

**Ministry of Awqaf  
The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs**

**PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE  
BETWEEN RELIGIONS AND  
FIQH OF COEXISTENCE:**

**Towards the Renewal Approach**

**By**

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**The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies  
and Research**

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## Introduction

The United Arab Emirates is an illustrious example of the ideal civilization in peaceful coexistence among people who belong to different religions, nations, races and cultures. It is indeed the fruit of the way first entrenched by the Wise Man of the Arabs Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan (may God rest his soul in peace) and later adopted by his sons and brothers of the rulers of the Emirates in a civilization-oriented vision worthy of all appreciation.

In an age rich with numerous faiths, ideologies and intellectual orientations, we believe that the most important basis for stability of societies is the viability of their citizens to coexist with others, given their diversity and different beliefs and attitudes. Such diversity is a natural and universal norm, As God (may He be Exalted) says, "And if your Lord had wished, He could have made all the people one nation, but they still would have continued to disagree. Except whom your Lord has

mercy upon; and for that He has created them. And the word of your Lord came true: "I will fill Hell with the Jinn and the people together!" (the Qur'ān, 11:118-119)

Undoubtedly, many of the conflicts, wars, killing and destruction we witness in the international arena— are due to a number of reasons. The most important of these reasons are the economic and political ambitions and conflicts, the weak human sensibility, the imbalance of value order with double or even multiple standards are used, the complete absence of awareness and accurate understanding of the requisites and basic rules of peaceful coexistence among religions. Furthermore, there is unawareness of the *fiqh* of coexistence among the followers of different religions, nations, races and ideologies.

This lecture has six sections and conclusion. In these sections, I hope to present a Shari'ah-oriented academic and intellectual enlightenment that contributes to the achievement of civilizational rapprochement and communication as well as acceptance of the other and better

coexistence. God (may He be Exalted) says, "O people, We created you from a male and female, and We made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely, the most honorable among you in the sight of God is the most righteous. God is Knowledgeable, Aware" (the Quran, 49: 13).

The Quran makes it plain that the fact that peoples are made into numerous nations and tribes shall basically encourage them to know and understands one another. This kind of knowledge and understanding is an objective for the differences between human beings, which is one of the universal norm that no one can overlook or ignore in any discussion on the peaceful coexistence among religions and the *fiqh* of coexistence of human beings.



## **Common Human Values in the Divinely Revealed Religions**

It is no doubt that all human beings are generally in need of stressing the human system of values and the belief in the civilizational and cultural diversity to coexist together and enhance the common human values. It is an emphasis that such coexistence is one of the basic principles of the mission of all religions. So, the religion shall not be abused for realizing political or economic interests, which results in killings and destructions in the name of religion under the outcries of *takbeer* (Allah Akbar i.e. Allah is the Greatest), *tahleel* (La Ilaha Illa Allah i.e. there is no god but Allah), *tasleeb* i.e. crossing oneself or any other similar symbols.

Allah (may He be Exalted) has dignified all human beings without discrimination. He (may He be Exalted) says, "We have honored the Children of Adam and carried them in the land and the

sea, and We have provided for them of the good things, and We have preferred them over many of those We created" (the Quran, 17: 70).

This point find further emphasis in statement of the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in his *Farewell Khutbah*, well known as *khutbat al-Wada'* as he said, "O people indeed your God is one and your father is one (i.e. Adam). You are the descendants of Adam who was created from dust (i.e. mud). The most honored among you is the most-righteous one. An Arab has no preference over a non-Arab except through righteousness."

Heavenly laws unanimously agree on a large set of human values and principles including the preservation of one's soul. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "It is because of this that We have decreed for the Children of Israel, "Anyone who kills a person who has not committed murder, or who has not committed mischief in the land; then it is as if he has killed all the people! Whoever spares a life, then it is as if he has given life to all the people". Our

messengers had come to them with clarification, but many of them are, after this, still transgressing on the earth" (the Quran, 5: 32) Therefore, man is like a building built by God. One who demolishes it (i.e. kills man) is demolishing the building of Allah.

Prophet Muhammad (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) stressed the sanctity of the human soul when he stood up upon seeing a funeral of a Jew. Some people wondered that it was a funeral of a Jew. He replied, "Was it not a soul?!".

All divine laws are in agreement on the basic values of justice, tolerance, fulfillment of one's pledges, honesty, telling the truth, doing what is right and gratitude to one's parents as well as the prohibition of violating the orphan's property and the merits of good neighbors, good words and fairness in measurement.

Simply, such commonalities indicate the same divine source. In the words of Prophet Muhammad (may God's peace and blessings be upon him) said, 'Prophets are brothers in faith;

they have various mothers (i.e. various laws) but their religion (beliefs and ethics) is one."<sup>1</sup>

Divine laws may differ from one another in the manners, time or place of worships but their human morals and ethics, acting as the foundations of coexistence, remain the same. For example, Prophet Muhammad (may God's peace and blessings be upon him) said, «Among the words that people learned from the earlier Prophets are: 'If you feel no shame, then do as you like».<sup>2</sup>

You will find no law permitting the killing of a human being without a just cause or allowing adultery, ingratitude towards parents, consumption of ill-gotten gains or violation of orphan's property and workers' due rights. No law ever tolerates telling lies, dishonest behaviors, betrayal or break of promises and returning evil for good

On the contrary, all divine laws are unanimously in accord on these lofty human values; they all condemn bad manners. Whoever deviates from them is not only a breaker of religions, but also a breaker of humanity and sound nature. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "It is the nature that God has made the people on. There is no changing in God's creation," (the Quran, 30: 30).

The Holy Quran mentions the Ten Commandments agreed upon by all religions. Allah (may He be Exalted) orders His Prophet to recite for people Allah's prohibitions communicated in Islamic legislation, the last and seal of religions. Addressing Prophet Muhammad (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), He says, "Come let me recite to you what your Lord has forbidden for you: that you should not set up anything with Him; and be kind to your parents; and do not kill your born children for fear of poverty, We provide for you and for them. And, do not come near lewdness, what is plain of it or subtle; and do not kill the person which God has forbidden, except in justice. That is what He enjoined you that you may comprehend. Do not come near the money of the orphan, except for what is best, until he reached his maturity; and give honestly full measure and weight equitably. We do not burden a person beyond his capacity. When you speak you must observe justice, even if against a relative. You shall also observe the pledges you made to God. He has enjoined you this so that you may take heed. This is My path, a Straight One.

