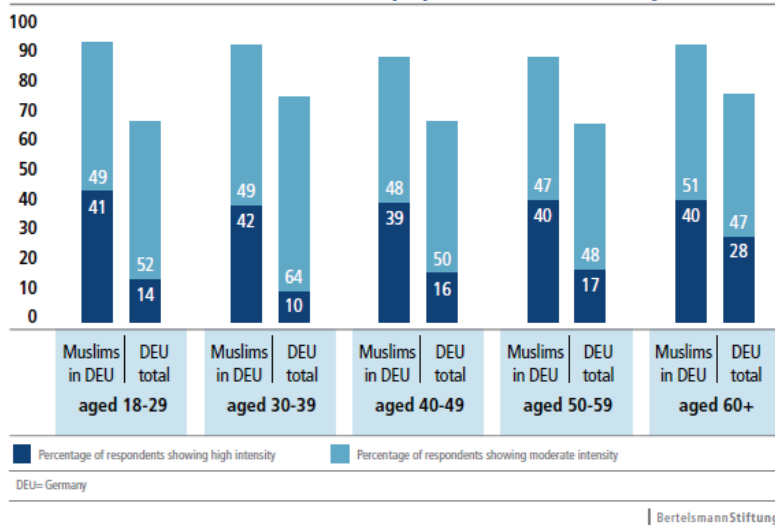
Clearly, religious denomination and cultural environment each shape and influence the degree of an individual's religiosity. This is particularly true for societies with multiple religious communities. Indeed, societies with histories marked by immigration face several challenges related to this fact. However, as the example of Germany shows, the combination of religious heterogeneity and immigrant communities does not inevitably lead to a "clash of civilizations."

Both historically and in the present day, Germany is a predominantly Christian country with a large number of people claiming no religious affiliation. As a result of labor-related immigration policies over the past 40 years, Islam has become a significant religious group in Germany with 4.5 million members, according to recent estimates. A Religion Monitor survey of 2,000 Muslims in Germany allows us to compare findings for members of this "diaspora" religion to other communities in Germany. In doing so, we find some considerable differences. Whereas 90 percent of Muslims in Germany are religious, and 41 percent of that group are highly religious, only 70 percent of German Christians and those with no religious affiliation are religious, and just 18 percent of that group are highly religious. An individual's upbringing appears to be an important factor in explaining these differences. This is true particularly for the youngest age group surveyed. Among Muslims, the younger the respondent, the more frequently he or she reports a religious upbringing. Among Christians, we see the

³ See Peter Heine and Riem Spielhaus, "What do Muslims Believe?" In *What the World Believes, Religion Monitor 2008*, pg. 626. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009.

opposite trend. A religious upbringing appears to have played a role only among the older generations of this group.

Generational comparison of the centrality of religiousness between Muslims and the total population in Germany



One thing is clear: Oft-cited fears that higher degrees of religiosity will lead to higher rates of radicalism and intolerance are unfounded. Indeed, the Religion Monitor shows that 86 percent of the Muslim respondents in Germany express an openness toward other religious traditions, whereas only 83 percent of Germany's Catholics and Protestants share this view. For the sake of comparison, considerably fewer—only 67 percent—of those polled in Turkey express openness toward other religious traditions. These findings suggest that tolerance for other traditions can grow within the context of a religious group's minority experience.

Conclusion – Religion is a global factor

Given the complexities and sensitivities involved with issues relating to religion, it is important that we have reliable data on how religiosity manifests itself in individuals and society. In a globalized context, interactions between various cultures and religions are growing in number and frequency. Clearly, this situation poses

some risks, but also offers ample opportunities. And these opportunities can multiply when people of different religious and cultural backgrounds know and understand something about the context and influences that have helped shape the person standing before them. Knowledge is the enemy of prejudice, and is therefore a sound means to conflict prevention.

The Religion Monitor contributes to this aim by providing a tool that not only provides sound data on the various dimensions of religious beliefs around the world, but also offers insight into individuals' religious self-conception. The examples discussed above represent only a small portion of what the Religion Monitor has to offer, but provide examples of the great potential this instrument holds. As the product of a single survey process, Religion Monitor findings represent a snapshot in time. Repeated surveys in the future would allow us to identify unfolding trends and developments, which would give us more information on the meaning and relevance of various religions around the world.

Nevertheless, the Religion Monitor has successfully exploded some stereotypes and corrected long-held myths about individuals, the societies they live in, and cultural environments both regional and international. It has also provided a more accurate picture of how religious beliefs shape behavior. Religion will continue to fundamentally shape how we live as individuals and therefore affect the social cohesion of communities. This will have profound consequences as globalization continues.

11. Interfaith Institutes: An Overview



The Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center (JICRC) is an interfaith organization that was established in 2003. It is concerned with the sensitive and vital issue of coexistence in the world in general and within the Middle East region in particular. One of the JICRC's primary objectives is to provide advice and assistance to governments, organizations and individual decision-makers regarding the issue of peace building based on religious beliefs, using fourteen centuries of peaceful interfaith coexistence in Jordan and human rights principles as models for building a better political, social, economic, cultural, and security environment. JICRC is a non-governmental Center.

The Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center was established with the aim of using research, dialogue, and practical initiatives to promote values of peaceful interfaith coexistence.

The JICRC aims to develop and implement educational programs geared towards developing the concepts of peace building using the interfaith perspective of human dignity, equality, justice and freedom. These programs will tackle issues of: Coexistence, Democracy, Women's Rights, Children's Rights and Youth Environmental Protection.

Chairman: H.E. Sheikh Izziddeen al Khateeb Al Tameemi,
Adviser to His Majesty for Islamic Affairs & Chief Islamic Justice

Vice-Chairman: H.E. Mr. Sami Gammoh, Former Minister of Finance, President, Jordan International Insurance Company

Executive Director:

H.E. Ekonomos Fr. Nabil D. Haddad,
Judge, Court of Appeal, Melkite Catholic Church in Amman.
Chair, Justice, Peace & Human Rights Committee, Middle East Council of Churches, Jordan. Member, Royal Commission for Human Rights.

Location: Jordan

www.coexistencejordan.org/



المعهد الملكي للدراسات الدينية
Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies

Established in 1994 in Amman, Jordan, under the patronage of HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS) provides a venue in the Arab world for the interdisciplinary study and rational discussion of religion and religious issues, with particular reference to Christianity in Arab and Islamic society.

RIIFS is governed by a board of trustees chaired by His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal. It is funded by an annual grant from the government of Jordan obtained through Majlis El Hassan, as well as by private donations. The director of RIIFS is Professor Fehmi Jadaane. Prof Jadaane holds Doctorat d'Etat ès Lettres, Sorbonne, Paris. He worked as Professor of Philosophy, and Arabic and Islamic Thought in several Arab Universities.

The work of RIIFS involves research and publication, as well as the organization of lectures, conferences and workshops.

The RIIFS Arabic program focuses on the study and documentation of all subjects pertaining to Christianity and Muslim-Christian relations. Its quarterly publication, *Al-Nashra*, provides a forum for the discussion of interfaith issues, particularly as they relate to Arab and Islamic society. It also monitors the Arabic press for news and other material bearing on religious questions.

