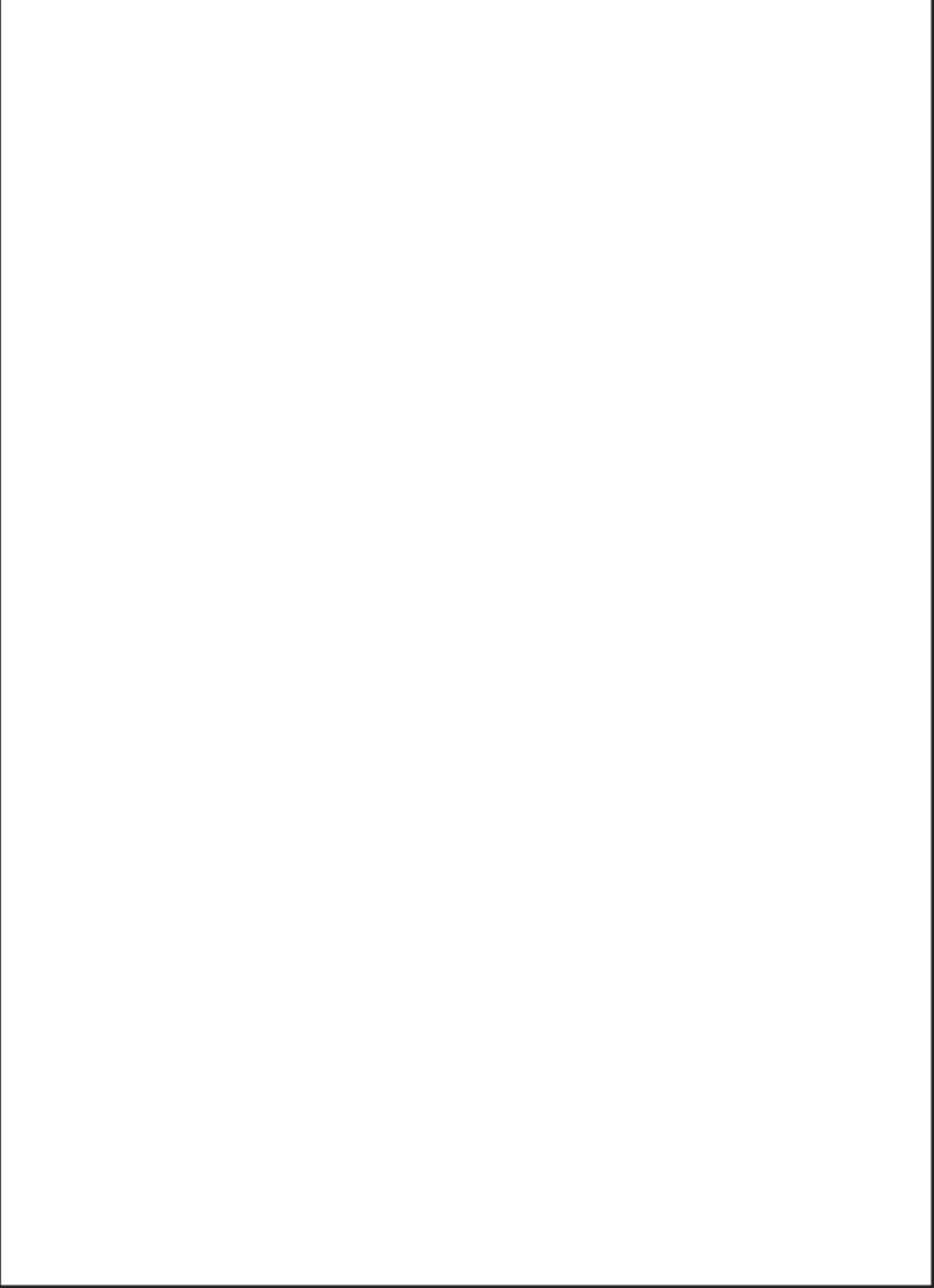


Alliance of Civilizations



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Dr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari

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Email : malketab@yahoo.com

Introduction

**“We have indeed dignified the Children of Adam.”
(Al-Isra - V. 70)**

Discussing the topic of culture and civilization, apart from its identity, must be based on the viewpoint of the nation that embraces that civilization, attempts to put its concepts into practice, and acts towards its members in the light of these notions and values. In this way the people of that nation are shown against a cultural embodiment of their civilization that can depict a portrayal of what they believe in, rather than merely an abstract notion that is too weak to be applied or to survive the spurious arguments aroused against it.

Unless it is united within, a nation will fail to bear the standard of a civilization that can embrace other

nations on the grounds of the common features of humanity and according to the criteria of justice.

A recipient of any cultural piece of data looks at the horizons of practical application and activity more than inclining to the hypothetical analysis. For this reason, the civilizations of the human world, at the top of which is the Islamic civilization, are required to attract and gain the respect of the people of other nations, because the Islamic civilization has represented a lively personification of human significance so fully that it has made all human beings understand that they are in the presence of a nation and a civilization that value their peculiarities. Consequently, we are responsible for fulfilling a duty greater than something which is merely a question of plurality or dialogue of civilizations, or coordination and cooperation between different civilizations. In fact, we are responsible for creating an alliance of civilizations, in the hope that we will achieve a merging of civilizations so that we will be able to found our efforts on the vast common features of humanity at which the different

schools of thought meet.

Today, our Islamic nation is required to assume the mission of playing its cultural and human pioneering role once again, starting with changing its internal affairs through an overall review of the causes of its disunity and division so as to work seriously towards uniting its word and strengthening the aspects of unification and unanimity amongst the different sects and schools of thought, basing these efforts on the Holy Qurʾan and the blessed Prophetic traditions. Only then can the Muslim nation play its pioneering role of reconstructing a justice-based human civilization. Let us emphasize on the plurality of civilizations in the next paragraph.

Plurality of civilizations

In the present day, the phenomenon of cultural plurality holds such a significance position of that it can be described as remarkable and hazardous, because this phenomenon has been an expression of a creational fact placed in the natural disposition of man, developed throughout ages; it has then taken the form

of a cognitive system with its own courses that has distinguished it from the other systems of civilizations. These civilizations attracted a great number of people who were created according to its notion, and believed and interacted with it. If these civilizations had existed in the age of obstacles, slowness, and non-politicization, they would not have been exposed to the stereotype of extreme interaction. Yet, because of ceaseless interaction and differing viewpoints, they started to adopt certain trends that rang alarm bells and are about to expose the entire world to enormous consequences that may intimidate the outcomes of all civilizations.

As a result, theories of cultural interaction began to be molded in certain shapes and forms, threatening the safety of the world and forewarning the coming of an imminent danger. This danger is represented by the fact that such theories pushed their way into the passages of thought and were about to turn into doubt-free and unquestionable facts in the eyes of some people, such as the theory of Samuel Huntington which he proposed in his famous book “Clash of Civilizations”

where he predicted, after the post-Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the inevitable conflict between the USA, in its capacity as the defender of 'Liberalism', on the one hand and Confucianism and Islam on the other. Once such theories have removed themselves from the scientific domain to move freely in the political field at the highest levels, it the most dangerous stage will have been reached.

Likewise, the theory of Fukuyama in his book "The End of History and the Last Man" adopted the course of cultural capture, which indicates the numbness of history and the death of cognition which Liberalism has reached, since it embodies the furthest stage destined for human life, which entails rebellion against the movement of history with all the dynamic factors that it hoards, and surrender to a collision with the wall of the inevitable and motionless illusion that is borrowed from interim backgrounds overpowered by self-restriction that fails to look up to new futuristic prospects and to make use of the resources deposited in the depths of human beings. These backgrounds are incapable of probing the history that reflects a cultural

flow throughout its progress, so as to give each generation, at each stage, a certain amount of culture, but not the whole amount, and to deal with the people of that culture up to the end of humanity.

