



ORGANISATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE
RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

THE WEST AND ISLAM TOWARDS A DIALOGUE

Ekmeleddin İHSANOĞLU

and guest speakers at IRCICA

**Hillary R. CLINTON Hajo FUNKE Murad W. HOFMANN
Ingmar KARLSSON Bassam TIBI**

Edited by

Zeynep Durukal Abuhusayn

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Preface

In recent years, states, international organisations and academic circles promoted a growing debate on how to meet the various challenges of world politics during the 1990s. Relations between peoples of different cultures and civilisations constitute a key issue of this debate, which entertains the topic "Islam and the West" as an area of study connected with various disciplines and concerning various regions of the world. Several factors influenced bringing up this topic in the global agenda.

The end of the Cold War reduced the threat of a nuclear war between superpowers. But at the same time, it yielded new tensions. Previously suppressed ethnic, religious and cultural identity differences among groups of people were released. This opened the way for some extremist movements to assert ideologies intrinsic to these identities. New threats were brought to the fore after the end of the Cold War. Wars were waged. Scenarios were drawn, and some literature produced, on probable conflicts between ideologies and confrontations between civilisations, with implicit threats of religious origins. In this environment, hypotheses on the possibility of a clash between the Western and the Muslim worlds, or between Islam and the West as it is termed in the debate, were quite weighty.

After the foundation of new States and an observable reinforcement of the concept of nationhood, communities of various ethnic and religious backgrounds which were previously bound together under the socialist system sought to reassert their ethnic and religious identities politically, often in reaction to similar efforts on the part of other groups within and outside their regions. Causes pleaded, most of them deeply rooted in history, were translated into conflicts, notably in the Balkans, eastern and south-eastern Europe and the territory of

the ex-Soviet Union, and most acutely in the war waged against Bosnia, the oldest indigenous Muslim community of Europe.

While this process was taking place, the weighty Muslim component of the increased immigrant population in Europe had already made of the Muslim presence a new reality in that continent. This phenomenon was calling upon European governments to revise their domestic and international policies and take measures to accommodate minority groups in national development, cultural life and education. As a result, matters concerning immigrant or minority groups, which they previously treated merely as such, became issues of national and regional policy.

Meanwhile, pervasive feelings of belonging helped strengthen peoples' awareness of their own cultures and ways of life as rights to be exercised, heritage assets to be preserved and value systems to be acknowledged. This trend is also reflected on a regional scale. Blocs of countries and groups communities which used to be defined in terms of political and economic criteria tend to be redefined on the basis of cultural variables. Thus, within the trend termed "globalisation", a concomitant process defined alternatively as "fragmentation", "regionalism" or "polarisation", is taking place. This made it possible for peoples to more effectively voice common opinions about international matters. In significant instances, reactions shown by governments and at grassroots levels towards the world community's attitude as regards the major conflicts of the 1990s, including the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, resulted in their questioning the value systems and human rights documents which originated in the West and were assumed to be universally applicable. In the face of these developments, growing concern about how to respond to the multiple challenges of an increasingly pluralistic world led international organisations to revise their programs to enable recognition of cultural rights as part of human rights, cultural development as part of overall development, local and regional cultures as part of world cultural heritage. Public concern for securing harmonious coexistence between peoples of the world also generated efforts in intellectual and scholarly circles and renewed interest in the study of relations between peoples from historical and cultural perspectives. Such interest and efforts bring invaluable inputs to the debate by pinpointing problem areas and major

misunderstandings which shaped peoples' negative images of one another, past and present. Efforts towards building mutual respect and understanding between peoples of different cultures should start by tackling these problem areas. This international debate deals with the topic "Islam and the West" basically at two levels. Firstly, relations between the Western and the Muslim worlds as two distinct civilisations encompassing groups of countries and communities which share common cultural values. Secondly, Muslim communities which, geographically speaking at least, are part of the Western world. The two analyses are closely related. However, matters concerning value systems, lifestyles, historical interactions between these two "entities", their mutual impressions and respective spheres of influence in world affairs gain prominence in the first context. Domestic and regional policy issues, as well as local cases of specific countries and communities, bear more relevance in the second. The international debate generally centres around the title "Islam and the West" because the subject is brought up, especially in the second context, as an imminent challenge facing the West. The chosen title "The West and Islam" implies that opinions, attitudes and circumstances which prompted the international debate at each of the above levels emanated not only from the Muslim standpoint but from both worlds towards each other, and ought to be considered as such.