The RIIFS English program addresses questions relating to religious and cultural diversity in the world at large, inviting international participation in its academic and other activities. Its biannual publication, *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (BRIIFS)*, is an academic journal refereed by internationally known scholars. *BRIIFS* is intended to provide a venue for interdisciplinary academic inquiry into all fields of the humanities and social sciences that bear on cultural or civilizational interaction and to situate culture contact in a global context.



Henry Martyn Institute - International Centre for Research, Interfaith Relations and Reconciliation (HMI) – is an ecumenical Christian organization, dedicated to the objective study and teaching of religions, the promotion of interfaith relations and reconciliation. Since its founding in 1930, HMI has established a long record of teaching and research, with an ever-widening circle of research scholars from both within the country and abroad who use the Institute's facilities for Master's, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral research.

HMI publishes an academic journal (the Journal of the Henry Martyn Institute) and books on Christianity, Islam and other faiths, to which scholars and experts contribute from all over the world.

HMI's goal is to combine academic research with praxis, reflected in HMI's work of reconciliation, which has grown out of the contemporary context of inter-religious alienation and violence. HMI's emphasis is on study and action at various levels in order to reduce prejudice, resolve conflict and increase trust, co-operation and understanding between individuals and groups. In order to work towards those goals HMI conducts a variety of praxis activities, including community development work in violence-prone areas of Hyderabad's Old City, mediation interventions and training to equip people from different backgrounds with skills for responding more effectively to conflicts within and between communities, individuals and groups, along with interfaith initiatives that bring together women and men at grass-root level.

Chairperson: Rt. Rev. Dr. Christopher L. Furtado

Vice-Chairperson: Ms. Christine Lazarus

Director/Secretary: Dr. Varghese Manimala

Location: India www.hmiindia.com/



Institut DIAN/Interfidei
Yogyakarta

Institut Dialog Antar-iman di Indonesia
Institute for Inter-faith Dialogue in Indonesia

Institut DIAN/Interfidei was founded 20 December, 1991 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Vision

The establishment of a civil society which is rooted in humanitarian and democratic values.

Mission

1. To encourage and develop a pluralistic religious thinking through dialogue.
2. To stimulate a dynamic network of dialogue and interreligious cooperation.
3. To encourage religious transformation as a solution to humanitarian issues faced by the society.

Strategies

1. To stimulate activities in the field of surveys, education, research which in its turn will encourage a constructive and tolerant attitude among differing religious societies.
2. To develop an intergroup network of cooperation which is pervaded by an honest, open and critical approach
3. To encourage inter-faith groups to become a social movement based on peaceful, non-violent and democratic means.

Research

The purpose of Research Division is to create a research-driven institution as a form of serious and deep insight study on various religious problems in Indonesia. By means of doing research, socio-cultural and religious discourses could help Interfidei to become tangible with the ongoing problems within society.

Director: A. Elga J. Sarapung

Location: Indonesia www.interfidei.or.id/



The Centre for Studies in Religion and Society is a leading centre in Canada for scholarly interdisciplinary research on topics at the intersection of religion and public life. It hosts several national public policy research networks, sponsors visiting fellowships for senior and junior scholars and members of the community, and produces a annual program of public lectures and seminars.

The centre was founded at the University of Victoria in 1991 by Harold Coward, a professor of history and well-known specialist in Indian philosophy and religion. The Centre was established in order to, “foster the scholarly study of religion” and to serve as a catalyst for dialogue between the university and the community.

The first director of the centre was Harold Coward, a scholar of comparative religion, who served from 1992 to 2002. Conrad Brunk, a philosopher of science and religion, served as the second director from 2002 to 2008. In July 2008, Dr. Paul Bramadat, a specialist in contemporary religion in Canada, took up leadership of the centre. Paul Bramadat received his BA in religious studies from the University of Winnipeg (1990), his MA in religion and culture from McGill University (1993) and his PhD in religious studies from McMaster University (1998).

Current areas of research at the centre include:

- Religion and securitization post-9/11
- Religion and hospice care
- The ethics of animal biotechnology
- Religion and ethnicity in Canada
- Globalization and the academic study of Islam
- Religion in India
- The role of religion in immigrant and refugee settlement in Canada
- Religious resistance to immunization

Location: Canada www.csrs.uvic.ca/



The Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR) is a Canadian academic society oriented to the scholarly study of religion.

Objectives

1. The Society provides a meeting place for all who are involved in the academic study of religion, for example, anthropologists, historians, phenomenologists, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, theologians.
2. The Society fosters an interdisciplinary discourse in order to arrive at a better, integrated understanding of religious phenomena.
3. The Society encourages research in the development of the study of religion with particular reference to the Canadian scene.
4. The Society promotes a critical examination of the goals, methods, and styles of teaching demanded by the discipline.

President and Representative to the Corporation

Dr. Darlene Juschka

Associate Professor, Women's and Gender Studies, and Religious Studies, University of Regina,



The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture is one of the largest centers in the world devoted to scholarly research on the interface of philosophy and religions East and West. Founded in 1976 on the campus of Nanzan University, it has established itself in Japan and around the world as a center of academic excellence through its publications, conferences, and team of permanent researchers.

The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture has, since its foundation in 1974, been actively engaged in religious dialogue, bringing together scholars from across the broad spectrum of Japanese religions to collaborate in scholarly pursuits.

In 1982 the Institute banded together with fifteen similar-minded centers in Eastern Asia to form a network of inter-religious encounter, Inter-Religio.

Objectives

1. The interdisciplinary study of the relations between religion and culture with particular reference to the Far East, and more specifically Japan.
2. The promotion of mutual understanding among Christianity and other religions

Director:

Paul L. Swanson

Permanent Fellow and Director, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture.

Professor, Faculty of Humanities, Nanzan University

Areas of specialization are Japanese Religions (Shugendo) and Buddhist Studies (T'ien-t'ai/Tendai Buddhism).



The Presbyterian Interfaith Research & Resource Centre is a venture springing from the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, aimed at informing, equipping and training the Christian church in Ghana and the West African sub-region in Interfaith issues through research, seminars, short courses and academic studies and the provision of resources through a library equipped with documentation which is both print, audio-visual and electronic.

Director: Rev. Dr. Solomon Sule-Saa

An ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana who completed his Master of Theology at Akrofi-Christaller Institute, (ACI) Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana and University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and his PhD at ACI

Location : Ghana

www.pirrcghana.org/

**Vision:**

To see Muslim-Christian relationships transformed through shared academic study and by following the example of Jesus Christ.

Purpose:

- Equipping leaders, resourcing scholars, developing Biblically-based thinking at the Muslim-Christian interface through teaching, research and consultancy.
- Promoting the study of Islam among Christians
- Promoting the study of Christianity among Muslims
- Promoting rigorous academic teaching and research on the Muslim-Christian interface

Director:

Dr Martin Whittingham

M.A. (Cantab), B.A. (London School of Theology/CNAA), M.A. (London School of Theology/Brunel), Ph.D. (Edinburgh)

Martin Whittingham has degrees in English Literature and Christian Theology, and a doctorate in Islamic Studies.

Academic Director: Dr Ida Glaser

B.Sc., M. Phil, Theoretical Physics (London Imperial):

Ph.D., Theology (Durham)

Dr Glaser is responsible for the academic and research activities of the Centre.



The Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths is dedicated to **teaching, research and dialogue** in the encounter between Jews, Christians and Muslims. It is an umbrella organisation for the Centre for the Study of Jewish–Christian Relations (CJCR, founded in 1998) and the Centre for the Study of Muslim–Jewish Relations (CMJR, established in 2006). The Woolf Institute is named in honour of Lord Harry Woolf, former Lord Chief Justice, who gives it his full support and encouragement.

CJCR is one of the world's leading institutes in the study and teaching of all aspects of the encounter between Christians and Jews throughout the ages. CMJR is the first and only academic centre in Europe dedicated to fostering relations between Muslims and Jews through teaching, research and dialogue.

President: The Rt Hon the Lord Woolf (President)

Inter-Faith Patrons: Sir Sigmund Sternberg KCSG
HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan

Director: Dr Edward Kessler

Interfaith Project Managers:

Rev Andrew Brown

He studied theology and philosophy

Mrs Trisha Kessler

BA Honours Degree in Theology and Religious Studies

Her particular area of interest is in the role of women in the Inter-faith process; she specialised in early 19th century Jewish and Christian women's writings for a Masters Degree in Jewish–Christian Relations.

Location: UK www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/index.php

The Center for Interfaith Studies & Dialogue

The Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue (CISD) promotes research and encourages strategies for living peacefully in a religiously diverse world. This vision is realized through dialogue, education, and community-building efforts.

Objectives

- To establish an environment conducive to understanding the diversity of faiths in our world and community.
- To communicate the skills necessary for people of diverse faiths to live together in peace and justice.
- To provide educational resources to aid in establishing an environment of understanding and equality.
- To teach individuals, communities and institutions how to live and communicate more effectively with those from other religions and faith backgrounds.

Dr. Muhammad Shafiq is the executive director of the Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue (CISD), and is professor of Islamic and religious studies at Nazareth College. In addition, he is the Imam of the Islamic Center of Rochester, Inc. Dr. Shafiq holds a Ph.D. from Temple University, and a M.A. and B.A. from the University of Peshawar.

Events:**Interfaith Understanding Conference**

<https://interfaith2010.naz.edu/>

Location: USA www.naz.edu/dept/cisd/

Centre for the Study of Inter-Religious Relations

The Department of Theology and Religion at Birmingham University has a long-established reputation for expertise in relations between the faith traditions.

In 1999 the Department of Theology at the University of Birmingham joined with the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations and with the Department of World Mission at the Selly Oak Colleges. In 2002 it joined with the Department of Religious Studies at Westhill College. Another significant development occurred in 1999 when the **UNESCO Chair in Interfaith Studies** was established in the Department, following an agreement between UNESCO and the University of Birmingham.

Dr Josef Boehle

Deputy Director of Centre for the Study of Inter-religious Relations

Dip. Theol (Tubingen), PhD (Birm)

Research Fellow in Globalisation, Religion and Politics

Co-ordinator, UNESCO Chair in Interfaith Studies

Professor Jonathan Webber

Director of Centre for the Study of Inter-religious Relations

UNESCO Professor of Jewish and Interfaith Studies

Jonathan did his undergraduate work in anthropology and linguistics at University College London and his doctoral work at the University of Oxford (Institute of Social Anthropology and St Antony's College), based on a fieldwork study of Jewish–Arab relations in Jerusalem from the perspective of the anthropology of language.

Location: UK

www.ptr.bham.ac.uk/postgraduate/interreligious/csir.shtml



Between 2005 and 2010 the Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium is undertaking a series of comparative research projects that address the following questions:

- How do religious values and beliefs drive the actions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organisations?
- How do religious values and beliefs and religious organisations influence the relationships between states and societies?
- In what ways do faith communities interact with development actors and what are the outcomes with respect to the achievement of development goals?

The research programme is funded by the UK Department for International Development.

The research programme has two overarching themes:

- How do religious values and beliefs influence the ways in which individuals and social groups see their own situation? How does religion influence their actions? What are the common elements and differences between religious values and those underlying mainstream development policies and practices?
- How do religious organisations, states, societies and economies relate to each other at local, national and international levels? How are those relationships changing in the contemporary world? What influence do they have on governance, policies and the achievement of human development goals?



The Hartford Institute was established at Hartford Seminary in 1981 under the name of the Center for Social and Religious Research. The founding of this organization formalized a research program started by the Seminary in 1974.

Its work is guided by a disciplined understanding of the interrelationship between the life and resources of American religious institutions and the possibilities and limits placed on those institutions by the social and cultural context in which they work.

Its research findings have been published in books, articles, and news reports of every major news outlet, television network and many journals and magazines.

The Dimensions of the Institute's Work

- *Research* is at the heart of what we do - gathering reliable information about what is happening in religious life today.
- *Communication* of the findings of projects receives as much creative attention as does the gathering of the data.
- The *Education* work of the Hartford Institute happens in classrooms and workshops and retreats, both at Hartford Seminary and around the world.
- *Research* informs our work when Hartford Institute faculty provide consultation to congregations, seminaries, denominations and area councils of churches and synagogues, for groups that range from Methodist to Mormon, from Mennonite to Muslim to Missouri Synod Lutheran.
- *Consultation* with local congregations also includes the Hartford Institute's church assessment inventories (Parish Profile, Pastoral Search & Church Planning Inventories). Hundreds of churches have used these inventories since the 1980's.



The Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme was born in 2002 with the vision of a programme which could address divisions between Jews, Christians and Muslims, using the exemplary resources that the University of Cambridge offers.

The programme's initial principles have remained the same to this day

- Participation by Jews, Christians, Muslims and others
- Fulfilling responsibilities to society and religious communities, as well as to academic disciplines in teaching and research
- Long-term integration of inter-faith learning, collaboration and collegiality into Cambridge University and other institutions
- Emphasis on face to face discussion and joint study and research , including study of each others scriptures

In 2005, CIP embarked on a three-year feasibility study, supported by Coexist, which resulted in affirmation of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme and the Cambridge Abraham Project by the General Board of the University of Cambridge in 2008. The Board fully endorsed “a long term inter-faith programme incorporating first class research and teaching activity as well as a significant element of public education and outreach”.

In 2008, CIP was named a flagship project of the University's 800th Anniversary Campaign.

Team:

- Professor David Ford – Director
- Dr Mike Higton – Academic Co-Director
- Ms Miriam Lorie – External Relations Officer
- Mrs Barbara Bennett – Administrator



The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C) is an ecumenical foundation reflecting the faith background of over 14 million people or 70% of the Australian population. The priorities of the ACC&C are ecumenism, interfaith dialogue, reconciliation with indigenous people, youth concerns, academic research and the relationship of theology to social issues.