It is therefore necessary to understand that the history of humanity as a whole goes beyond our history, and to understand that the extended future is further than our future. As a result, we must not suppose that our end is the end of everything, just as our beginning was not the beginning of all things. In the same way, we must not consider the man of the beginning of our march to be the first man or consider the man at the end of our march to be the last man; rather, the percolations of the man of each stage in the history are different in person and not open to the general human state that exceeds all eras to link itself to the truth. By doing so, our provisional openness does not turn into a cognitive closeness that is imprisoned by ego and whose movement is curbed by crises that may take the form of aimless devastating wars and disputes, leaving nothing behind them except afflictions that affect entire humanity.

Alliance of Civilizations

Lexically, the word alliance means the combination of different parties that retain distinctive principles.

Alliance is always shifting within the framework of negative independent dealing of the relevant parties, thus obscuring its movement within the circle of conciliation, truce, and acclimatization without allowing any other factor to enter the circle of positive influence; although this circle may grant all parties mutual freedom of assured openness thereby facilitating a confident reciprocity. With the passage of time, this process achieves a cognitive accumulation with its own bearings on cultural perspectives, transforming present-day man into a generally more humane being than at any time in the past. It also grants him a continuous dynamism for creating future differences capable of flowing as an increasing temporal qualitative leap.

An alliance is expected to maintain cultural interrelations at the boundaries of coexistence, to accept the other, and assist in avoiding the perils of clashes and

conflicts of civilizations. Although this is a considerable upshot, it is still dominated by an inward turn, since it has failed to make any further steps forward or interact towards achieving civilizational progress that is naturally the result of cognition and the outcomes of human experiments in such different fields as philosophy, ethics, arts, and literature, which will eventually give rise to the sought-after civilizational merge. According to the lexicon, the word, “merge”, means incorporation in a greater or superior form. In Arabic, the word is also used to express the community.

At the levels of theory and application, the Islamic mission is characterized by binding the followers of Islam to coexist with all human beings regardless of gender, colour, or nationality adopting the notion that all human beings are members of the social structure that must be upheld and maintained.

The Holy Qurʾan and the Prophetic traditions are awash with texts that highlight this significant issue. Besides, descriptions of the conduct of the Holy Prophet and Imams are resplendent with the most fabulous practical examples of these concepts. These

facts encourage true Muslims to adopt a cultural view that qualifies them to coexist with all human beings with whom they interact. The history of Muslims has always been replete with clear-cut manifestations of this pure Islamic image of respectful treatment of all people. For instance, the Islamic State acted towards all people equally and embraced many non-Muslim subjects, granting them full freedom. This State, which influenced a number of countries in the Western world regarding philosophy, social systems and policies, left many traces that can still be seen in these countries even after many centuries despite the large number of warped factors which have targeted the authenticity of Islam.

The extensive spread of Islamic thought was proliferated by some Muslims who lived in various regions of the globe and took the form of waves of emigrants resettling in almost all countries of the world; it was also carried through agreements and pacts drawn up by Muslims with other nations.

This active dynamism, open spirit, and civilized manner would not have been enjoyed by the Islamic State

and by Muslims if they had not had certain mechanisms based on an ethical footing and an intellectual background derived from a clear fixed view of the universe. This background provided Muslims with sound ideals and with positive behaviour in all fields of life, enabling them to interact humanely with others without facing any problems that might deprive them of their good behaviour or make them even think of removing the lives and benefits of others, threatening their interests, abusing their security, or offending their dignity. Rather, this background has built a human cultural edifice founded on justice, knowledge, amicability, and peace, assuring the achievement of sought-after well-being and guaranteeing a world free of deviant inclinations that molested people and drew them into disorder and confusion.

In the same vein, Islamic Law involved legally binding people to exhibit decent behavior. Since Islam is the religion that embraces all humanity, its law was a legal system that defined Muslims' interaction and controlled their movements in all social milieus. At the same time, it defined a set of ideas and concepts

founded on imposing a structure of cooperation with others, no matter how great the intellectual distance between them or which field of life was touched. All these laws were decided on the guidance of the orthodox religion of Islam and based on the open course of human civilization, and the result has been that this religion left the finest mark on people abiding by its laws.

The most serious danger that is faced by cultural and international cooperation is its lack of intellectual roots and valuable underpinning to protect it from any confrontational crises or dominance which could develop into provincial and international wars.

The bloody wars, in which Europe sank, causing millions of human casualties, were triggered only by the spread of discriminatory inclinations, like Fascism and Nazism, spawned from a perverted intellectual background calling for racial discrimination.

In the present day, although some civilized states in the world have worked towards establishing cooperative relationships amongst themselves without restricting their activities to the principle of cooperation in a defi-

nite domain, they have in fact founded their efforts on material principles so as to achieve certain interests expected from such cooperation. This restriction has made these states act according to their own interests and extend in a specific direction, causing their course to be sometimes undulating and sometimes veering in an opposite direction, creating not only crises but also armed conflict.

On the other hand, Islamic teachings with regard to interrelations contain two intellectual bases; one is fixed and beyond - and even sometimes uninfluenced by - the circle of material interests, which gave these relationships an unalterably fixed value that is extended from the civilizational invariable, and variable, yet within the material interests; although the latter basis is subject to the system of values and is controlled by its standards. This basis is termed a civilizational variable.

The current crises of human cooperation at local, provincial, and international levels are profoundly ethical, representing a breach of man's dignity and defiance of the natural disposition on which God created

man: “So, keep your face set enquiringly towards the true religion. This is God’s natural handiwork along which lines He has patterned mankind. There is no way to alter God’s creation. That is the correct religion, though most men do not realize it.” (al-Rum - V. 30)

After this introduction, I will move to discussing the composites of civilizations as I have concluded from the Holy Qurʾan. These composites can be found in many Qurʾanic verses, but the following Qurʾanic verse, mentioned in Chapter: Ibrahim (no. 14) might comprehensively hold eight composites of civilization:

**“Do you not consider how God makes a parable? A good word may be compared to a good tree whose root is firm and whose branches soar up into the sky. It yields its food each season with its Lord’s permission. God composes parables for mankind so that they may be reminded.”
(Ibrahim- V. 24)**

Composites of Civilization in the Light of the Qur'anic Verse

1. Word (Principle of monotheism): This word is not a mere expression of an utterance or statement; rather, it entails many conceptions and notions. Although many explanations have been given to the expression word, its all-comprehensive meaning can be put in the word of monotheism; that is, the belief that there is only one God. This term inclusively refers to the religion of natural disposition that God placed in man and on which He created him and which provides man with an internal content and a spiritual understanding of life, by which the true believer is distinguished from others, distanced from their beliefs and religions.

2. Good: This is an indicative of purity and clearness. Originally, the description good is said to describe whatever is found delightful by the senses and enjoyed by souls.

3. Whose root is firm (genuineness): The root of everything is its base whose all other parts are high due to its height.