As an inter-governmental cultural research institution of the Muslim world, the OIC Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) is resolved to make contributions to the dialogue between cultures, by introducing the Islamic culture and civilisation to the world more thoroughly and fostering understanding between the Muslims and the peoples of other religions. The Centre fulfils this commitment by conducting researches and publishing objective studies on the history and the cultural heritage of Muslim nations and communities. It also organises colloquia, symposia and regular public lectures on these and related topics and participates in similar activities organised by other institutions. IRCICA's interest in inter-cultural relations started immediately upon the Centre's establishment in 1980 at the initiative of Director General Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu. To fulfil the above objectives within the framework of IRCICA's mandate, Prof. İhsanoğlu combined his experience from previous cultural and scholarly missions with his dedication to the cause of creating a more conducive environment for understanding between

peoples of different cultures. Thus, a number of research projects and other activities were initiated as part of IRCICA's work programs with the objective of fostering international cultural dialogue within and outside the Muslim world. Cooperation was established between IRCICA and many other organisations engaged in this field.

Furthermore, the Centre took an active part in a number of inter-cultural dialogues organised by other institutions. For example, Director General Prof. Dr. Ihsanoğlu was invited to the First Conference of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival held in Oxford, U.K., in 1988 and the Global Forum on Environment and Development for Survival held in Moscow, U.S.S.R., in 1990. Both meetings were attended by representatives of Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the same context, the Director General also participated in other inter-faith meetings, in particular the series of meetings involving representatives of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, co-chaired by H. R. H. Prince Hassan bin Talal, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, H. R. H. Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, and H. E. the Chief Rabbi of England. Prof. Dr. Ihsanoğlu also delivered the opening address on behalf of the Muslim participants at the Religious Summit Meeting which was attended by five hundred participants from all over the world, in Kyoto, Japan, in 1987.

IRCICA's efforts to contribute to inter-cultural dialogue by way of presenting a true image of the Islamic culture and civilisation to the whole world have long been acknowledged and greatly appreciated by the Member States of the OIC. Such appreciation was expressed on numerous occasions at the Islamic Summit and Foreign Ministers Conferences, as well as during the visits that Heads of State and Government, Ministers and high officials paid to the Centre. Recognition and appreciation for IRCICA's contributions to a more profound understanding between cultures came also from UNESCO Director General H. E. Mr. Federico Mayor, on the occasion of his visit to IRCICA on 3 October 1995, in his message of congratulation dated 7 November 1995 to Prof. Dr. Ihsanoğlu on IRCICA's Fifteenth Anniversary, and most recently in the Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation Between UNESCO and IRCICA which was signed on 8 June 1996.

Attainment of universal peaceful coexistence of cultures was the main theme for discussion at the meeting of the leaders of the different faiths represented in Turkey which was held at IRCICA on the occasion of the visit of the First Lady of the United States of America, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton. This theme was also underscored during the visits of Cardinal Francis Arinze, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Vatican (October 1995) and Rabbi Arthur Schneier, Chairman of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, New York (January 1992) to IRCICA.

This subject was also under discussion at a meeting of the International Commission on the Balkans which was held at IRCICA, in October 1995, with the participation of Mr. Leo Tindemans, former Prime Minister of Belgium and Chairman of the Commission, Mrs. Simone Veil, former President of the European Parliament, and other members of the Commission. The latter, a joint panel of the Aspen Institute of Berlin and the Washington-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, published its final report in 1996. Prof. İhsanoğlu, who co-chaired the meeting at IRCICA, pointed out that the main reason for the cruel treatment inflicted on the Bosnian people during the 1992-1995 war was that they belonged to a different religion. He said it was high time Europe accepted that Islam is not a "foreign" religion, but, together with Christianity and Judaism, it is one of the major religions practiced by indigenous European nations and communities. Once acknowledged as such, Islam would no more be considered an alien, unwelcome, disliked, or feared religion or culture. Another important aspect of Prof. İhsanoğlu's views expounded on this and other occasions is that, owing to the significant contributions made by the Islamic civilisation to the development of European civilisation during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, the existing European, or Western, civilisation carries with it "Islamic" elements besides Judeo-Christian ones.

This book brings together the texts of selected lectures and addresses by distinguished guests and visiting scholars at IRCICA and contributions of Director General Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu made at various inter-cultural meetings. The Director General encouraged my proposal to compile and publish topics of relevance for the 1990s' debate selected from over one hundred and fifty public lectures given at the Centre and from his papers and articles

numbering more than two hundred. The statements, opinions and research findings of this select group of authors reflect various viewpoints about matters pertinent to both levels of analyses mentioned above. I believe they will add new insights to this debate.