The ACC&C was established in 1993 under the auspices of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). The ACC&C constituency comprises the majority of Christian churches in Australia, including all members of the National Council of Churches in Australia, and beyond. The ACC&C provides opportunity for ecumenism and interfaith dialogue and ongoing reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Vision:

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, which is the Australian national Christian Centre, has **five objectives**:

1. We seek to engage in **ecumenical dialogue and joint Christian celebration, reflection and action**, so as to assist all Christians to fulfil their common calling in mission, to the glory of the Triune God.
2. We seek to engage in **inter-faith dialogue** from a Christian perspective, particularly with the followers of the other major world religions, in Australia and regionally, so as to promote understanding and co-operation in these communities.
3. We seek to encourage further **reconciliation** between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians as a means of expressing a central tenet of Christianity.
4. We seek to engage in **applied Christian theology**, as a means of articulating a Christian response to the will of God in the issues of contemporary society and culture.
5. We seek to engage in the issues of Christian faith and society, particularly to support the engagement of **young people**.

The Berkley Center was created in the office of Georgetown's President, Dr. John J. DeGioia, in March 2006. The Center draws on and contributes to Georgetown's strengths: academic excellence; Washington, DC, location; international reach; and a Catholic and Jesuit tradition open to other faiths and the wider world. Generous support from William R. Berkley, a member of the University Board of Directors, has enabled the Center's rapid growth.

Current Programs and Faculty:

- Religious Pluralism in World Affairs
 - Thomas Banchoff
- Globalization, Religions, and the Secular
 - José Casanova
- Foundations of American Freedom
 - Jean Bethke Elshtain
- Religion and US Foreign Policy
 - Thomas Farr
- The Church and Interreligious Dialogue
 - Chester Gillis
- Religion, Politics, and Law
 - Michael Kessler
- Religion and Global Development
 - Katherine Marshall
- Religion, Conflict, and Peace
 - Eric Patterson



Established in 1992, the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding is an educational and research division of Sacred Heart University and is a direct outgrowth of the Second Vatican Council's teachings which encourage interreligious dialogue and understanding.

Views:

More changes have taken place in Christian-Jewish relations in the past 40 years than in the previous two millennia. With the Vatican II declaration of *Nostra Aetate* (1965), and the subsequent Guidelines (1974), Notes (1985), and *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, and the many other statements that followed, the Catholic Church and numerous Christian denominations have reached out to Jews in friendship to advance shared goals of repairing the world. From these mutual collaborations, come a living relationship serving as a model of understanding for all of humanity. Christians have rejected anti-Semitic readings of the Christian Scriptures, removed negative portrayals of Jews and Judaism in their catechetical and liturgical texts, and rejected the covenantal theology of substitution and the charge of “deicide” against the Jewish people.

Directors:

- Dr. Anthony J. Cernera
- Howard Ehrenkranz, DDS
- Dr. Thomas Forget
- Mrs. Louella Lieberman
- Mr. Gregory Milbank
- Ms. Suzanne Newmark
- Mr. Vincent A. Roberti (*Chairman*)

Location: USA

www.sacredheart.edu/pages/122_center_for_christian_jewish_understanding.cfm



Comparative Study of Jews and Muslims in Britain, Europe, and North America



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



Diasporas,
migration
& identities



The Forum for the Comparative Study of Jews and Muslims facilitates improved understanding about the experiences of Muslims and Jews living as members of minority faith groups in western societies, often as part of migrant or diasporic communities. It aims to make long overdue connections between academics and students working in the field, and practitioners involved in community affairs, whether specifically religious or otherwise. Activities in the programme to date have included a series of academic seminars in 2005/06, supported by the Stone-Ashdown Charitable Trust, an international academic workshop and a practitioner workshop in 2006, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Diasporas, Migration and Identities Programme.

The main objective of this initiative is to achieve a better understanding of contemporary Muslim-Jewish relations, and create a solid basis or framework of interaction on which future dialogue can take place.



The Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism, FAIR, was founded in 2001 as an independent charitable organization. Our aim is to work towards establishing a Safe, Just and Tolerant Britain in which Islamophobia and racism have no place.

Through analysis of its work, FAIR aims to respond to Government and other consultations and provide briefings to government departments and officials on challenging Islamophobia and Muslim alienating trends in society.

Established as an independent charitable organisation, FAIR's aims and objectives are:

- To **raise awareness** of and challenge **Islamophobia** through constructive and educational means.
- To project a more balanced and positive image of Islam, as practiced by the vast majority of British Muslims.
- To **monitor** and identify specific incidences of **harassment and violence** and deal with them by case-specific means. To work towards the elimination of religious discrimination at all levels and to **promote equality of opportunity for all**.
- To campaign and lobby to **highlight and critique** unjust laws affecting the Muslim community in Britain. To monitor the way the regime of anti-discrimination law is working and **recommend improvements**.
- To **encourage good relationships between people and communities of different religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds**.



JOSEPH ROWNTREE
FOUNDATION

Search
Demonstrate
Influence

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is an endowed charity that funds a large, UK-wide research and development programme. The goal is to seek to **understand the root causes of social problems**, to **identify ways of overcoming them**, and to **show how social needs can be met in practice**.

The purpose is to **influence** policy and practice by **searching** for evidence and **demonstrating** solutions to improve:

- the circumstances of people experiencing poverty and disadvantage;
- the quality of their homes and communities;
- the nature of the services and support that foster their well-being and citizenship.

JRF and JRHT have no political affiliations and work in partnership with all sectors – private, public and voluntary.

The aim is to present evidence in a balanced, unbiased way and to stimulate debate on current and emerging issues.

In all works the JRF looks to reflect the diversity of the UK population, learn from others and operate in a sustainable way - socially, environmentally and economically - finding practical and realistic solutions and focusing on the needs of disadvantaged people. Through our housing, community and care services, we aim to achieve the highest professional standards.

Most of the work centres on the interconnected themes of poverty, place and empowerment. In 2009–2011 JRF will also continue to look at some of the themes that emerged from the social evils programme, launched in 2007 to understand people's perceptions of social evil in the 21st century.

Location: UK/Worldwide

www.jrf.org.uk/



KALAM RESEARCH & MEDIA
REVIVING THEOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT

Kalam Research & Media (KRM) is a collegial think tank and training centre dedicated to research, education, content development, and capacity building in the following core areas:

- Islamic Theology (Kalam) – Inter-Faith Engagement
- Islamic Philosophy & Wisdom – Inter-Faith Conflict Prevention & Resolution
- Islamic Philosophy of Science, Technology, & the Environment – Scriptural Reasoning & Hermeneutics
- Islamic Professional & Business Ethics – Creative & Critical Thinking
- Compassion Architecture

Kalam Research & Media has already initiated projects in the following areas:

- **THEOLOGY**-KRM is working on the renewal of Islamic Theology (*kalam*, meaning “discourse”) around compassion, wisdom, and the common good.
- **FAITH, PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE**-KRM is fostering scholarly and creative engagement between theologians, jurists, philosophers, social and natural scientists, and artists.
- **SCRIPTURAL REASONING AND HERMENEUTICS**-KRM is promoting training and praxis in Scriptural Reasoning and Hermeneutics.
- **INTER-FAITH**-KRM is promoting global, regional, and local Inter-Faith initiatives, and is developing curricula, outreach resources, and publications to support them.
- **MEDIA**-KRM is developing Media & Faith workshops and resources for religious leaders, media professionals, writers, artists, journalists and broadcasters.
- **EDUCATION**-KRM is developing curricula, workshops, seminars, conferences, retreats and exhibitions in its core areas.
- **RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION**-RM is conducting research, prepares translations and publications in the core areas.