4. Whose branch is in the sky (civilizational aspect): The branch of a tree is its twig. Thus the branch of that tree being in the sky is understood from two aspects. The first aspect is tallness; therefore, this word is used to express something's height. The second aspect is width. Likewise, the word is used to express the expansion of a thing.
5. It yields its food: This is an expression of productivity.
6. Each season: This is an expression of continuous giving, since the word season indicates the time of maturity and cropping.
7. With its Lord's permission: This is an indication that this tree belongs to the Lord in identity. The Arabic word rabb (Lord) is originally derived from education and raising, which is used to express the process of rearing something through the different stages of its existence until it attains perfection. Yet, this word (Lord) refers to God exclusively, because He provided the beings with what is useful for them.
8. For people: This means that the scope and goal of this word is purely humane.

The organic link between the rule of cognition and the aspects resulting therefrom is the real discriminating factor between culture and civilization. Thus, the cultural aspects are different from the aspects of civilization in the same way as the pioneers of culture are different from the pioneers of civilization. Confucius, Pythagoras, Buddha, Zoroaster, and the figures that lived between the years 600 and 480 before the birth of Jesus Christ are classified as pioneers of civilization, as are the prophets and their successors.

This religious fact has turned into a sociological postulate for and according to which many reformists such as John Adams, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and others called and acted.

Variables and invariables of the Cultural Elements

1. Mechanism of reason: Islam has urged the use of reason in recognizing the reality of existence and in getting to know the traces of God's creation. The Holy Qur'an thus declares: **“Look then at the traces of God's mercy; how He gives life to the earth after its death. Verily, He is the giver of life to the dead; and He has power over all things.”**

(al-Rum -V. 50)

Intellect is expected to take man to where scientific evidence lies, while those who do not know are expected to refer to the knowledgeable and those who know in whatever they ignore, as is necessitated by the reason-based principle: “The ignorant refer to the knowledgeable in whatever they do not know.” Confirming this principle, the Holy Qur'an reads:

“Ask the followers of the Reminder if you do not know.” (al-Nahl- V. 43)

It was through intellect only that man believed in God and His messengers and deserved to be God's vicegerent on earth.

2. Creedal conviction: Islam rejects blind imitation in the issue of belief. It condemns following the creeds of the forefathers and denounces blind subordination to social traditions; rather, it urges man to accept any creed as true only after providing convincing evidence of its soundness, since this process grants the intellect a sufficient share of conviction: **“They say: We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we do guide ourselves by their footsteps!”** (Al zuqrf - V. 22)

It is necessary for every Muslim to equip himself with sufficient proofs to be acquainted with what he believes in and, at the same time, make him bright enough to deal with others ideationally, making sure that his creed would not turn to an imitation of the surroundings or a frozen continuance of the beliefs of his ancestors.

3. Significance of knowledge: Since the beginning of the Qurānic revelation to the Holy Prophet, Islam has insisted on learning and obtaining knowledge. The first Qurānic text that was revealed to the Prophet read: **“Read in the name of your Lord Who creates.”** (al-ʿAlaq - V. 1)

Deciding knowledge as the discriminating factor among people, Islam intended to encourage people to open up on learning in all fields, to be part of the cause, and to contribute to developing the world after God has given man all scientific faculties and granted them the ability to smooth away all difficulties, warning them against employing these faculties in destruction, which is the inevitable result of wars and conflicts. The Holy Qurʾan thus reads:

“Are those who know, to be considered equal to those who do not know?” (al-Zumar - V. 9)

“Only His learned servants dread God Alone.”
(Fatir- V. 28)

Moreover, Islam has decided that seeking knowledge is a duty incumbent upon every Muslim individual whether male or female. Thus, the Prophet said: “Seeking knowledge is a duty incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman.”

Islam wants knowledge to be the only means that

creates interaction between existence and ourselves so that we may discover the secrets of the universe through knowledge. In the social milieu, knowledge-based interaction is different in action and tendency from any other interaction that lacks scientific background, since scientific logic dominates social relationships in the light of the scientific laws that God has placed in society just as all other physical laws are placed in nature. Everything is founded on the fact that man is a sociable being subordinated to the law of influence and social passivity with the milieu in which he lives.

Islam has not prohibited its followers from obtaining knowledge from non-Muslims; rather, it orders its followers to gain knowledge from any available source as long as this serves the public interest of Muslims and humanity as a whole. A Prophetic tradition reads: “Seek knowledge even if it be in China.”

Another tradition reads: “Wisdom must always be the goal of the believers; so, take wisdom from everyone, including atheists and hypocrites.”

Through its focus is on knowledge and intellectuals,

Islam has made social structure rest on the principles of learning, science, and the faculty of knowledge so that knowledge could be the cause of ceaseless openness and promotion and would not stop at a certain level, since knowledge is limitless:

“Above every one possessed of knowledge is the All-knowing one.”
(Yusuf - V. 76)

Islam also urges learning from the past, since it is full of lessons and experiments: “Indeed, there in the histories of theirs, is a lesson for men of understanding.”
(Yusuf - V . 111)

Yet, it warns against turning history into sacred heritage, closing eyes to the disadvantages found therein:

“They say: We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we do guide ourselves by their footsteps!”
(Al zuqrf - V. 22)

4. Making use of the limitless sources of nature: God has placed in the universe infinite power and innumerable fortunes that cover and even exceed the needs of human beings and also meet all their requirements no matter how many, on condition that they use these fortunes in an appropriate way and invest them constructively, depending upon the principles of fine productivity and fair distribution; otherwise, they will undergo misery leading to disastrous consequences. This appropriate investment of fortunes mainly relies on man's effort, which must not be oriented towards a deviant path that provokes incentives of unconscious rivalry and changes human cooperation in employing the power of nature into conflict; this conflict being a struggle for interests and domination of the strong over the weak, or misappropriation of natural resources in a way that exposes the world to disasters in the form of floods and torrents in some regions and drought and desertification in others. Islam looks at mismanagement in the fields of production and distribution, which has brought about injustice and ungratefulness, as the secret behind economic

crises; therefore, it urges man to avoid mismanagement:

“And He gives you of everything that you ask Him; and if you reckon God’s bounties, you will not be able to compute them. Verily, man is very unjust and very ungrateful.”

(Ibrahim - V. 34)

Unlike Malthusianism, which claims that the rate of increase of the population tends to be out of proportion to the increase of its means of subsistence and therefore should be checked mainly by sexual restraint, Islam declares that the means of subsistence are so sufficient that they always cover the needs of the population. Accordingly, the Muslims’ faculty of openness to others ramifies at more than one level. The best examples of such openness are Muslims taking part in the field of economics and dealing with others regarding exchanging activities, concluding business deals, and commitment to the international pacts founded on the principle of respecting the interests of all human beings.

5. Human dignity: Islam has awarded dignity to all human beings in their capacity as human beings. It thus wishes their dignity to be immunized against transgression, defended against offence, kept away from discrimination, and healed from ignorance:

“We have indeed dignified the Children of Adam.”
(al-Isra’ - V . 70)

In Islam, man prospers from the vast horizon of dignity, away from racial, nationalistic, or class leanings that were imposed on them and tore up their lives, causing them to stumble on impassable obstacles due to which they have had to experience the humility of enslavement and have had to taste the fire of meekness in the various fields of their lives. Whilst murders for worthless reasons are widespread in some communities nowadays, Islam decided that one who deliberately kills a soul is considered to have killed all human beings: **“Anyone who kills any person without another soul being involved or for causing mischief in the land, acts as if he had killed all mankind. Anyone who spares life acts as if he had granted life to all mankind.”** (al-Ma’idah - V. 32)

That was not all; Islam also condemned all types of enslavement and highlighted the necessity of granting all people full freedom: “How should it be that you enslaved men while their mothers had given birth to them as free?”