"So follow it, and do not follow the other paths lest they divert you from His path. That is what He has enjoined you so that you may be aware" (the Quran, 6: 151-153).

Commenting on these *Qur'anic* Quranic verses, Ibn'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with both of them)

Ibn 'Abbas said, "These are decisively authoritative verses that no other verse in the book abolished; these limits are duties upon all humankind and they are the mother of the book, (viz. seminal and fundamental principles). S/He who abides by them is admitted to Paradise and s/he who abandons them is leading to hellfire."

Islam teaches Muslims to speak softly with human beings without the least discrimination, God (may He be Exalted) says, «... and speak kindly to humankind» (the Qur'ān, 2: 81). Other verses even command the best of words: «Tell My servants i.e. Muslims, to speak that which is best» (the Qur'ān, 17: 53). It is frequently said that good behavior is very simple: cheerful face and sweet tongue!

God (may He be Exalted) says, «The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then will

he, between whom and you is enmity, will become as if he is an intimate friend. (34) None is granted such good save those who are steadfast and none is granted it save the owner of great happiness» (the Qur'an, 41: 34-35).

In the words of Prophet 'Isa (Jesus, God's peace be upon him): "If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also!" (Mathew, 5: 39).

Indeed, it is a great universal call for tolerance echoed in all divine revelations for humankind to live in peace and love free from conflicts, differences, violence and terror.

Religions came to bring good for people and happiness for humanity in this life and the Hereafter. Furthermore, religious values in various civilizations are the foundation of lofty ethical values and principles. Civilizations neglecting values and ethics lay the foundations for their demolishment although striving to develop.

Therefore, dialogue between people of different religions about the common values is the best way to understand each other for sake of positive cooperation for the good, welfare and progress of

humankind and the domination of peace and stability all over the world. Interfaith peace is inevitable for the achievement of peace among humankind.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most significant issues based on such common human values is the role of religions in the promotion of peace worldwide and the interreligious cooperation to exclude unjustifiable wars and prevent meaningless destructive wars. These wars demolish the world's reservations and resources. They shall present holy wars that spread injustice and oppress entire peoples because of their beliefs. The religions can act for positive cooperation in combating terrorism and violence worldwide and supporting justice and right by siding with the legal rights of the oppressed nations regardless of their religious or racial backgrounds.<sup>4</sup>



## **Charter of Medina**

The Charter of Medina is one of the best ideal examples for human coexistence. In the light of the current political and cultural climate, replete with conflicts and partisan and ideological polarization, we feel a dire need to consult our Islamic heritage and search for the tolerance spirit the civilized Islamic history reveals, which is also attested to by the Charter of Medina that has answers to the today's questions and future expectations. It paves the way for coexistence relying on humanly lofty foundations.

It lays the foundation for the coexistence sought by all members of the community regardless of religions and beliefs. The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) assured that the Jews of Banu 'Awf, Banu Al-Najjar, Banu al-Harith, Banu Sa'ida, Banu Jusham, Banu Aws, and Bani Tha'lab in addition to the Muslims are only one nation; to the Jews their religion and to the Muslim their

religion within the peaceful human coexistence that shall be commonly shared.

It also states that parties of this Pact would help each other against anyone who attacks the people of this document. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and good, not sin. Also, no persons allying transgressing parties should be harmed until they share them transgression. The contracting parties are bound to help the oppressed, and the Jews should share the expenses at times of war. A neighbor is like one's soul; therefore, s/he may not be harmed or accused of being a sinner. They should combat any attack on Yathrib and it shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document. One who leaves Medina will be safe and so are those living therein, except transgressors. God is the protector of the doer of good and the God-fearing and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.<sup>5</sup>

In this charter the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) presented the highest example of human values of coexistence, civilization, loftiness, respect of human values. No one can match his tolerance and justice, for he

(may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) firstly says, "to the Jews their religion" before saying, "and to the Muslim their religion."

He ensures the right to freedom of belief. Islamic religion prohibits killing based on religious or racial discrimination. Seeing a woman who was killed in a war, he condemned the act saying, "Who killed this woman? Such a woman was not to be fought." He then sent a man telling Khalid "Not to kill a woman or worker."<sup>6</sup>

The charter ensures the means to social security, mutual mercy and consultation, keeping promises and honesty and stresses the equality and mutual rights of Muslims and non-Muslims in the community on equal footing.

His eminence Prof. Dr. Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar<sup>7</sup> delivered a fabulous speech stressing that Islamic faith encourages Muslims to be fair and abide by the rules of justice regardless of love and hate. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "And let not the hatred towards a people make you avoid being

just. Be just, for it is closer to awareness, and be aware of God. God is Expert over what you do" (the Quran, 5: 8). The Quranic verse indicates that one should not oppress or wrong others because of hatred.

He mentioned that Ibn Taymiyyah, influenced by al-Zamakhshari, commented on the *verse* saying: "If the Quran prevents us from wronging or oppressing the disbelievers whom we hate, what about the followers of our *milla* (religion) whom we hate, be they *fasiq* (profligate), *Mubtadi'* (heretic), sinner or *Mut'awwil* (taking a wrong or less preferred opinion)?! Indeed they are in dire need of good invitation in wisdom and good admonition. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "Invite to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and argue with them in the best possible manner. Your Lord is fully aware of who is misguided from His path, and He is fully aware of the guided ones" (the Quran, 16: 125).

There should be no conflict, violence or rebuke. He (may He be Exalted) also says, "O you who acknowledge, join in

peace, all of you, and do not follow the footsteps of the devil. He is to you a clear enemy" (the Quran, 2: 208); he who seeks disagreement, conflict, fight and violence is following the footsteps of devils and is deceived by satanic tricks.

Al-Tayyib also says, "This Islam which built a nation of history makers and created a civilization as we all know. It is the religion of peace for all; it promotes domestic peace for its citizens and exports it to humanity. Allah (may He be Exalted) sent his Messenger Muhammad (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as a mercy for all human beings urged his followers to be messengers of peace among themselves, then messengers of peace to the whole world, even to the worlds of animals, plants or inanimate things".