The Centre's Purpose and Origins

The Centre exists to promote mutual understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs and to build respect between people as fellow human beings.

The Centre is a shared space where people are invited to speak freely and fearlessly, in the spirit of Listen to others as you want them to listen to you.

The Original idea emerged from the grassroots in a group drawn from the local Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities alongside the University of Derby. The Design Brief and fundraising were achievements of inter-faith dialogue.

The Future

The Centre is undertaking a strategic review over the summer and a new 3 year plan will be launched in September 2010.

The Centre Director has resolved to focus on high profile events, projects and conferences of regional and/or national significance. In parallel a network of local “ambassadors” continues to work to strengthen connections with all parts of the local community. The Centre has a small library of religious/non-religious books.



The Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding was founded in 1993 by an agreement between the Fondation pour L'Entente entre Chrétiens et Musulmans, Geneva and Georgetown University to build stronger bridge of understanding between the Muslim world and the West as well as between Islam and Christianity.

The Center's mission is to improve relations between the Muslim world and the West and enhance understanding of Muslims in the West. The geographic scope and coverage of the center includes the breadth of the Muslim world, from North Africa to Southeast Asia, as well as Europe and America. Since its foundation, the Center has become internationally recognized as a leader in the field of Muslim-Christian relations.

In December 2005, the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (CMCU) received a \$20 million dollar gift from HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, an internationally renowned businessman and global investor, to support and expand the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. The Center was renamed the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU). This endowed fund was the second largest single gift in Georgetown University history.



The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program seeks to bridge gaps in understanding between East and West and ensure that Harvard's capacity in Islamic Studies matches more fully the depth of Islam's rich historical and geographically diverse cultures.

By bringing together faculty, students and researchers from across the University, the Program builds on Harvard's strong commitment to the study of the religious traditions of the world.

Research Projects include:

- **Islamic Heritage Project** - Through a new collaboration among Islamic-studies scholars, librarians, and curators, Harvard University's Open Collections Program has cataloged, conserved, and digitized Islamic manuscripts, maps, and published texts from its renowned library and museum collections. The result is a new online collection comprising more than 145,000 digital pages available to Internet users everywhere.
- **The IslamopediaOnline Initiative: Web-Based Resources on Contemporary Islamic Thinking** - this research project began with a two-year grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York with Profs. Ali Asani, Roy Mottahedeh and Jocelyne Cesari as co-principal investigators. The main goal of this initiative is to develop a comprehensive resource that gathers in one place the current databases, interpretations, and controversies concerning Islamic religious tradition in Muslim and non-Muslim societies. The overall goal of IslamopediaOnline is to contribute to a better dialogue/understanding between Islam and the West by providing non-biased information, promoting knowledge of the vast diversity of opinions within the Islamic tradition and to develop collaborations between Muslim intellectuals and scholars and students across cultures and languages.

The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud

Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR)

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

The Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR) at the American University of Beirut aims to establish and maintain a world-class locus of activity and exchange of ideas for an interdisciplinary community of researchers, teachers, students and others in the Middle East interested in building further understanding of American institutions and practices (political, social, economic, cultural) and the complex contextual realities in which these institutions and practices have developed and currently exist. CASAR's mission has three specific components:

1. the **TEACHING** component aims to provide students with basic knowledge about American institutions and practices in an interdisciplinary way;
2. the **RESEARCH** component aims to promote interdisciplinary research and academic exchange on a range of topics, with particular attention to exploring the Arab-American Encounter through historical and contemporary perspectives, using both descriptive and comparative analytical frameworks;
3. the **OUTREACH** component facilitates an open exchange of ideas and enhances understanding among local, regional, and international communities (both academic and non-academic) with respect to American institutions and practices in context, as well as all aspects of the Arab-American encounter.

CASAR was established in 2003 as result of a generous \$5.2 million endowment from His Royal Highness Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by Prince Alwaleed and AUB president John Waterbury stated that "the aim of the center is to promote better understanding between the United States of America and the Arab world, and to deepen knowledge in the Arab world of American society, politics, history, culture and institutions through teaching, research, and outreach programs."

Location: Lebanon/USA

www.aub.edu.lb/fas/casar/Pages/index.aspx



Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud Center for American Studies

American Studies focuses on the cultural, political, and intellectual life of the United States of America. Students investigate the American past and present from the perspectives of multiple disciplines, learn to synthesize various knowledge, and develop learning and research strategies needed for the responsible analysis of persistent historical questions and urgent contemporary national and international developments.

The Alwaleed Center for American Studies and Research promotes a scholarly multidisciplinary approach to the study of the United States of America addressing the concerns and needs of Egypt and the Arab world. To this end, the Center's programs facilitate, encourage and disseminate objective, in-depth research on American subjects. It seeks to enhance the collection of library materials necessary to support students and scholars from AUC and beyond in serious research on American subjects and to facilitate access to those resources. It organizes conferences, seminars, lectures, short courses and publications designed to contribute to a more sophisticated analysis of America's varied societies and cultures among academics, professional groups and interested publics in Egypt and the Middle East. Located at AUC, the Center reaches out to Arab scholars promoting collaborative scholarly activities with research institutions across the Arab world and throughout the globe.

Location: Egypt

www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/casar/Pages/Home.aspx



The Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World

The Six Key Objectives of the Centre

- To improve radically knowledge and understanding of Islamic civilisation and of Muslims in Britain among policy-makers, the general public, and students of all ages in the UK through a comprehensive educational outreach programme, and by helping to integrate the study of Islamic civilisation into the school curriculum
- To advance tolerance, mutual understanding and cross-cultural dialogue between Islam and the West by building new partnerships with institutions in the Muslim world, and with mosques and madrasas within the UK
- To foster intellectual curiosity and build educational excellence among young Diaspora Muslims in the United Kingdom
- To create the UK's leading resource for expertise on Islam in the modern world, based on the integration of the study of Islamic civilisation and issues relating to Islam in modern Britain
- To produce, on a self-sustaining basis, a world-class cadre to researchers at the postgraduate and post-doctoral levels by providing studentships and fellowships designed to feed into the next generation of academics as well as the public and private sectors
- To establish a model partnership network with Muslim and other universities around the world, both within and outside the Arab world, that creates new opportunities for knowledge transfer and fosters collaborative research

Location: UK

www.imes.ed.ac.uk/index_pages/department/bin_talal_centre.html



Catholic-Muslim Studies Program is dedicated to building bridges of mutual understanding and profound respect between Muslims and Christians. The vision of this program is to create significant opportunities for the relationship between Muslims and Christians to deepen, and to reflect only the noblest values and highest ideals of their common spiritual heritage.

The Catholic Muslim Studies Program sponsors study, publication, dialogue, and cultural events in an effort to achieve these goals:

- To educate members of the church—especially leaders and teachers—so that they can share a genuine appreciation and understanding of Islam with other Christians.
- To educate men and women whom the Muslim community can respect and trust as worthy dialogue partners and true friends.
- To facilitate learning about Islam and Muslim peoples by creating contexts in which Muslims can represent themselves to others.
- To be a public advocate for peace and social justice by reducing the sense of alienation between Muslim and Christian cultures, and by helping people within these cultures become more aware of the richness of their common historical and religious heritage. (It is particularly important to enable both Christians and Muslims to abandon stereotypes and recognize the extraordinary diversity of opinion and orientation that exists within both traditions.