In light of these humane teachings, all racial, provincial and class tendencies have been denied by Islam, because they stand for the abuse of man’s dignity. Unfortunately, the victims of such loathsome tendencies were found worldwide. In World War II, for example, such racial tendencies harvested the lives of more than fifty million people; 17 million soldiers and many groups of civilians.(1)

6. Respecting human diversity: God wanted human beings to be different tribes and peoples as a form of diversity and wanted them to get to know each other and to behave according to the principle of mutual

(1) Muhammad Salih Mansi, World War II, published in 1989; Ramadan, ‘Abd al-‘Azim, The History of Europe and the World in the Modern Age, published by General Enterprise of Books – Cairo.

recognition through which human diversity is decided. The purpose of this mutual recognition is to activate civilized interaction between human beings, which is open to all forms of human diversity but is not suffocated in the frame of nationalism, tribalism, or casteism. Due to this mutual recognition, progression in the social pyramid is automatically issued in the highest class because of pressure on the lower class and its structure is designed on the basis of the soundness of human building, so that it will be protected from the dangers that surround it which would result from the spirits of spite and ego that eventually bring about wars and conflicts, as well as various sorts of crises: **“O mankind, We have created you from a male and female, and set you up as nations and tribes so you may recognize one another. The noblest among you with God is that one of you who best performs his duty. God is Aware, Informed.”** (al-Hujurat - V. 13)

The superiority complex with which some human beings are infected, apart from the cause, had allowed

any attempt at peaceful coexistence to fail, created a state of isolation in which the parties of coexistence took different sides, and made the overwhelming majority of people keep away from the despotic minority that was not only unqualified for promulgating the necessity of coexistence of the different parties, but also turned this process into a state closer to alienation and hostility than one of proximity and amicability.

For many ages, coloured people in America had suffered intolerably since the beginning of the slave trade run by private companies that transferred great numbers of black people from the coasts of Africa to America. Although this trade was stopped during the rule of Jefferson in 1801, the sufferings of black people within American society did not cease. After a very long period of 225 years, Barack Obama came to power in the USA to assume the office of presidency and to be the forty-third president of the country. Meanwhile, Islam had opened up to black people since the first days of its advent and, as a result, Bilal the Abyssinian was the official caller to prayer for the Prophet Muhammad, while the mission of calling to

prayer at that time was equal to the office of the minister of information in the present day.

7. Spread of justice: Islam has considered justice to be a human objective and committed Muslims to abide by establishing it and working hard to put this goal into practice in any field of life and in every position they occupy. According to Islam, Muslims must precede all others in establishing justice, which is their responsibility and trust; therefore, they are never allowed to overlook maintaining this trust:

“Verily, God does command you to render back the trusts to their owners; and when you judge between men, to judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is what God exhorts you. Verily, God is the Hearer and the Seer.”

(al-Nisa’ - V. 58)

Justice covers all aspects of human life, and man’s felicity is contingent upon the establishment of justice, since the most appalling tragedies and woes that have afflicted humankind, as well as the crimes and inviolabilities that spread in the milieus of human societies,

have mostly been the result of social bias and the absence of justice. More elaborately, the issue of justice and injustice is part of the logical system of rational good and evil; therefore, Islam specifies decency and fairness as conditions and qualifications for assuming many offices and undertaking many responsibilities, such as the leadership of the Muslim nation, the office of judge, the leadership of congregational devotional acts, and formal testimonies.

According to Islam, “Justice improves the affairs of the subjects,” “Blessings are doubled when justice is established,” and “You should hate for others whatever you hate for yourself and love for them whatever you love for yourself. Once you do so, you will be fair in your judgments.”

The awareness of the people, on the one hand, and deepening the human aspect in them, on the other, has allowed a state of harmony and equality. Consequently, the phenomenon of mutual civil sympathy has begun to creep into the capitals of the world, expressing the awareness of injustice suffered by humanity and demanding the enactment of the principle of justice

to which all human beings resort. Such a sound background can act as good atmosphere for cooperation, coexistence, and the maintenance of various human rights.

Concerning women and their position in Islamic thought, as well as the challenges they face within the Islamic nation, God has singled out a special and distinctive position for them in all individual and social fields of life; as is clear in many verses of the Holy Qurʾan.

Although women have been set aside from certain aspects of the Muslim community, this reflects nothing but the Muslims' customs and traditions, and never Islamic thought.

In other words, women in the Islamic world are suffering a crisis only because of some traditions; therefore, this can be expressed as a crisis of traditions but not a crisis of thought, while on the other hand, we notice that women in the Western world and civilization are suffering from a crisis of thought, which has taken the form of patriarchy in the institutions of that world. To explain, woman in the Western world did not ob-

tain the right to vote before the year 1919 during the presidency of Wilson, the President of the USA, after the constitution had been amended for the nineteenth time. Yet, women did not practice their right to vote in the USA before the year 1924. Women in Britain were no luckier, as they did not enjoy this right until 1945, while in Switzerland this right was only given to women in 1977.

Since the early days of Islam, Muslim women stood by the Holy Prophet and paid homage to him within the famous event known as the Allegiance of the Tree, **“Indeed, God was well pleased with the believers when they pledged their fealty to you under the tree.”**

(al-Fath -V-18)

which represented a political pact of the highest level. The need of any community for justice is founded on the fact that justice is interrelated to selves and to self-education, and man, in the various stages of his lifetime, is in indispensable need of justice and cannot do without it in such fields as politics, economics, and

society, whether at the level of family or city. Lack of justice has negative bearings on man, not to mention that the lack of justice always turns into injustice that creates abuse of others. For this reason, it has been said that infidelity may last long, but injustice never lasts.

Defining injustice, al-Raghib al-Isfahani, a famous Muslim master scholar of the science of the Arabic language, says: “Injustice, or wrongdoing, is the trespass on the others’ rights and is classified into three types: (1) wrongdoing between man and God, (2) wrongdoing between two human beings, and (3) wrongdoing between man and himself.(2)

8. Principle of peace: Islam is the final religion of God. Its name is derived from the triconsonantal root s-l-m, which means peace. One of the Excellent Attributes of God is “the Source of Peace.” Moreover, the greeting of Islam with which each Muslim is advised to

(2) Mufradat Gharib al-Qur’an, page 315, Dar al-Ma’rifah Publications.

begin his day is al-salamu ‘alaykum, meaning: peace be upon you.

This widespread proclamation of the concept of peace inside the Islamic cognitive system and ethical approach, as well as the reflections on man’s external behaviour in the context of dealing with God, others, and his surroundings, indicates a cultural value of embracing peace with the entire world and drives men to build human civilization on the foundation of peace so as to keep themselves away from all types of war.

Peace is the rudiment of what is between man and the cultural compound, because it is peace that forbids man to quit his calm disposition except in certain cases, such as when an aggressive war is imposed on him. In such a case, man is permitted to defend himself and fend off the dangers awaiting him. We read in the Holy Qurʾan: **“Those who have been wronged are permitted to fight back, since God is Able to support them.”** (al-Hajj - V. 39)

Even if a war is started and the Muslim has to defend himself, the Islamic principle of peace still ac-

tivates the Muslims towards accepting any attempt at truce and inclination towards peace: **“If they should incline to peace, then incline to it too and rely on God. He is Alert, Aware.”**
(al-Anfal - V. 61)

It is not an honor for the Muslim to be simultaneously aggressive and to be Muslim, but it is an honor for him to incline towards peace when the other party leans towards it.