Is not that a Muslim is the only person who usually sends peace to himself and then to all righteous people in his obligatory prayers more than 17 times a day, at least? Is not that the *Salam* (peace) is the usual greeting of Muslims? Is the word 'peace' not repeated 42 times in the Holy Quran? It has these many mentions in honor

of peace and emphasis of its importance for individual and society. Does not the Holy Quran call the *Jannah* (Paradise) the 'House (i.e. land) of peace and make the greeting of its people "*Salam*" (peace). Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "And their greeting in it is: "Peace" (the Quran, 10: 10). Allah also says, "Angels will greet them at every gat, "Peace be upon you for what you have been patient for. Excellent indeed is the final abode." (the Quran, 13: 23-24)?!

Islam calls for and promotes peace encouraging people to move towards it and 'enter into it' for the Islamic teachings and principles to materialize in human life. Consequently, they would have safety for souls and hearts and enjoy fairness of mind and spirit.

No doubt, peace is one of the most prominent rites of Islam. Islam makes it the usual greeting among Muslims so that they may abide by it in their lives. Allah (may He be Exalted) orders the believers to take it as the usual greeting when they meet or while making farewell saying, "When you enter any home, you shall greet each other a greeting from God that is blessed and

good. God thus explains the revelations for you that you may reason" (the Quran, 24: 61).

All these commands are made to ensure the spread of peace in society, so individuals may achieve their religious and worldly goals, and patriots can fulfill the dreams of their respective nations and achieve their own goals.

Islam generally denotes peace '*salam*'. The word '*salam*' is derived from a divine attribute and name of Allah (may He be Exalted): '*Al-Salam*'. This finds further support in the plain meaning of *Quranic* texts. Mentioning His names, Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "He is God; there is no other god beside Him. Knower of all secrets and declarations. He is the Gracious, the Compassionate. He is God; there is no other god beside Him. The King, the Holy, the Peace, the Trusted, the Supreme, the Noble, the Powerful, the Dignified. God be glorified; far above what they set up" (the Quran, 59: 22-23). He urges people to enter in peace saying, "O you who acknowledge, join in peace, all of you, and do not follow

the footsteps of the devil. He is to you a clear enemy" (the Quran, 2: 208).

It is out of the Islamic universal principles and high objectives that peace became a worldwide principle for all humanity, not restricted to the believers. Like Muslims, other people shall enjoy peace and happiness and promote them all over the world. Zurarah Ibn Awfa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Abdullah Ibn Salam said, "When the Messenger of Allah (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) came to Medina, the people rushed towards him and it was said: 'The Messenger of Allah (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has come!' I came along with the people to see him, and when I looked at the face of the Messenger of Allah (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), I realized that his face was not the face of a liar. The first thing he said was: 'O people, spread (the greeting of) *Salam*, offer food to people and pray at night when people are sleeping, you will enter Paradise in peace.'"<sup>8</sup>



The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) addressed people generally, not only Muslims or believers saying, "O people, spread (the greeting of) *Salam*" giving precedence to spreading peace in mention over offering food to people and praying at night to stress the importance of peace and its role in maintaining security for individuals and society.

Furthermore, the nearest one to Allah and his bounty, mercy and good is the one who is first to promote peace and greet people with peace and spread such greeting. Abu Dawud narrated on the authority of Abu Umamah that the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "The person nearest to Allah is one who is the first to offer the greeting of peace."

Throughout history, Muslim Imams stressed that peace is the heist of Islamic goals and the most important of its objective in this world. The revealed messages consecutively stressed the necessity of promoting peace with one's self and family. For instance, Allah (may He

be Exalted) addresses his Prophet Noah saying, "O Noah, descend with peace from Us, and with blessings upon you and upon nations to come from those with you" (the Quran, 11: 48).

Prophet Abraham, reaching an impasse in calling his father who insisted on driving him out of home, did not insult him and rather dealt kindly with him. The Quran relates the incident saying, "He said, "Have you abandoned my gods, O Abraham? If you do not stop this, I will stone you. Leave me alone. He said, "Peace be upon you, I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord. He has been most kind to me" (the Quran, 19: 46-47).

Prophet Abraham, although being insulted, follows the religious mission of keeping peace with spirit, peace with others and peace with all creatures avenging the bad treatment with the good one. He says, "Peace be upon you, I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord." Also Prophet Jesus, proclaims peace for himself saying, "Peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am resurrected alive" (19: 33).

The applied meaning of peace manifests in laying foundation for mercy and good, justice and fairness, and equity between all human beings in isolation from human lusts and desires. There would be no peace with partial interests.

Zaqzuq, the former minister of Awqaf sets forth the regulations and conditions for religious tolerance.<sup>9</sup> The first essential condition is that there should be a mutual tolerance with followers of other religions. The tolerance we mean is free from negative shadows; it is like an intellectual truce excluding inconvenient thoughts and helping parties concentrate on the common core-points to reach concrete solutions. It is a kind of knowledge-based tolerance requires profound knowledge of religions.

The Second Condition is that the successful dialogue can be achieved through mutual respect of human dignity. It is the respect for the individual's ability to act as God's vicegerent with responsibility and innovation. Cultural, racial, national, racial and color variations of people pave the way for the possibility of human education and elevation. They also pave

the way for fruitful competition, ideas exchange and enrichment of human life.

It was possible for Allah (may He be Exalted) to make all people into one nation and consequently share the same civilization. However, cultural and religious groups' intense competition for good allows people to reap the fruits of education and civilization. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "Had your Lord wished, He could have made all the people one nation, but they still would continue to disagree; Except whom your Lord has mercy upon; and for that He has created them. The word of your Lord came true: "I will fill hell with the Jinn and the humans together!" (the Quran, 11: 118-119).

It is quite recently evident now that humanity should choose between extremists of the two parties, who consider others' beliefs as misguided doctrines and the religious tolerance that admits that Allah (may He be Exalted) had revealed revelation in various ages. If we are to coordinate a civilized successful dialogue reliant on knowledge-oriented tolerance and mutual respect to create the necessary

trust climate, it is necessary to admit the de facto religions.

Islamic tolerance exceeds what is stated in the Medina Charter. The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did his utmost to maintain human rights for non-Muslims. In a letter addressing the people of Najran, he says, "For Najran and its followers the alliance of Allah and the promise of Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to have safety regarding their properties, souls, lands, religion and their fellows living among them; and those departed from them, their families, and trades and what they own whether little or much. No Bishop will be driven out of his bishopric, or a monk out of his monasticism or a priest of his priesthood. No disgrace shall reach them.