Location: USA

www.ctu.edu/Bernardin_Center/Signature_Issues_x_Initiatives/Catholic-Muslim_Program.html

**Mission**

IGE promotes sustainable environments for religious freedom worldwide. It studies the impact of faith on state and society, it encourages governments to protect religious freedom, and it equips citizens to exercise that freedom responsibly.

Structure

- **The Center for Relational Diplomacy** - Under the direction of IGE President, Dr. Chris Seiple, the Center for Relational Diplomacy (CRD) works in Central, South, and East Asia, as well as Africa and the Middle East. IGE's relational diplomacy is grounded in a commitment to first study, listen to, and understand the local context and then engage it.
- **The Center on Faith & International Affairs** - Led by IGE Vice-President for Research and Publications, Dr. Dennis Hoover, the Center on Faith & International Affairs (CFIA) equips scholars and practitioners of international affairs with the tools necessary to understand religion's impact on the world today.
- **The Center for Global Education** - Directed by IGE COO, Dr. Paul Manuel, the Center for Global Education (CGE) prepares current and emerging leaders to engage global affairs in ways that promote sustainable environments for religious freedom. Currently CGE programs include its annual Global Leadership Forum, a website for Christian global education (www.globalchristian.org), undergraduate internships, and graduate fellowships.

Jesuit Father Felix Körner

Jesuit Father Felix Körner is professor of theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. He studied Philosophy in Munich and Theology in London, read Islamic and Turkish Studies at Bamberg. His PhD thesis is on “Koran Hermeneutics in Contemporary Turkish University Theology”; his STD thesis from the university of Fribourg, Switzerland, develops the theme of “Religious Witnessing”. He served in Ankara, Turkey, from 2002–2008 and is now director of the Roman Catholic “Institute for the Interdisciplinary Studies of Religions and Cultures”, where Christians and non-Christians study and teach together (http://www.unigre.it/struttura_didattica/isirc/index.php).

Many of his publications are available online: <http://www.sankt-georgen.de/lehrende/koerner.html>.



Pontificia Università Gregoriana
Istituto di Studi Interdisciplinari
su Religioni e Culture



Used for the training of experts in interreligious dialogue, this academic structure of the Gregorian offers a postgraduate program specialist. Christians, Muslims and believers of other religions study together in the institution for an MA (2 years).

The courses, seminars and private lessons taught by Christians and non Christians, deepening from a historical point of view, spiritual and theological texts and contexts fundamental tensions and attempts at reconciliation, the possibility of doctrinal development and coexistence through the testimony of diversity. The training is oriented to theological insight based on deep mutual understanding.

The high quality of academic preparation is provided by organic collaboration with the Cardinal Bea Center for Judaic Studies, the Faculty of Theology, Philosophy and missiology, as well as the partnership with the Pontifical Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies (PISAI) .

Courses are taught in Italian or English, but also in French, German, Arabic and Turkish. It is possible the attainment of a diploma (one year) and solutions of part-time study.



Our mission is to help Americans engage with the realities of religious diversity through research, outreach, and the active dissemination of resources.

In the past thirty years the religious landscape of the United States has changed radically. There are Islamic centers and mosques, Hindu and Buddhist temples and meditation centers in virtually every major American city. The encounter between people of very different religious traditions takes place in the proximity of our own cities and neighborhoods. The results of the 2000 census underscore the tremendous scope of ethnic change in our society, but tell us little about its religious dimensions or its religious significance.

Pluralism has long been a generative strand of American ideology. Mere diversity or plurality alone, however, does not constitute pluralism. There is lively debate over the implications of our multicultural and multireligious society in civic, religious, and educational institutions. How we appropriate plurality to shape a positive pluralism is one of the most important questions American society faces in the years ahead. It will require all of us to know much more about the new religious landscape of America than we presently know.

The Pluralism Project: World Religions in America is a decade-long research project, with current funding from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, to engage students in studying the new religious diversity in the United States. We will explore particularly the communities and religious traditions of Asia and the Middle East that have become woven into the religious fabric of the United States in the past twenty-five years.



The Center for Christian-Jewish Learning is devoted to the multi-faceted development and implementation of new relationships between Christians and Jews that are based not merely on toleration but on full respect and mutual enrichment. This defining purpose flows from the Mission of Boston College and responds to the vision expressed in Roman Catholic documents ever since the Second Vatican Council.

The building of new, positive relationships between Jews and Christians requires sustained collaborative academic research. Therefore, under the Center's auspices scholars and thinkers representing diverse Jewish and Christian perspectives engage in intense and ongoing study of all aspects of our related yet distinct traditions of faith and culture.

Educationally, we are committed to the goal that "Jews and Judaism should not occupy an occasional and marginal place in [Christian religious education]: their presence there is essential and should be organically integrated" (*Notes*, 2). We are convinced that Jews and Christians enrich and deepen their respective identities by joint educational endeavors. The Center is thus dedicated to conducting educational research and to offering programs, both in the university and the wider community, in which Christians and Jews explore their traditions together.

In short, the Center applies the scholarly resources of a Catholic university to the task of encouraging mutual knowledge between Christians and Jews at every level (*Notes*, 27).

[*Notes* = Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Teaching in the Roman Catholic Church* (1985).]

Location: U.S.

<http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl.html>



The question of a Global Ethic stems from Professor Hans Küng's book "Global Responsibility" (1990), which was first published in English in 1991. This book developed programmatically the idea that the religions of the world can make a contribution to the peace of humankind only if they reflect on those elements of an ethic which they already have in common: on a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes.

Underlying the **Global Ethic project** is the basic conviction that there can be:

- No peace among the nations without peace among religions.
- No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.
- No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundations of the religions.

The **Global Ethic Foundation** has come into being through the generosity of **Count K. K. von der Groeben**. In 1995 he read "Global Responsibility" and was so impressed by it that he made available a substantial sum for the dissemination of the idea of a global ethic. In the words of its founder, "the Foundation is to show that there are more satisfying values than material pleasure, and that to commit oneself to a lofty goal brings great joy. We must get away from the celebration of 'self-fulfilment' and the idea of prosperity and make it clear to people that if we are to live together in peace and freedom we need high ethical norms. Perhaps yet more people will associate themselves with our initiative. There is plenty of work and plenty to do!"

The interest from the capital of the Foundation will ensure that a small research team under the direction of Hans Küng can engage in long-term work to further a global ethic. The Foundation will also support wider initiatives and projects in line with its aims.



The Children of Abraham Institute (“CHAI”) is dedicated to bringing indigenous religious interests back on the map as essential components of peace negotiations between peoples with a history of intense religiosity. The Institute focuses specifically on the three Abrahamic Religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – and on the conflicts that divide peoples who otherwise share allegiance to the same God. The most urgent of these conflicts are, of course, violent ones, but CHAI also focuses on non-violent but socially significant political disagreements among religious groups. There are three aspects to the work of CHAI.