Peace is the opposite not only of war, but also of terrorism, which is a process that is extraneous to the sound disposition of human beings and is not enjoyed by anyone. Also, every rational human being considers terrorism, which is not restricted to certain nationalities, as a departure from the nature of humanity. Just as terrorism has its own identity, which cannot be defined as belonging to a certain religion, sex, country, or people, so also are the victims of terrorism not limited to a certain identity; rather, the term “victims of terrorism” is so wide that it includes all human beings without exception and the damage caused by ter-

rorism includes all evils that afflict human beings, injures their lives, security, and economy. In view of this fact, it is necessary to face it, punish the terrorists, and support its victims without discrimination, because it is illogical to condemn terrorism when committed by a person who is considered to be Muslim but refuse to condemn it when it is committed by a non-Muslim or an enemy of Islam. It is also shameful that the entire world stands by the victims of terrorism when they are non-Muslims but keeps silent when these victims are Muslims, such as the international silence towards the savage disgraceful crimes that were committed against the people of Gaza.

9. Benefaction; doing good to people: Granting felicity to all human beings is an Islamic objective on which the Muslim individual is required to focus in his conversations, endeavours, and activities. It is therefore not permissible for any Muslim to give up or to allow others to make him give up this objective:

“It is a mercy of God that you are lenient unto them. Had you been severe and hard-hearted, they would surely have dispersed away from around you.” (I-‘Imran - V. 159)

**“A good deed and an evil deed are not alike. Repel evil with something that is finer, and notice how someone who is separated from you because of enmity will become a bosom friend!”
(FuSilat - V. 34)**

From such texts and many others Muslims have recognized their responsibility to do good acts and behave politely towards non-Muslims, irrespective of their religions, beliefs, or orientation. Non-Muslims have lived the best of their lifetimes in the Muslim countries, since no law embittered their lives and no one dared to threaten their interests. Christians and Jews used to live under the shadow of the Islamic State of Andalusia with utter tranquility and peace and practiced their devotional acts in their churches and temples without facing any sort of persecution.

Moreover, some of them assumed high offices and reached high ranks of responsibility with full confidence. In the present day, too, the Islamic world is full of non-Muslims who take an active part in the social life of Muslims and accede to various positions without initiating the least offense.

This means that the Muslim individual has always acted as a source of benefaction in his community and as an element to curb any abuse that might assail him. A society whose members exchange aggressive propensities must have already slipped to the bottom of lowliness, unlike another community whose members observe the mechanism of mutual benefaction, which raises their community to the level of the civilized and refined.

Benefaction is not restricted to mutual amiability and the exchanging of deeds of munificence; rather, the edifice of behaving pleasantly towards others cannot be founded except on bases of amiability and munificence; the culture of openness should substitute the state of self-seclusion, intercommunication should replace estrangement, and the culture of plurality of

chiefs should come in place of the crisis of seeking supremacy.

In this connection, it may be inappropriate not to mention and present Iraq and the crises that have swept it. Iraq has always historically embodied a signpost of civilization; its scientific, material, and spiritual fortunes were imparted to the entire humanity in the days when human values were prevalent. Unfortunately, it later mutated to a pit of tension for the region due to dictatorship and terrorism, causing bloodshed, usurpation of fortunes, and the abuse of human dignity and sovereignty; all this was due to foreign occupation of the country. In these lines, our aim is to distinguish between resistance and terrorism with regard to action. At the same time that men of the resistance forces are carrying out their duty of confronting the occupation through their own values, persons, speeches, and thought, and looking after the safety of the people and maintaining the fortunes of the country, the terrorists are mercilessly spreading bloodshed and devastation in the milieus of the innocent.

10. Avoidance of damage and causing harm: According to Islamic teachings, no one is allowed to harm himself or others under any pretext, as is deduced by the famous principle that represents the Prophet's saying: "Neither harm nor causing harm are permissible." Confirming this principle, the Holy Qur'an declares: **"No mother should be made to suffer because of her child, nor any family head because of his child."** (al-Baqarah- V. 233)

Thus, Muslims are immunized against harming themselves or causing harm to others not only at the level of families, parents, and children but also at the level of the entire community. Islam has not allowed its followers to mistreat others. Accordingly, Muslims have valued representing and maintaining all human rights. For this reason too, the phenomenon of suicide cannot be found in Muslim communities. It is worth mentioning that suicide is completely different from the principle of seeking martyrdom, because God has prohibited suicide, saying that suicide results in death, while seeking martyrdom is the essence of true life. Likewise, the culture of occupation, waging wars, and

assaults cannot be found in any part of the cognitive system of Islam.

11. Doing acts of kindness: Hurrying to lend a hand and helping out, and doing acts of kindness - these two benevolent actions cast on Muslims the feature of giving and spreading compassion everywhere. Stressing this feature, the Holy Qurʾan says: **“Everyone has some course he steers by; so, compete in doing good deeds. Wherever you may be, God will bring you all together. God is Capable of everything.”**
(al-Baqarah - V. 148)

The Holy Prophet is also reported to have said: “The best of all people is he who benefits the people most.” Islam, through its teachings, leads Muslims to the furthest extreme of preferring others to themselves even if they are in need of help. Praising the true Muslims, the Qurʾan says: **“They prefer them ahead of themselves, even though some privation exists among them. Those who are shielded from their own avarice will be prosperous.”**
(al-Hashr- V. 9)

As the motto raised by material man is “take,” the motto raised by the religious man is “give,” since “Giving is part of sustenance.” God thus says: **“And they spend out of what We have provided for them.”**
(al-Baqarah - V.3)

Likewise, as the goal of material behaviour is to achieve personal benefit, the goal of the behaviour of the believer is based on spending and altruism.

12. Fulfilling the obligations: Introducing social justice as a pillar of human lives, Islam imposed on Muslims maintaining and establishing the rules of social justice, considering it to be the root of judgment. “Justice is the root of governing.”

Consequently, Islam has directed its followers to fulfill their obligations and commit to the promises they make, because these are the bases of man’s relationship with God, with himself, and with others. Islam imposes commitment to all promises and obligations whether or not this commitment achieves a personal interest, or saves or does not save one from injury.

It is worth mentioning that obligations to be fulfilled

are not only those which are in the circle of Islam; rather, the fulfillment of obligations is one of the rational issues of every society, and to observe and respect them is a natural issue that is inseparably related to all human societies; man attempted to observe his obligations since the beginning of his existence in the universe. The Holy Qurʾan directs:

“Fulfil your oaths; any promise will be checked into.”

(al-Isra - V. 34)

“And those who keep their word whenever they promise anything.”

(al-Baqarah- V.177)

13. Good neighbourliness: Neighbours, apart from their religions, family relations, or social class, have been privileged with special consideration in Islam:

“And do good to parents, and to kinsfolk, and to orphans, and to the needy, and the neighbor close to you and neighbor who is a stranger, and to a

companion by your side and to the wayfarer, and to that which your right hands possess.”
(al-Nisa- V.36)

The Holy Prophet says: “Good neighbourliness is not to stop injuring your neighbour, but it is to tolerate the injury of him.”

Islam’s showing this much interest in neighbours and the issue of neighbourliness reflects the significance of interaction and coexistence that goes beyond houses, since neighbours are not only those who live next door; rather, this term, according to Islamic teachings, includes tens of houses on different sides. If maintained, the relationships of neighbours will expand and open a wide domain of social relationships.