The rightly-guided caliphs also followed the Prophets way. 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) made for the Christian people of Jerusalem a treaty of peace according to which they enjoyed safety regarding their souls, properties and churches whether

dilapidated or in good condition, and also safety for all other Christian sects.

Their churches shall not be inhabited by others, demolished, made smaller or good things are taken out of them. They also have safety with regard to their crosses and properties. And they will not be subject to leave their religion or to harm.

This treaty highlights the greatness of Islam in dealing with non-Muslims with fairness, free from forcing them to accept Islam. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "There is no compulsion in the system." He also says, "And I was commanded to treat you equally. God is our Lord and your Lord. We have our deeds and you have your deeds. There is no argument between us and you. God will gather us all together, and to Him is the ultimate destiny" (the Quran, 42: 15)

## **The Danger of *Takfiri* Thought and Fatwa Without Knowledge**

Many Muslim countries and many other countries worldwide have suffered from religious extremism and non-specialists' attempts of penetrating *Daw'ah* and fatwa spheres. Their attempts of using religions are for political aims. We decided that *Da'wa* and fatwa should be excluded from political utilization or parties or *Madh-habi* (related to schools of law) conflicts which trade in religion or exploit religious emotions to achieve special interests on the account of national security.

No doubt, extremism, violence, terrorism, or reckless *takfir* would reflect negatively on national issues and nations' stability, security and their high interests from one side and international relations from the other.

The fear of the infection of extremism is disturbing dangers to stable and secure countries as the world is currently like one

village and mass media are influencing the entire world. The South is influenced by news from the East and the West by news from the East.

The influences of all sides overlap, parallel and intersect through the social network sites whose influences are unavoidable.

Scholars warned against groundless *takfir* that lack clear-cut proofs. Imam Al-Shawkani (may God rest his soul in peace) said, “Know that the judgment of a Muslim as a deserter of the religion of Islam and a holder of disbelief shall not be precipitated by a Muslim who believes in God and the Last Day unless he has a plain incontrovertible evidence clearer than the midday sun.

Stressing the danger of declaring *takfir* without right and warning against it, Prophet Muhammad (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) says, “When a man calls his Muslim brother a disbeliever, one of them shall certainly and deservedly be as such.” Such narrations and others similar to them shall strictly deter



and restrain the hasty decisions of excommunication.”<sup>10</sup>

*Takfiri-thought* and *fatwa* without knowledge is one of the worst forms of deviation from religious moderation and fairness and the way of the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his companions.

It is an old-new calamity; it led people astray in the past when a Muslim group upheld it and rebelled against the Muslim nation. The Muslim called them “*Al-Khawarij sect*”. As a result of misguided opinions upheld by this sect, many disagreements and calamities had afflicted the Muslim nation, bloodshed among Muslims was made lawful, and violations against humans' dignity and legislations were committed.

Muslims suffered many bad effects of this awful calamity. It is also a new calamity, because there are new misguided extremist sects declaring Muslims disbelievers. Declaring Muslims disbelievers without knowledge, they are following *the*

*khawarij* and instigating trials (or disorders) among the Muslim nation.

There are prophetic texts, which greatly warn against *takfir*. The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said, "If somebody accuses another of disbelief or calls him the enemy of Allah, such an accusation will revert to him (the accuser) if the accused is innocent".<sup>11</sup>

Exclusion from declaring a Muslim a disbeliever is one of the most prominent doctrines of Islam. The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) says: "Three things are the roots of faith: to refrain from (killing) a person who says, "*there is no god but Allah*" and not to declare him unbeliever whatever sin he commits, and not to excommunicate him from Islam for his any action. Jihad will be performed continuously since the day Allah sent me as a prophet until the day the last member of my community will fight with the Dajjal (Antichrist). The tyranny of any tyrant and the justice of any just (ruler) will not invalidate it. One must have faith in Divine decree".<sup>12</sup>

All these texts clearly state that a Muslim should beware of *reckless takfir* for being dangerous to individuals and communities.

This is also the way of the *Salaf* (early good Muslim ancestors) including the *Sahaba* (Companions of the Prophet) and the *Tabiu'un* (Successors for the *Sahaba*). Al-A'mash reported on the authority of Abu Sufyan that the latter asked Jaber (may Allah be pleased with him) who was living in Mecca among Banu Fihri (an Arab tribe) about this. Jaber was firstly asked by a man who said, "Would you declare people praying to the *Qibla* (i.e. Muslims) pagans?" He replied, "[No] I seek refuge with Allah!" So I asked, "Would you declare them disbelievers?" He said, "No".<sup>13</sup>

Islamic viewpoint of warning against *takfir* is so clear in comparison to those views based on *reckless takfir*. It is based on Allah's saying, "And do not say to those who greet you with peace, "You are not an acknowledger!" (the Quran, 4: 94).

The Quranic verse prohibits us to declare the one uttering *salam* before us a

disbeliever, then what will the case be with those who utter the *shahada* (*la ilahaila Allah* i.e. there is no God but Allah) before us?!

Al-Thabit Ibn Al-Dahhak (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Cursing a believer is like murdering him. He who kills himself with a thing in this world would be tormented with that (very thing) on the Day of Resurrection; none is obliged to give votive offering (of a thing) which is not in his possession and whoever accuses a believer of disbelief, then it is as if he had killed him".<sup>14</sup>

Muslim scholars followed such prophetic warnings. Therefore, fearing Allah, they were very cautious to draw nearer to this area. They deemed those recklessly declaring *takfir* led astray and lacking in knowledge and belief.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr says, "The Quran and *Sunnah* undoubtedly and clearly prohibit declaring a Muslim a *fasiq* and disbeliever... Thus, it is obligatory not to make *takfir*

except with regard to those regarding whom there is a consensus to be declared disbelievers or that there is a clear-cut and decisive proof to be declared disbelievers".<sup>15</sup>

Al-Qurtuby says, "The area of *takfir* is so dangerous that many people dared to enter it so they went astray and others did not, so they were safe (guided)".<sup>16</sup>

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami recorded that Shafi'i scholars were cautious when it came to *takfir*. He says, "A Mufti (one issuing a fatwa) should be cautious with regard to *takfir* as much as possible, for it is dangerous and being [disbelief] is mostly done unintentionally by many people like the common people. Our Imams, old or new, are still upholding this view".<sup>17</sup>

Delivering a speech at the opening of the conference: "Danger of *Takfiri Thought* and Issuing *Fatwa* Without Knowledge on National Interests and International Relations, held by Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Cairo on May 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Prof. Ahmad Al-Tayyib, the Grand Imam, stressed that being far away from

*takfir* constitutes one of the fundamental rulings of Islam. If one, he proceeded, utters a phrase whose apparent meaning is blasphemous according to one-hundred views, and has one possibility of not being blasphemous, it should not be considered blasphemous. This finds further support in the Islamic ruling stating: Nothing takes you out of the fold of belief except the denial of that which made you a believer.