- The first is to cultivate a circle of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian scholars who have learned how to work closely together, studying each other’s sacred traditions and generating models of cooperative study among practitioners of the three Abrahamic faiths.
- The second objective is to observe patterns of overlapping understanding that emerge out of sustained dialogues among religious leaders of the three faiths. These dialogues should generate families of “peace practices” that can be translated back into the indigenous vocabularies of the various communities, but that are also continually refined through each event of CHAI’s study and conversation.
- The third objective is to enable these religious leaders to establish regional centers of CHAI in their home cities, encouraging gradually expanding circles of Abrahamic practitioners to share in CHAI’s practices of study and the ideals of peacemaking. Over time, these circles of study and friendship should include religious and political leaders in their local communities.
- The fourth objective is to develop programs of study-in secondary schools, universities, and seminaries-that prepare future scholars and religious leaders in the methods and visions of peace among the children of Abraham.

Location: U.S.

<http://etext.virginia.edu/journals/abraham/index.html>

**What Theos is**

Theos is a public theology think tank which exists to undertake research and provide commentary on social and political arrangements. We aim to impact opinion around issues of faith and belief in society. We were launched in November 2006 with the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, and the former Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor. Our first report "Doing God": A Future for Faith in the Public Square examined the reasons why faith will play an increasingly significant role in public life.

What Theos stands for

Society is embarking on a process of de-secularisation. Interest in spirituality is increasing across Western culture. Faith is on the agenda of both government and the media. In the arts, humanities and social sciences there are important intellectual developments currently taking place around questions of values and identity. Theos speaks into this new context. Our perspective is that faith is not just important for human flourishing and the renewal of society, but that society can only truly flourish if faith is given the space to do so. We reject notions of a sacred-secular divide.

What Theos works on

Theos undertakes research across a wide range of subject areas. We analyse social and political change and offer interesting new angles and alternative perspectives on the issues that matter.



As an institution shared by the 43 countries of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) is in unique position to bring people together from different cultural, social and religious backgrounds for the promotion of mutual understanding across the two shores of the Mediterranean.

Since its launch in 2005, the Foundation has developed a region-wide Network of over 3000 civil society organisations, comprised of NGOs, schools, universities, youth groups, cultural practitioners, social and religious leaders, a network which forms the backbone of the Foundation's programme which aims to impact on those fields where mutual perceptions are shaped: education, culture, media, cities and migration and the field of religion, spirituality and values.

Inspired by the search for common values and mutual knowledge, the Anna Lindh Foundation aspires at valuing the religious diversity as an asset for the region and establishing bridges of exchange between religious and secular communities based on the principles of tolerance, understanding, freedom and respect for human rights among people coming from different cultures and beliefs.

**Editors and Contributors to
the Annual Dialogue Report**

Editors

Ibrahim Negm is Senior advisor to Sheikh Shawky Allam, The Grand Mufti of Egypt. He was awarded a distinguished fellowship to conduct research at Harvard Law School in 1996. He was also a visiting Researcher at the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences. He was also a visiting Scholar and researcher at Oxford University, UK, 2002. He obtained his Ph.D. in Islamic Studies in 2005 from Graduate Theological Foundation, IN. After earning his graduate Degree, he was awarded an adjunct position as an Assistant Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at St. John's University in New York. He served as a full time Imam and Director at the Islamic Center of South Shore in New York. He then served as the first Director of the Islamic Learning Foundation in College Point NY. Sheikh Negm has been the Senior Advisor to Sheikh Ali Gomaa, the former Grand Mufti of Egypt.



Christian Kolmer is the Head of Political and Social Research at Media Tenor International. Born 1965 in Essen, he studied Medieval and Modern History, Journalism and Communication Science and Economics in Bochum and Mainz from 1985 to 1993. He conducted research on the media image of the German Treuhandanstalt, and completed his PhD in 1999, on theories of news selection.



Since 1994, he has worked as a research associate at Media Tenor in Bonn and Zurich, last responsible for political studies, knowledge transfer and social issues.

His work focuses on: Agenda setting, news selection, international comparative content analyses, media and war.

Roland Schatz is the Founder and CEO of Media Tenor International and InnoVatio Publishing. Schatz is a journalist in the 5th generation of his family and has devoted the past 30 years to implementing Perception Change by empowering media. In 2008, he launched, together with Prince Ghazi of Jordan, the C1 One World Dialogue foundation, to improve Inter-Faith-Dialogue. The InnoVatio network of academics, entrepreneurs and media leaders initiated the UN Global Sustainability Index. Schatz hosts masterclasses on ‘Unlearning Intolerance’ at the UN and teaches at the Institute for Future Management of the Sigmund Freud University in Vienna. In 2013 Schatz was ap-pointed Senior Advisor to the General Director of the UN in Geneva.



Shawki Allam in the nineteenth and the current Grand Mufti of Egypt since March 4th, 2013.



Shawki Allam was born in the Nile Delta governorate of Beheira. He received his PhD in 1996 from the Al-azhar University in Jurisprudence and Sharia law. Prior to his appointment as the Grand Mufti of Egypt, he

served as the chairman of the Department of Jurisprudence at the School of Sharia at Al-Azhar University's Tanta branch.

In February 2013, he was elected by Al Azhar's council of senior scholars replacing outgoing grand Mufti, Ali Gomaa. This makes the first time that the Grand Mufti has been elected by Islamic scholars rather than appointed by the state

The position of Grand Mufti is seen as very influential in Egypt as well as throughout the Arab and Islamic world. The Grand Mufti is the first and primary source of religious authority, is seen as the symbolic religious representative of the whole state, and issues fatwas on religious matters. His office, the Dar al Ifta (literally, the house of fatwas), an agency charged with issuing religious legal opinions on any question to Muslims who ask for them, issues some half a million fatwas a year in ten different languages, including both the official ones that he himself crafts on important issues and the more routine ones handled via phone and Internet by a dozen or so subordinate muftis.

Dr Allam is a prolific writer. He wrote more than a dozen books on various issues of Islamic Law including women's political engagement, Criminal justice, codification of Islamic Law, religious minorities and Islamic thought.

Since his appointment as the Grand Mufti of Egypt, he made it a point to reach out to the whole world to promote an authoritative picture of Islam and spread peaceful coexistence and build bridges of understanding and cooperation. He was recently named the best promoter of interfaith understanding in 2014 by the interfaith alliance in South Korea.

He was recently selected the President of the world supreme council of Fatwa authorities. It is an initiative launched in Cairo of the senior leading Grand Muftis worldwide.

James D. Bindenagel is Henry Kissinger Professor for Governance and International Security at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University Bonn, Germany.

He is U.S. Ambassador (ret), whose professional speaking and writing includes teaching, articles and public lectures on international security in the 21st century, German security issues, Bundeswehr deployments, conflict prevention, post-conflict justice, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, the Kimberley Process for conflict diamonds, debates and other topics. Bindenagel is a former U.S. Ambassador, a career diplomat and an expert on Germany. He served as an American diplomat in East, West and united Germany during the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War, unification of Germany, the Balkan Wars, debates on North Atlantic Treaty Organization security policy and expanded NATO membership, and German national security from 1972 to 2002. He introduced and promoted American Foreign Direct Investment in the Eastern states of Germany after unification in 1990 that made the United States the largest foreign investor in the five new German federal States. The Wall Street Journal profiled him on its front page as acting U.S. ambassador in Germany leading a business friendly U.S. Embassy.