14. The principle of moderation: The Holy Qurʾan asserts,

“Thus, We have set you up as a moderate nation so you may act as witnesses for mankind, even as the Messenger is a witness for you.”
(al-Baqarah - 143)

Moderation that we seek must not be understood as taking the initiative submissively, losing one's way in the gloom of the choices of reality, and justifying our speculative frailty and failure in performance to be based on moderation. Rather, the moderation we seek is exclusively the concept that is grounded on a fixed fundamentality that gives us many choices in performance at all levels. Through such moderation, the essential difference between the fundamental principle, which can be termed as "moderation with maintaining the principles" in the making of the present and the culture of justifying the choices of feebleness, which we may term as "moderation of dualism," is set apart. The principle of moderation grants those who adopt it the right to take the initiative, to be marked with realism, and to have firmness in attitude formation. In other words, moderation is starting with others or for them but not starting from them.

The dual moderation that is adopted by some groups means that its path is depicted through creating conciliation between the parties of a dispute. Accordingly, this moderation cannot give any party its due fully or

condemn the wrong party fully. On the contrary, true moderation is supposed to be paperwork that solves the disputes of the parties by standing by the right party, but not by standing by both parties completely, because moderation must be fairly detached from any party. It is thus a standard that is independent of any party of dispute so that it is able to treat both parties fairly out of their circles. Hence, it may sometimes stand by a certain party and at other times away from both parties.

This is the picture of moderation as depicted by the Holy Qurʾan: “You may act as witnesses for mankind,” but not by mankind.

This subjective notion of moderation from outside is able to give everyone his due and treat the right party fairly. For instance, when the two parties of a dispute are the Prophet and the archenemy of Islam, fundamental moderation is very far away from them, but when the two parties are true believers, then the fundamental moderation is with all of them equally:

**“We shall guide the ones who strive for Us along Our ways. God stands by those who act kindly.”
(al-‘Ankabut V. 30)**

15. Theory-practice harmony: Islam has laid great emphasis on the necessity of connecting theory with practice, since it has not allowed any contradiction between them:

**“O you who believe, why do you preach something you are not practising? God feels a strong distaste for you to preach something you do not practise.”
(al-Saff -V . 2 and 3)**

On the strength of this principle, mottos in Islam have always moved parallel to reality and the expression of its nature. Since the early days of Islam, Salman the Persian, Suyahb the Roman, and Bilal the Abyssinian stood side by side with Abu-Dharr and al-Miqdad the Arabs. They contributed to spreading the message of Islam and defending it. This outstanding feature has always been witnessed in Muslim communities, so remarkably that anyone living in a Muslim country can

easily notice it and anyone else can also find it within the morality of Muslims living in foreign countries. Whenever Islam raises a motto, it means it apparently and actually and never leaves it unpractised. Thus, all Muslims meet under this motto and carry it out in their daily activities. Therefore, such mottos as the refusal of racial discrimination, the spread of justice amongst people, the prevention of cruelty to animals, the avoidance of causing harm to others, and many more, always contain an Islamic feature, since they are practically carried out by Muslims:

“Those who believe and perform honorable deeds will find gladness and the finest journey’s end.”
(al-Ra’d - V.29)

A Prophetic tradition reads: “True faith is recognition by the heart, profession by the tongue, and acting upon the principles.”

“True faith cannot be attained through wishes or hopes; rather, it is what settles in the heart and is approved by deeds.”

However, contrast in rank between a motto and its

applications does not necessarily mean contradiction between them, which is expressed by the aforesaid Qurʾanic verse as “strong distaste,” although it may sometimes be indicative of weakness, especially when there is a great difference between a motto and its application; rather, the true irony lies in the contrast in tendency between the motto and its application, between the claim and the reality, and between the heard and the seen. So, when the motto and its practical application take the same course, despite difference in rank, this is an expected matter and acceptable in most cases, since not everyone who talks about the morality of the Qurʾan can embody its morality, except for the Holy Persons.

16. Bridging and consolidating interrelations on the grounds of mutual confidence: It is required from any nation that intends creating harmony between its members so as to reflect that harmony on other nations, to spread amongst its members the culture of adequate mutual confidence in whatever is related to it as a nation from the aspects of thought, mentality, and politics. As long as this nation desperately de-

sires to maintain its fundamental roots that express its historical invariables, and wishes to contribute to the development of the lives of other nations, such a nation, which possesses the two features of verticality in history and horizontality in the present, has no option than to take on the highest level of accuracy in transmitting the truth to others. This accuracy can be noticed in the Muslims' great interest in such sciences like Qur'anic studies, the study of the Prophetic traditions, and the study of the biographies of the transmitters of these traditions, which is termed as 'ilm al-rijal. This accuracy is also commanded in the Holy Qur'an that reads:

“O you who believe, if some scoundrel should come up to you with some piece of news, clear up the facts lest you afflict some folk out of ignorance, and some morning feel regretful for what you may have done.”

(al-Hujurat - V. 6)

Skepticism is the most fatal disease attacking the Islamic nation in the present day. As a result of skepti-

cism, many elements of power and adherence have collapsed, causing disunity and alienation to prevail over the members of the Muslim nation. Furthermore, the phenomenon of despair and the loss of hope, which some people are promulgating, are only symptoms of the disease of skepticism.

As we sense the accumulation of problems in our nation, we hereby point out the necessity of observing the mental and material energies that are considered elements of power and are placed in the Islamic world, since the Islamic nation possesses two thirds of the oil reserves, occupies a strategic position in three continents of the world, and occupies 51 countries whose population is more than more than one milliard and a quarter of the population of the world, which is considered a huge demographic fortune. Nevertheless, the Islamic world today is not the same world that it was in the past, with all the obstacles and misfortunes it is facing.

These elements, plus the spiritual element represented by believing in God, connecting to the Divine messages, and openness to knowledge and sciences, make

the Muslim nation worthy of occupying a leading position among the other nations and contributing to the building of a civilization based on justice, amicability, and knowledge.

17. The principle of cooperation in work: Islam has focused on the inevitable need to build a society that embodies the features of humanity and civilization. This mission requires founding that building on various bases, the first of which is the basis of cooperative work:

“Say: Work. Soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger, and the Believers.”

(al-Tawbah -V. 105)

The second is the basis of mutual amicability, feeling of peace, and justice, which cannot be achieved unless man enjoys the features of righteousness and piety:

“Cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety, and do not cooperate with one another for the purpose of vice and aggression.”

(al-Ma'idah - V. 2)

Through these factors, Islam has defined the Muslim's attitude to the nature of work, basing it on a process of qualitative classification between the background of righteousness and piety and the background of vice and aggression. Islam urged its followers to cooperate on the former background and warned against cooperation on the latter. Thus, Islam has curbed all harmful deeds and adjusted them while, on the other hand, given free rein to righteous deeds through cooperation so as to guarantee its spread and expansion to include all humanity. Within his instructive epistle to Malik al-Ashtar, Imam 'Ali said, "The subjects are one of two categories; either a brother-in-faith or a match in creation."

As cooperation has its own background, content, standard, and goal, it may adapt with the changing of these elements. Consequently, there is a sort of cooperation at the levels of building, exchanging of greetings, spreading of justice, and respecting human rights. Conversely, another sort of cooperation may be made for devastation, waging wars, making mischief, and violating human rights. This is the basic

difference between the morality, thought, culture, and performance of each of these two sorts of cooperation.

18. The principle of dialogue: Dialogue that is founded on scientific evidence is the natural bridge on which thoughts and values extend from one side to another, making operative the wide human foundation of consolidating righteous social relationships that are aimed at activating opinions and exchanging viewpoints, no matter how great the differences are:

“Say: Bring on your proof if you have been so truthful!”