*Ifta'* (issuing fatwa) is not an easy job; it needs qualified specialists in the area of *fatwa* so that *takfiri* opinions may not instigate trials (or disorders) among the *Ummah* and disunite it. Imam al-Shafi'i outlined, as reported by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, many of the qualifications of *Muftin* (people issuing *fatwa*).

For example, no one should issue a legal Islamic *fatwa* unless he is fully qualified and has the knowledge of the Quran and *Sunnah*, the *Nasikh* (abrogating) and *Mansukh* (abrogated), the *Muhkam* (clear-cut and decisive) and *Mutashabih* (equivocal) and the *ta'wil* (profound meaning) and *tanzil* (reasons and occasions of revelation), the Meccan Quran (revealed

before Hijra) and the Medina Quran (revealed after Hijra), meaning and matters regards which it was revealed.

He should also be knowledgeable in *Hadiths* (prophetic *Sunna*) and its *Nasikh* and *Mansukh* and have the same *Quranic* knowledge with regard to hadith. He should have good command of Arabic language, poetry and be knowledgeable in other relative sciences. He should have fairness and should not be talkative. He should also be knowledgeable of scholars' differences worldwide and has a sound faculty. A person meeting all these qualifications is the only qualified to issue a *fatwa* regarding *halal* (the permissible) and *haram* (the forbidden). Failing to meet them, s/he should not issue a *fatwa* and talk in Islamic knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

A person who lacks knowledge in Islamic religion, *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), *Usul* (Fundamentals of *fiqh*) should not be involved in *fatwa* even if he has knowledge in *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), *Ulum* (sciences) of the Qur'an, *hadith* and Islamic legal policy. A Mufti should not deprive people of the hope in

Allah's mercy nor give them concessions for doing sins.

He should have *wara'* (caution regarding equivocally lawful issues) and return to the right whenever reminded for returning to the right is praiseworthy unlike following falsehood. He should, moreover, stick to the right strongly defending it and not following the whims of the laymen or the ruler; he should, rather, seek Allah's pleasure.

*Muftin* should be careful not rashly issue *fatawa* especially those prohibition-related *fatawa* for denouncing habits, new traditions or new issues unless they are conflicting with Islamic Shari'a. They should, according to the rules of *Usul al-Fiqh* and legal deduction rules, avoid improbable meanings for texts and avoid citing evidence of weak Hadiths. Finally, they shall ascribe the *hadiths* cited to their original sources.



## **Cultural Diversity versus Narrow-Mindedness**

Diversity is a universal divine norm; God created human beings from one soul and from this soul He created diverse peoples, tribes, nations, races and colors. This diversity or difference in culture, color, ideas and minds is one of Allah's wonders. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "And among his wonders is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colors: for in this, behold, there are messages indeed for all who are possessed of [innate] knowledge!" (the Quran, 30: 22).

Commenting on this Quranic verse, the author of *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn* says, "Diversity of your tongues" denotes difference in language (Arabic and other languages) and colors (white, black, etc.) in spite of being the descendants of the same parents (Adam and Eve).

This clearly indicates Allah's Absolute Power. This sign, according to the Qirā'ah

(way of reading) which reads "Al-‘Alimin", means "the scholars" but according to the Qirā‘ah "AL-‘Alamin" it refers to all people according to his/her understanding and contemplation of Allah's wisdom in His creation.<sup>19</sup>

Commenting on this noble verse in his *Taysir Al-Karim Al-Mannan fi Tafsir Kalam Ar-Rahman*, Sheikh As-Sa‘di says, "In spite of being many (humans), from one parents (Adam and Eve), and having the same points of articulation (in body), one cannot find two voices or skin colors which are identical in all respects. This indicates Allah's Complete and Absolute Power, Will and Mercy in which He decreed such diversity so that no confusion may arise and no interests may be missed."<sup>20</sup>

It is interesting on the interpretation of this verse to quote At-Tahir ibn ‘Ashur's saying, "The diversity of human languages is one of the great signs (of Allah). Thus in spite of being of one kind (i.e. decedents of the same parents: Adam and Eve), the diversity of their languages is a sign of the divine instinctive difference, diversity of languages and their change in terms of

accents, omission, diminution, adding, etc. and , therefore, begetting many languages although sharing one foundation.<sup>21</sup>

Admitting such divine and natural diversity that is unchangeable and taking care of cultures and the individual and social cultural formation has not become secondary or trivial, but actually inevitable for national interest. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the national interest cannot be achieved completely without adopting an integrated and investigated cultural frame.

We emphasize that many institutions are taking part in such formation, most importantly: family, school, mosque, university, youth centers and mass media whether print, audio or visual. Yet, social networking sites have become among the most important factors and sources shaping the cultural awareness of individuals and societies.

For sake of achieving open-mindedness in individuals and social cultural horizons, diverse means shall be used to combat close-mindedness,

introversion and unilateral dimension culture.

It is sorrowful to find a university-bachelor (holding high certificates in theoretical or applied fields), who is narrow-minded, less cultured or has poor communication with society and inability to understand others' national, cultural and intellectual ideas and convictions.

Therefore, it is important to reconsider the amount of cultural component and its kinds in the university and the pre-university education and to activate the role of youth centers in social dialogues. Similarly, the *Da'awi* religious discourse should help greatly in this mission through the following points:

1. Launching dialogue campaigns to listen to the youth and discuss numerous evidence and thoughts and their counterclaims and counterevidence. They Quranic approach of dialogue shall be activated in local villages and hamlets taking into consideration the new style of discourse suitable

- to the requirements and the new present incidents.
2. Holding religious, cultural and dialogue meetings in schools, institutes, mosques, youth centers and concerned associations. They should host specialized, moderate and wise *Du'ah* (callers to Islam).
  3. Holding cultural seminars and discussion panels to spread awareness so that the young people may not be misled.
  4. Knowing closely about the cultural and intellectual problems and working hard to wipe out the Islamic illiteracy among society strata especially the youth.
  5. Producing a religious TV-drama to broadcast a moderate cultural content agreeable to our civilization, culture, heritage and values.
  6. The youth should take part in the international conferences and the public bodies that spread moderate Islam.
  7. The youth should take part in the religious and research contests along

with the Du‘ah on the local, Arabic and international levels.