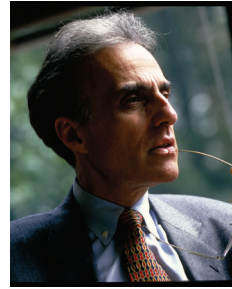


He served as deputy and acting U.S. Ambassador in East Germany (1989-1990) and in United Germany (1994-1997). He was appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1999 as U.S. Ambassador and Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, was Special U.S. Negotiator for "Conflict Diamonds", and was Vice President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and at DePaul University. Bindenagel also served as President of the Japan America Society of Chicago. Prior to his diplomatic career he was assigned to the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division in Germany.

He holds an MA in Public Administration and an AB in Political Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

John L. Esposito is Professor of Religion and International Affairs and of Islamic Studies and Founding Director of the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at the Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University.

Esposito specializes in Islam, political Islam from North Africa to Southeast Asia, and Religion and International Affairs. He is editor-in-chief of the four-volume *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, *The Oxford History of Islam*, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, *The Islamic World: Past and Present*, the six-volume *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* and Oxford Islamic Studies Online. His more than thirty five books include *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (with Dalia Mogahed), *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, *Islam and Politics*, *Political Islam: Radicalism, Revolution or Reform?*, *Islam and Democracy* (with J. Voll) and *Women in Muslim Family Law*. His writings have been translated into more than 28 languages. A former president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America and the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies, he was a member of the World Economic Forum's Council of 100 Leaders, and is also on the High Level Group of the U.N. Alliance of Civilizations and President of the Executive Scientific Committee for *La Maison de la Mediterranee*'s 2005-2010 project, "The Mediterranean, Europe and Islam: Actors in Dialogue." Esposito is a recipient of the American Academy of Religion's 2005 Martin E. Marty Award for the Public Understanding of Religion and of Pakistan's *Quaid-i-Azzam* Award for Outstanding Contributions in Islamic Studies. He has served as a consultant to the U.S. Department of State and to governments, corporations, universities, and the media. In 2003 he received the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University Award for Outstanding Teaching.



H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal

Founder C-1 World Dialogue Foundation

Date of Birth: 15th October 1966.

Education:

- Cambridge University (Trinity College):
(1988-1989; 1990-1993)
Ph.D. (Cantab.) in Modern and Medieval Languages and Literatures (July 1993)
- Princeton University: (1984-1988)
B.A., Comparative Literature (June 1988).
(Graduated with Highest Honours, *Summa cum laude.*)
- Harrow School: (1979-1984)
'O' and 'A' Levels.



Official Work:

- *Personal Envoy of H.M. King Abdullah II and Special Advisor to H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan.*
(October 6th 2003 to present.)
- *Advisor for Tribal Affairs and Cultural Secretary to H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan.*
(From February 7th 1999, until October 6th 2003.)
- *Advisor to His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan for Tribal Affairs.*
(July 2nd 1998 to February 7th 1999.)
(in addition to the post of *Cultural Secretary*).
- *Cultural Secretary to His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan.*
(October 4th 1994 to February 7th 1999.)
- *Officer* in the Royal Jordanian Desert Police Force (June 1989-December 1992):
Promoted to *First Lieutenant* (November 14, 1992).
Commissioned as a *Second Lieutenant* (November 1989).

Regent of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan:

- Has served Jordan as *Regent* in the absence of H.M. King Abdullah II from the country.

Rabbi Dr. Alon Goshen-Gottstein has been the director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute (formerly the Elijah School for the Study of Wisdom in World Religions) since 1997. Alon is acknowledged as one of the world's leading figures in interreligious dialogue, specializing in bridging the theological and academic dimension with a variety of practical initiatives, especially involving world religious leadership. He is both a theoretician and activist, setting trends and precedents in the global interfaith arena. He is the founder and director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute (formerly the Elijah School for the Study of Wisdom in World Religions), and its rich website is testimony to his many and varied activities. A noted scholar of Jewish studies, he has held academic posts at Tel Aviv University and has served as director of the Center for the Study of Rabbinic Thought, Beit Morasha College, Jerusalem. Ordained a rabbi in 1977, he received his Ph.D. from Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1986 in the area of Rabbinic thought. From 1989 to 1999, he was a member of the Shalom Hartman Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem, where he also served as director for interreligious affairs. Stanford University Press published his *The Sinner and the Amnesiac: The Rabbinic Invention of Elisha ben Abuya and Eleazar ben Arach* in 2000, and the Littman Library published his co-edited volume *Jewish Theology and World Religions*. His *Beyond Idolatry – The Jewish Encounter with Hinduism* is to appear shortly. Several other collective research projects and edited volumes complement more than fifty articles, published in such scholarly journals as *Harvard Theological Review*, *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, *Journal of Literature and Theology*, *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, *Ecumenism*, and *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*.



Jovan Kurbalija is the Founding Director of DiploFoundation and the Head of the Geneva Internet Platform. A former diplomat, Dr Kurbalija has a professional and academic background in international law, diplomacy, and information technology. He has been a pioneer in the field of e-diplomacy since 1992 when he established the Unit for Information Technology and Diplomacy at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies in Malta.



Dr Kurbalija is a leading expert in the field of e-diplomacy and the impact of the Internet on international relations. His book, *An Introduction to Internet Governance*, has been translated into 14 languages and is used as a textbook on academic courses worldwide. Dr Kurbalija lectures on e-diplomacy and Internet governance in academic and training institutions in many countries, including Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. He is currently based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Prince Michael of Liechtenstein is Founder and Chairman of the Geopolitical Information Service AG and President of Finanzkontor in Vaduz, an international advisory and fiduciary trust company. He is also President of the think tank, ECAEF based in Vaduz. He studied Commerce at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, and consolidated his studies by assignments in the banking and industrial sector in Belgium, Canada and the U.S. From 1978 to 1987, he worked for Nestlé SA in the fields of controlling, management and marketing in various markets in Europe and Africa.



Ferdinand Mirbach is a project manager within the Cultural Orientations program at the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Gütersloh (Germany). After completing studies (2000 – 2005) in political science and religious studies in Munich, Göttingen and Bologna, he wrote a dissertation on the political integration of Muslims in Germany. Since 2008 he has been managing several projects at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, including the Religion Monitor. His research interests include issues regarding inter-religious dialogue and the integration of minorities in heterogeneous societies.



Michael Møller is Acting Head, United Nations Office at Geneva. Møller brings to the position a wealth of experience, having served for more than 30 years as an international civil servant in the United Nations. Most recently he was Executive Director of the Kofi Annan Foundation from 2008 to 2011. Prior to this, he served as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cyprus (2006-2008) and Director for Political, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs in the Office of the Secretary-General (2001-2006), also serving concurrently as Deputy Chief of Staff for the last two years of that period.



Martin Rieger is director of the Cultural Orientations program at the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Gütersloh (Germany). Following his studies in philosophy and theology (1988-1993), he completed his Ph.D. in liturgy and objective theology. From 1994 to 2004 he worked as a press relations officer with Lutheran church services in Germany. He then taught at the Berlin University of the Arts until 2006. Martin Rieger oversees several projects at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, including the Religion Monitor.