(al-Naml - V. 64)

Islam has expressed disapproval of disputes that lack evidence and reasonable argumentation:

“Some men will still argue about God without having any knowledge or guidance, nor any enlightening Book!”

(Luqman - V. 20)

The true Muslim does not refuse discourses and dialogues, nor does he look at argument as a sign of

superiority or a form of aggression; rather, he considers it to be an opportunity to reveal his opinion and discover other opinions. Hence, he practises all the etiquettes of the inviolability of dialogue, such as listening to the other, leniency in posing questions, and frankness in expressing opinions.

There are a number of points that must be taken into consideration in every dialogue. These points are as follows:

A. Dialogue on the strength of the terms common to both parties: Islam advises its followers to base their dialogues with others on the grounds of shared points to avoid starting with or sinking into the points of difference, which would naturally aggravate the relationship and prevent ideas being transmitted to the others and make them the victim of the critical feeling created in the mentality of the other party:

“Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you.”

(I-‘Imran - V. 64)

These common terms can be human, religious, or even sectarian. So, when the dialogist enjoys sound faculties of thinking, sensing, and performance, he will master the art of choosing the appropriate shared term with the other party in any topic with which he disagrees.

B. Choosing the proper words: Islam has chosen the principle of dialogue and phrasing the dialogue as the grounds for any dialogical process and has encouraged Muslims to choose the most proper styles in their discussions with others:

“Do not argue with the People of the Book unless it is in the politest manner, except for those of them who do wrong. Say: We believe in what has been sent down to us and what has been sent down to you. Our God and your God is the Same One, and we are committed to observe peace before Him.”
(al-ʿAnkabut - V. 46)

The Muslim dialogist may have a number of choices depending upon his experience in running debates. These choices are followed by picking up the best choice of the other party with regard to wording. Hence, a Muslim dialogist may have many choices appertaining to mechanisms and contents, but the range of his choices in style is even greater. This is undoubtedly the means he uses in displaying his ideas, since it is said that displaying is part of the essence.

C. Avoiding deciding the other party is already wrong: Islam does not want the Muslim to decide he is absolutely right while the other is absolutely wrong before they meet at the table of argument that holds the probability of right and wrong for the two parties: “Verily, either we or you are guided aright or in manifest error.”

Of course, there is a huge difference between the supposition of imposing oneself on the other and refusing him, and the other supposition of accepting the other and supposing that he may be right. The other supposition creates a proper atmosphere of introducing one’s opinion and getting to know the other’s opinion.

Guarantees of cooperation

Sound cooperation is guaranteed when the following instructions are applied to action:

1. Cooperation should be built on the basis of shared human thinking and morality so that the social and political atmosphere acts as witness to the cooperative style and performance and as a pressing tool towards maintaining it.

2. The theory and plan of cooperation should be put into practice, along with ensuring all the requirements of activation.

3. Work should be based on the principle of partial cooperation whose influence flows to all of the agreed fields without being affected by the other fields, including the ones disagreed upon. With regard to the plurality of fields that require cooperative efforts and differ from one country to another, it is highly significant to write each agreement about cooperation in a certain field in such a form that saves it from violation when a disagreement takes place about other fields.

4. It is necessary to promulgate cooperation as culture, since this contributes greatly to guaranteeing cooperative efforts exerted by the peoples of the parties of cooperation and curbs responding to any attempt at violation by any of the parties.

5. Introducing an exemplary model to the parties of cooperation and confirming that this model is characterized by the morality of cooperation and best performance. Generally speaking, the existence of an example incites those who copy to go along with him and to

consider his conduct to be an untouchable value. For this reason, the followers' defence of their example, whether a dictator or popular, has always taken the form of defending his values and principles, even as a whole.

6. International pacts and agreements should be respected so that any violation of them is seen as an international rather than a local responsibility.

Steps on the path to unity (3)

1. The Holy Qur'an should be taken as the supreme reference that dominates all other texts and discourses. It is therefore imperative to refer to the Holy Qur'an in the processes of re-forming the relationships between the followers of one sect, raising them, and raising the members of the Muslim community in

(3) Islamic unity in the Holy Qur'an; a set of lectures delivered by Ibrahim al-Ja'fari, published by the Al-kebab Cultural Foundation, January – 2008.

the light of the Qurʾan, which is the common factor, in all fields of life.

2. The Prophet's conduct should be taken as role-model, since it reflects a fantastic portrayal of maintaining the unity of Muslims.

3. It is necessary to behave towards other Muslim sects in a way that maintains their dignity and the dignity of their followers and safeguards their souls, property, and whatever is related to them.

4. Moods of peaceful discourse and continuous meetings must be created with others so as to discuss the shared affairs of the nation and define its interests so as to curb surrounding dangers.

5. The verdicts that accuse others of atheism, provoke hostility, and work towards inciting sectarian fanatical instincts and violating others' inviolabilities must be stopped.

6. The culture of proximity should be laid open and thorough light should be shed on the points that are common to all sects, using various mass media such as media channels, journals, and conferences.

7. The issues of disagreement among the different

Muslim sects with regard to creed, historical events, and jurisprudential issues should be avoided and should be relegated exclusively to the scholars and experts.

8. Discussions must be focused on the general concerns of Muslims and the goals related to the future of the Muslim nation entirely, looking at the Islamic world as the object of concern for all Muslims in the present and in the future.

9. The national unity of the people of every country should be highlighted and the bonds of union amongst the individuals of one people should be intensified so that the unity of the entire nation with all of its peoples can be bolstered.

10. Plans and solutions of a human nature should always be introduced and drawn from Islamic thought. These plans may contribute towards decreasing the distance between the individuals of the Muslim nation and the other nations in the world.

11. Much interest should be shown in learning the Arabic language, not out of racism but out of caring to understand the Holy Qurʾan, the Prophetic tradi-

tion, and the valuable Islamic heritage that was written profoundly in this language. Thus the Arabic language should be the language of thoughtful and intellectual discussions and the language of inferences, along with the observation of the rights of the other languages just as Islam has respected, sustained, and upheld these languages throughout history.

12. Islamic unity between all the peoples of the Islamic world should be the one and only concern before which all other concerns fade, while racial instincts that have lately been aroused in some Western countries should be avoided.

13. Islamic unity should be turned into a type of work but not a mere hypothesis; therefore, its promoter may act as a theorizer at one moment, as an executor of this objective at another, and as one sacrificing at a third. The martyr Sayyid Mu|ammad Baqir al-Sadr might be introduced as the first person who embodied modern Islamic unity in Iraq hypothetically, practically, and sacrificially.

Epilogue: Additional Emphasize on sectarian matters

I would like to tell you all, who belong to different countries, that we did not read Izz al-Din al-Qassam through the fake mass media that stood against him, did not read ‘Umar al-Mukhtar through the fake mass media that stood against Libya, did not read ‘Abd al-Karim al-Khitabi through the fake mass media that stood against Morocco, did not read ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza’iri through the mass media that stood against Algeria, and did not read other leaders like ‘asan al-Banna and al-Shirazi, who led popular revolutions in the various regions of the Islamic homeland through their actual activity; rather, we read about them after much effort and suffering. Only then were we able to recognize them as they should be recognized. Thus, we concluded that when we study a personality carefully and reach the core of the truth, this means that we have exerted much effort and enjoy a supreme morality.

Unless the educated person is marked by a state of

struggle, discerning insight, high morality, and the courage to speak the truth, he cannot reach the truth. In fact, truth can be discovered only by people of such characteristics and it does not fall in the hands of anyone except such people.