8. Coordination between the authorities concerned with Da‘wah, thought and culture in both the Muslim and Arab world to spread the culture of peaceful coexistence in accordance with the moderate understanding of Islam and which is in harmony with the well-established fundamentals of the Islamic creed. Yet, there should be intellectual and cultural partnership with global conferences and forums concerned with civilizational communication. This is to be done without conceit, arrogance or attempts of dictating (coercion). Thus, this coordination should be with those who believe in the human values and work seriously on implanting them as a whole without deceit, evasion or exploitation for the sake of political, economic or ideological agendas.

## **Tolerance and Coexistence-Fiqh: Two foundations of Islam**

It is no doubt that the spirit of tolerance and awareness of the requirements of *fiqh* of coexistence based on the human common values and civilizational communication between nations and various parts of society have a positive reflection on the high national interests. This reflection is perceived in security, stability, welfare, progress and promising future. To clarify, this spirit is deeply rooted in the articles of Muslim faith. Accordingly, removal of hardship is one of the fundamental maxims of Shari‘ah, which is based on easiness and removal of hardship. Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says, ﴿God wills for you ease, and He does not will difficulty for you﴾, (the Quran, 2: 185).

He (may He be Exalted) also says, "And [He, Allah] has laid no hardship on you in [anything that pertains to religion, [and made you follow] the creed of your forefather Abraham. It is He who has named you in bygone times as well as in

this [divine writ] those who have surrendered themselves to God" (the Quran, 22: 78).

Similarly, He (may He be Exalted) says, "And know that God's Apostle is among you: were he to comply with your inclinations in each and every case, you would be bound to come to harm [as a community]. But as it is, God has caused [your] faith to be dear to you, and has given it beauty in your hearts, and has made hateful to you all denial of the truth, and all iniquity, and all rebellion [against what is good]. Such indeed are they who follow the right course. Through God's bounty and favor; and God is all-knowing, truly wise" (the Quran, 49:7-8).

Addressing Prophet Muhammad (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), He (may He be Exalted) says, "And it was by God's grace that you [O Prophet] dealt gently with your followers: for if you had been harsh and hard of heart, they would indeed have broken away from you. Pardon them, then, and pray that they be forgiven. And take counsel with them in all matters of public concern; then, when thou



hast decided upon a course of action, place thy trust in God: for, verily, God loves those who place their trust in Him" (the Quran, 3:159)

The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) says, "*Rifq* (leniency or Kindness) makes a thing embellished (i.e. perfect, sound or adequate) but when it is removed from a thing, it makes it defective." Never did the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) make a choice between two things, but he adopted the easier one as compared to the difficult one. However, his choice for the easier one was only in case it did not involve any sin or severance of the relation with one's relatives. If it involved sin, he was the one who was the farthest from it amongst the people".<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore he (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) says, "Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So do not be extremists, but try to be near perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded. Gain strength by worshipping

in the mornings and afternoons and during the last hours of the night".<sup>23</sup>

The Islamic texts of Quranic verses and Hadiths have laid down the principle of tolerance and coexistence simultaneously with complete maintaining of the distinction of the Muslim character. Thus, the Sura of *Al-Kafirun* declares Islamic approach to the two matters. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "Say: "O you who deny the truth! (2) "I do not worship that which you worship, (3) and neither do you worship that which I worship! (4) "And I will not worship that which you have [ever] worshipped, (5) and neither will you [ever] worship that which I worship. (6) Unto you, your moral law, and unto me, mine!" (the Quran, 109: 1-6).

This Surah implies a declaration of dissociation from all forms of disbelief; it leaves them free to keep their convictions unless they transgress or prevent the spread of Da'wah to Islam.

Islamic greatness is reflected in differentiating between 'Aqidah legislated

through the Shar‘i texts and the coexistence prescribed by Islam.

Mixing these two matters up led to a state of confusion among many people. Islam makes it perfect the ‘*Aqidah* of the believers and takes care of the distinct character of Muslims prohibiting the imitation of disbelievers to preserve the distinct entity of Muslims but at the same time guarantees peaceful coexistence for all. This peaceful coexistence is vividly illustrated in the fact that committing injustice against non-Muslims is extremely denounced in Islam, even in a Muslim country.

The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said, "Beware! If anyone wrongs a *Mu‘ahad*, or diminishes his right, or forces him to work beyond his capacity, or takes from him anything without his consent, I will be the one who will argue strongly against him on the Day of Judgment".<sup>24</sup>

Misunderstanding and narrow-mindedness have led to confusion in which a *makruh* (reprehensible) act is considered

(by some people) prohibited even of major sins and a *mandub* (commendable) act is considered *majib* (obligatory). Additionally, they have led to non-acceptance of different opinions regarding flexible matters (matters open to legal *Ijtihad*). This confusion is mainly caused by those non-specialists and unqualified especially in the fields of Da'wa and fatwa.

Finally, we invite for quite (positive) communication that relies upon common humanitarian values that call for and encourage tolerance, mercy, altruism, love of good, right, justice, equality, mutual respect, and unwillingness to selfishness and domination. This is to strengthen peace and spread security, harmony and agreement.

The mere difference in 'Aqidah, thought and opinion is not a legal excuse to wrong or violate others. Instead, there should be much understanding and communication on the common values along with approving the freedom of expression on condition that no infringement upon others' rights is

committed and the culture of violence, extremism and *takfir* is repudiated.

The principles of tolerance include:

1. Respect of others' opinions: Among the key factors to reach agreement and reduce the heated disagreement is the respect and consideration of others' different opinions, which are based on *Ijtihad* unless these opinions imply contradiction with the well-established fundamentals of 'Aqidah. This is based on the maxim that any ruling that is not *Qat'i* (decisive) is liable to *Ijtihad*. Thus, if it is liable to *Ijtihad*, it would, consequently, accept difference.
2. Possibility of diversity of correct things: Believing in the possibility of diversity can help greatly in tolerance towards disagreement and respect of others' opinions concerning multiplicity of right opinions. That is why some of our As-Salaf As-Salih (early good Muslim ancestors) would say, "My opinion is right but may be wrong and others' opinion is wrong but may be right." Some little adjustment may be introduced saying that both opinions

may be right but one of them is *Rajih* (preferred) and the other is *Marjuh* (less preferred).

Generally speaking, *Rajih* opinions are not *infallible* and the *Marjuh* opinions are not to be rejected as long as they follow the right steps of *Ijtihad* and a recognized *Shar'ī* proofs. The general rule in this regard is that one should not be blamed for differed-upon matters, but rather for dissenting from the agreed-upon matters.

3. Acceptance of difference in juristic qualification (*Tahqiq Al-Manat* i.e. deciding on the related effective cause backed by rational arguments. The *Fiqh* of *Ikhtilaf* (difference) encourages a Muslim to respect others' opinion and abstain from mocking them or declaring opponents disbelievers as long as these opinions do not lead to *Fitnah* (disorder) or deny something which is *Ma'lum min ad-din biddarurah* (well-established and known Islamic principles). Similarly, such opinions should follow the measures of *Ijtihad* and *Fatwa* and those who give them should be specialists.

4. Avoidance of rigidity, extremism and immoderation in religion: Other reasons that help better agreement and understanding among Muslims is the avoidance of religious extremism and immoderation. The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) warned against this extremism in the Hadith narrated by Ibn Mas'ud, he (the Prophet) said, "Beware! The extremists perished", he (the Holy Prophet) repeated this thrice.<sup>25</sup> The Hadith either shows the case of extremists or implies a Du'a' (supplication) against them. In his commentary on the Hadith, Imam Al-Nawawi said, "Al-Mutanti'un are those who delve too deep and go to extremes, and overstep the limits in both word and deed".
5. Mercy and kindness to those invited, especially the sinners and those committing mistakes. The Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sets great example in this regard. Sufficient to mention here is his conduct towards the Bedouin who urinated in the mosque. The

companions who were sitting in the mosque did not bear this act done by the him, so they rushed to beat him up (or rebuke him) but the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Leave him alone and pour a bucket of water over it. You have been sent to make things easy and not to make them difficult."<sup>26</sup> In another narration, the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Do not interrupt his urination (i.e. let him finish)." This situation shows the great tolerance, mercy, open-mindedness, easiness and wisdom when dealing with a person committing a mistake.



## **Understanding Others' Customs, Traditions and Heritage**

There is a proverb that says, "Do not reject all people so that they may not reject utterly"; Exclusion begets counter exclusion; and refusal results in equal counter refusal unless there is understanding.

Furthermore, no doubt that difference of cultures, civilizations, customs, and traditions results consequently in difference in the rights and obligations. It is not possible for the human rights of the West, suiting their relative communities—to be reproduced or imposed forcibly on the East and vice versa.

Therefore, both the East and the West should respect each other's culture and civilization. Thus, mutual dealing should be in the light of integration of civilizations not clash of civilizations. Yet, the West has its own culture, customs, traditions and rights which the East cannot not deny or dictate others to it.

By the same token, the East has its own culture, civilization, traditions and rights which are not to be forcibly

changeable by the West or dictate others to it whatever the pretext or the justification was.

Islam urges for communication and acquaintance between nations and peoples. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware" (the Quran, 49: 13).

In this context, Allah (may He be Exalted) tells us that He created humans from one origin and race; all of them from male and female, namely, Adam and Eve, but He spread out of the two a multitude of men and women and made them many different peoples and tribes whether small or big to know one another.

Accordingly, if each one lives independently, there will be no acquaintance which results in help, cooperation, exchange of experiences and benefits, giving due rights to the relatives and everything that is in the interest of

humanity, its happiness, development and progress.

His eminence Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Shaykh Ahmad al-Tayyeb says, "A Muslim must deal with the followers of other religions with the rules of justice, right and giving due rights. Accordingly, it is not appropriate for a Muslim to deal with other non-Muslims unkindly or to contempt, harm or wrong them. For Islam, it is prohibited to wrong the others regardless of their race, religion or ideology. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "And when you voice an opinion, be just, even though it be [against] one near of kin" (the Quran, 6:152). This Quranic verse implies that a Muslim must follow justice even with regard to every word s/he utters. Therefore, it is against justice to mock at others, treat them unfairly or harm them.<sup>27</sup>

Among the forms of tolerance in Islam is that it commands Muslims to be kind to non-Muslims— who do not do harm to them, and do not fight them. It commands good relation and benevolence to be maintained with non-Muslims.

Al-Bukhari recorded in his *Sahih* on the authority of Asma', the daughter of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with her and her father), that she said, "My mother came to me during the lifetime of Allah's Apostle and she was a pagan. I said to Allah's Apostle (seeking his verdict), "My mother has come to me and she desires to maintain good kinship with me, shall I keep good relations with her?" The Prophet said, "Yes, keep good relation with her".<sup>28</sup>

Allah (may He be Exalted) also says, "As for such [of the unbelievers] as do not fight against you on account of [your] faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for, verily, God loves those who act equitably" (the Quran, 60: 8).

It is noticeable that Islam permitted us to eat from the food of the people of the Book [Jews and Christians] and for male Muslims to marry their women. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "Today, all the good things of life have been made lawful to you. And the food of those who have been vouchsafed revelation aforetime is lawful

to you, and your food is lawful to them. And [lawful to you are], in wedlock, women from among those who believe [in this divine writ], and, in wedlock, women from among those who have been vouchsafed revelation before your time -provided that you give them their dowers, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication, nor as secret love-companions. But as for him who rejects belief [in God] - in vain will be all his works: for in the life to come he shall be among the lost" (the Quran, 5:5).

In this regard, the Islamic greatness has several reflections. For example, Islam commands kindness towards the captives of war. Thus, the Sahabah (Companions) would rush to feed them before themselves." Similarly, when the Prophet (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) liberated Mecca, out of Allah's Bounty, he treated its disbelieving people with forbearance and forgiveness although they had done harm to him, drove him out of his homeland, and tried to kill him.