With regard to my notes on the discourse of Mr. Munnir Shafiq, I would like to say that we condemn the American attitude as a strategy, since we have our own strategy that truly stands out against the American one. By strategy, I mean an attitude that does not change when the American government or the ruling party in the USA changes.

In other words, the USA has its own strategy and we have our own strategy. It is well known that we have never supported waging war against Iraq, because we used to work painstakingly and we sacrificed our dearest ones for the purpose of overthrowing the regime that ruled in Iraq, and there is no family in Iraq but that one of its members was martyred for changing the ruling regime. Yet, when we were invited to many conferences that acted as advocates of the war, we rejected all of them and refused to attend any of

them. I thus appeal to you all, since you are educated, to review our attitudes before and after the war. We refused to participate in such conferences as the London Conference, the $\bar{a}la\bar{a}$ al-Din Conference, the Nasiriyah Conference, and the Baghdad Conference, since we insisted on adopting other ways than war to ward off Iraq being engaged in a war that would naturally be followed by foreign occupation. Now that the war has become history and the occupation has become a fact, it is we who paid the price of facing these issues practically on Iraqi soil. Therefore, no one should complain to us on this issue. On the fourth of November, 2005, I said these words from the stage of the Arab League. Some of you must have read Theodor's book: Imperial Stout, where he claims that Muslims do not hate the American government, but they hate The Times, burglary, colonialism, and occupation. Expressing the opinion of the people of the Islamic nation, I would like to say that I disagree with Dr. Munir in his claim that the military make a civilization.

Sciences may be possessed by the military and any

other foundation equally, because sciences are naturally neutral, and scientists are neutral, too. William Harvey and Isaac Newton were not military persons, nor were other scientists; it was the government that intended to employ the scientific facts and discoveries in the field of the military so as to impose a military state in Iraq, not in the USA. Computers were used in the USA in the security and intelligence services before they were used in the fields of blood analysis, personal identification, history, or culture in other countries. Computers were first used in the early seventies of the last century for controlling the people and watching their movements - a fact that cannot be denied. Soldiers in the American army are subjected to political decisions but not the opposite. This is another truth that I declare despite our cultural differences with them.

We are against the military mechanism and against militarizing political work and making it depend upon spying, but we stand with any political effort that is opened up to others and observes the human principles stemming from the nation in its capacity as a ba-

sis for civilization.

For long ages, wars were waged in Europe, but not in any other region of the world. What can they say about the 116 year war that they term as the Hundred Years' War? One of its victims was Jean d'Arc, in France in the year 1426. Where did these battles take place? The two parties in this war were the French and the British nations and inside each nation a war took place. The Thirty Years' War took place between the years 1418 and 1448 in Germany, between the north and the south of this country. World War I and World War II, whose victims were 65 million people, took place in Europe. Yes! These wars did not take place in the Islamic nation; rather, they took place in Europe. This is their morality and these are the civilizations that were moulded according to the way of life of these nations. They were totally empty of any ethical or intellectual content; therefore, they were exposed to various types of devastation that covered all their countries.

Let us not forget that we respect and think much of some personalities from Europe who thought liberally, such as Jean Jacques Rousseau and Montesquieu

in France, and many others, or John Adams who was the president of America when the revolution for independence broke out in 1783. At that time, he said, “America could not be liberated from the British occupation until its mind and its heart had been liberated. Only after that could America liberate itself.”

This ethical concept was declared by the Holy Qurʾan many centuries before John Adams, who was the second president of America after George Washington. The Qurʾan said:

“Verily, God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.”
(al-Ra’d - V.11)

How strange is the claim of those who believe that the Islamic nation has fallen to the bottom of despair! My brothers! Why do we think in this way? We are not now in the year 1909, and it is impossible for us to go back to that year. Where were we in that year? We were under the authority of the so-called sick man; i.e. the Ottoman Empire. During that reign, our sons and daughters could not join any school and cultur-

al retardation was the distinctive feature of life. On the contrary, in the present day we are more than one country in the Islamic world, more than a revolution, and more than a renaissance; we have more than one thinker and our women have found their way to the Parliaments. Now, we can steadily achieve every success in each and every domain of life.

Today, we were very different from yesterday. Although we are not in the forefront as yet, we are not behind; rather, we are on a turning tide.

I hope that we can keep ourselves away from this way of thinking so that despair will not take hold of us. We are in reality a nation that possesses all the constituents of growth and progression, while the nations that are now in front of us have been a rich pasture of retardation in the past and more wars flared up there for long ages than in our nation. Where can you find a nation that still pulsates after 1400 years? The Bolshevik revolution of the Russian nation took place in 1917 but collapsed in 1985 when Perestroika came, while it had possessed the whole world and been the primary enemy of the USA. Where is that revolution

now? After 1400 years, the Muslim nation is still vigorously living in every corner of the Islamic world. Are we, the Muslims, few in number? We are forming 51 countries and our number is one milliard and 250 million. We are still here. Two thirds of the world oil reserves are in our hands, in addition to a fortune of civilization, culture, speech, personalities, and history. Le Ghoul, a French professor, says, “The Islamic nation had decided its existence when it found an explanation for life after death; therefore, it will survive forever.”

Why this fear and hesitation?

Did we come here to curse a nation or to talk about our shared affairs? Our nation needs one who lends her a hand, picks her up, and lifts her upward. Is there any nation in the world that has not been exposed to tardiness and lagging behind? Is there any nation empty of traitors?

It is sufficient pride that the Islamic nation is one of genius and a nation that possesses all the elements of growth and elevation. It is indeed an elevating nation, even if some of its members may still be marking time

here and there. Our nation is facing challenges and has been challenging danger for 1400 years, and if any other nation in the world had experienced such challenges, it would have become ashes scattered by the wind.

This is our nation when we drift. There are amongst us Sunni Muslims and Shi'ah Muslims, but we never give up; rather, we shall work on solving the problems of the Sunni and Shi'ah Muslims. We may look at this problem from a sectarian prospect, including laws, ways of thinking, and understanding; this should be no problem in this respect, but when sectarian coexistence turns into fanaticism and extremism, we object to that and deny it decisively.

Unfortunately, if you talk about the unity of Muslims, a blockade will be imposed on you. Yet, how beautiful it is when you talk about principles and values; due to this you are exposed to a blockade, because this means that you are doing a great thing. So, when your deed is great, reactions will be great too, and when you talk and mention condemningly the interests of the traitors and the evildoers, you will most surely be

fought and even stoned!

What did the Shi'ah Muslims do? The Shi'ah do not want to institute a Shi'ite project; rather, they only want a national project because they are part of the general state of nationality that also includes their brothers who follow the religion of Islam and their Iraqi nationalist brothers. The Shi'ah insist on launching a national Iraqi project that meets the proportions of Iraqi nationalism. Although they faced many strikes they could treat their wounds.

You know very well what happened at the al-A>immah Bridge and what the attitude of the Shi'ah was, represented by their supreme authorities, movements, the government, and Shi'ah individuals at that event.

You know perfectly well what happened in Samarra». Nevertheless, the Shi'ah worked on soothing the situation and calming the atmosphere so that the event would not turn into a sectarian sedition.

Do you know that we delayed the declaration of the government (cabinet) for three months, just because some of the political bodies wanted to share the governmental offices and seize the positions of our Sunni

brothers? Yet I insisted that I would not declare the final governmental formation unless I was sure that six of the ministers and the deputy prime minister would be from among our Sunni brothers. This is our view about Islamic unity, which we will always defend and struggle for.

Ibrahim Al-Jaafari

London

12/6/2009