After the conquest, he asked "O you people of Mecca! What do you think that I am going to do with you now?" They replied, "We think that you are going to

treat us in a good manner O noble brother and son of a noble brother!" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Go, for you are free". Yet, to build a complete trust for mutual understanding to bear its fruit, we must emphasize the following points:

1. Abandonment of self-superiority towards others (i.e. looking down upon them): This means that there should be mutual respect between the two parties. Understanding and respecting each other's stances and civilizational particularities should be fully guaranteed on equal footing. Dealing with others with an air of superiority, especially on the grounds of race, color and civilizational level belong the ignorance of the past, not suiting the present time.
2. Abandoning the desires for colonial domination: The attempts of any civilization to dominate another civilization imposing its values and systems on it and erasing its traits and particularities is actually awkward. It is a crime against the people of this civilization. This is because such victim civilization would find itself of

no origin and identity and, at the same time, separated from the other civilizations. Yet, this is considered annihilation of the civilizational personality of the victim nation and aggression against its particularity for the sake of the civilization trying to dominate. This, in turn, leads to the conflict for existence not to communication and integration.

3. Entering into dialogue instead of violence: Violence begets violence but dialogue is a civilized way of communication among human beings. It is the ideal method for solving problems and avoiding much evil and destruction. The fruit of dialogue only follows when the two parties are ready to listen to each other and think of each other's visions and views. Similarly, there should be readiness for self-criticism and avoidance of vilification and belittlement. Yet, they should seek, via communication, common views and standards that open the way for joint cooperation, not only for the sake of our common interests but also for spreading of

peace and stability in this world. Doing so, any form of violence and negative situations can be confronted.<sup>29</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I should state that:

1. Belief in multi-civilizations, differences between nations, religions and cultures is an inevitable de facto, which cannot be denied. Profound Islamic view even makes it a universal divine phenomenon. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, "Had your Lord wished, He could have made all the people one nation, but they still would continue to disagree; Except whom your Lord has mercy upon; and for that He has created them. The word of your Lord came true: "I will fill hell with the Jinn and the humans together!"
2. Mankind is in dire need to stress human values and the belief in civilizational and cultural diversity. Therefore, sharing common grounds, we should seek mutual coexistence



which is religiously stated by all religions so that religion may not be exploited for political and economic interests causing bloodshed and destruction in the name of religion under the outcries of *takbeer* (Allah Akbar i.e. Allah is the Greatest), *tahleel* (*La ilaha illa Allah* i.e. there is no god but Allah), *taṣleeb* i.e. crossing oneself or any other similar symbols.

3. Islam is the religion of fairness urging its followers to reach fairness which is based on justice, regardless of loving or harboring hatred for others. Muslim relation with people of other religions is based on justice, achieving right, and ensuring rights for them. Therefore, a Muslim should not insult, degrade or harm non-Muslims. Insulting others is prohibited in Islam regardless of their respective *Madh-habs* (school of thought), religion or race.

Cultural, civilizations, customs and traditions differences result in a different rights and obligations. Western social rights

suiting western societies should not forcibly be applied to the East and vice-versa. Both the East and the West should have mutual respect for their respective cultures and civilizations to achieve civilizational-integration and avoid the clash of civilizations.

The West has its own culture, tradition, custom and rights that shall not be denied by the East. Likewise, the East has its own culture, tradition, custom and rights that shall not be violated by the West, changed forcibly or exchanged for others whatever may be the reasons or causes.

Civilizational-dialogue should remain remote from the attempts of dominance and imposition. Parties should have a belief in dialogue and serious readiness for the acceptance of others and respecting their customs, traditions, civilizational and cultural heritage. Simply, rejection only begets counter-rejection.

## **Biography of Lecturer**

H.E. Prof. Muhammad Mukhtar Gomaa Mabruk: the Egyptian Minister of Endowments (Awqaf), Chairman of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, a member of the Islamic Research Academy and member of the technical office of Sheikh Al-Azhar.

He is a graduate of the Faculty of Islamic and Arabic Studies, Al-Azhar University, Egypt, and holds both Masters and Ph.D. degrees in Arabic language and literature. He was appointed as a Teaching Assistant at Al-Azhar University prior to being promoted to the position of Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Professor, Vice-Dean, and Dean of the faculty of Islamic and Arabic Studies.

In addition, he was selected as a member of the technical office of the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar for Da'wa affairs and religious media. Prof. Gomaa was appointed as the Egyptian Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) in Prime Minister Hazem Al-Beblawi's cabinet on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Having been incorporated into the

two cabinets formed by Al-Beblawi's successor Ibrahim Mihlib, Gomaa became a member of the Academy of Islamic Studies, a board member of the World Association of Al-Azhar Graduates, a Chairman of the Arab Endowments Association.

Dr. Gomaa's distinguished literary and critical works, particularly in relation to the Quran, led to his appointment as a member of several academic and professional bodies. He is a member of the Egyptian Writers Association, Arab Writers Association and the International Association for Islamic Literature. He is also a member of Al-Azhar University's selection-panel for promoting professors and assistant professors of literature and literary criticism. He has participated in and chaired various academic and literary conferences and seminars in Egypt, supervised numerous theses and academic journals, and participated in the development of academic programs at Al-Azhar University and the Faculty of Education in Oman.

*The Implication and Effect of Context in the Literary Text: An Applied*

*Study in the Light of the Holy Quran; Ancient and Modern Moderates: A Critique, and The Dialectic of Presence and Absence between Ancient and Modern Writers: A Critique.* Moreover, he has many other works mounting to more than 20 works. He edited *The Teacher's Reference Guide in Values, Manners and Citizenship*, published by the Egyptian Ministry of Education.

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  - 2 Al-Bukhari, *Sahih, Kitab: Al-Adab* (etiquettes), Bab (chapter: al-Haya' (shyness).
  - 3 Zaquq, Muhammad Hamdi. *Islamic-Christian Dialogue*, (Cairo: Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs), 1426, -2005, pp. 16-17.
  - 4 Ibid., p. 20-21
  - 5 Ibn-Hisham, *al-Seera al-Nabawiyya*, vol. 3, p. 34.
  - 6 Abu Dawud, *al-Sunan*, vol. 3, p. Al-'Asif means: workman.
  - 7 A lecture delivered by Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Prof. Ahmad Al-Tayyib, "Boosting

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- 9 See: Zaquq, Mahmud Hamdi. "*Islam and Christianity: Understanding Possibilities and Cooperation between Both Sides*", (Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo), 2005, pp. 11-
- 10 Muslim, *Sahih Muslim, Kitab: Al-Iman*, Bab: "Ruling regarding the one saying to his brother (in Islam) 'you are a disbeliever'".
- 11 Muslim, *Sahih Muslim, Kitab: Al-Iman*, Bab: "Ruling regarding the one saying to his brother (in Islam) 'you are a disbeliever'".
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