On behalf of IRCICA, I wish to express our deep gratitude to the distinguished guest speakers: Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, the First Lady of the United States of America, whose visit to IRCICA was one of the most memorable events in the history of the Centre; Ambassador Ingmar Karlsson and Ambassador Murad W. Hofmann, both eminent diplomats, scholars and friends of IRCICA; Prof. Dr. Hajo Funke and Prof. Dr. Bassam Tibi, renown international scholars whose instructive articles bring valuable inputs to the debate. Finally, we express our thanks and appreciation to Dr. Muhammad Isa Waley from the British Library, U.K., for his expertise in revising the texts for publication.

Zeynep Durukal Abuhusayn
Senior Researcher, IRCICA
December 1998

EUROPE AND ISLAM - NEW CHALLENGES, NEW HORIZONS

It would perhaps have been better if the communist system had not dissolved and the Soviet empire had not collapsed. It is a bitter irony for someone who neither believed in communism nor saw life in the Soviet empire as an ideal, to begin a serious debate with such a factory. But there are reasons for my opening a discussion of the relations between Europe and the Muslim world with these words. The developments which took place after the collapse of communist power and the dissolution of the Soviet empire, and the resulting debates and arguments, have been such that they render the foregoing appropriate. Let me recall the following statements by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher at the North Atlantic Treaty meeting that convened on 7 June 1990, before the collapse of the communist system: "For though the greater part of NATO's substance, our task has been to defend our way of life against an aggressive enemy with an expansionist ideology... Now the challenges with which we became so familiar as we looked eastward is changing radically. Communism has crumbled... To anyone who asks: Has NATO a future?, we reply with a resounding 'Yes'... We are now faced with new threats we shall face in future and we must find ways to meet them, and to look at new... organisations which will be managing Europe's future. If we succeed we ensure that NATO remains as relevant, indeed as pivotal, in the next phase as in the first."

EUROPE AND ISLAM - NEW CHALLENGES, NEW HORIZONS

*Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu**

*Outline of the address given during the conference on
"Relations between European and Islamic Cultures and
the Position of Muslims in Europe" organised by
the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at Stockholm,
Sweden, on 15-17 June 1995*

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EUROPE AND ISLAM - NEW CHALLENGES, NEW HORIZONS

- 1 -

"It would perhaps have been better if the communist system had not dissolved and the Soviet empire had not collapsed." It is a bitter irony for someone who neither believed in communism nor saw life in the Soviet empire as an ideal, to begin a serious debate with such a fantasy. But there are reasons for my opening a discussion of the relations between Europe and the Muslim world with these words. The developments which took place after the collapse of communist power and the dissolution of the Soviet empire, and the ensuing debates and arguments, have been such that they render this fantacising acceptable. Let me recall the following statements by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher at the North Atlantic Treaty meeting that convened on 7 June 1990, before the collapse of the communist system: "For much the greater part of NATO's existence, our task has been to defend our way of life against an aggressive enemy with an expansionist ideology ... Now the landscape with which we became so familiar as we looked eastward is changing radically. Communism has crumbled. ... To anyone who asks: 'Has NATO a future?', we reply with a resounding 'Yes'. ... We need to consider how to extend NATO's role from preventing war to building peace: to identify the threats we shall face in future and the forces and strategies we need to meet them; and to look at how NATO will fit with the many other organisations which will be managing Europe's future. If we succeed, we ensure that NATO remains as relevant, indeed as pivotal, in the next phase as in the past. ... There is no guarantee that threats to our security will stop at some imaginary line across the mid-Atlantic. It is not long since some of us had to go to the Arabian Gulf to keep oil supplies flowing. We shall become very heavily dependent on Middle Eastern oil once again in the next century. With the spread of sophisticated weapons and military technology to areas like the Middle East, potential threats to NATO territory may originate more from outside Europe." Thus spoke Mrs. Thatcher. Moreover, five years later NATO Secretary General Willy Claes stated that militant Islam was as important a strategic threat today as the Soviet Union had been in communist times. Explaining the new post-Cold War

policies of NATO, the Secretary General said that there was cause for serious concern about the political instability in the southern flank of NATO. Responding to several NATO member states' reactions to this statement, he said that NATO's attitude was one of struggle not against Islam but against radical trends which appear in Muslim countries and threaten security in those areas, and that it was necessary to plan a common strategy, in cooperation with North African countries, to overcome these trends. These statements, made in 1990 and 1995 respectively by two important and high-level representatives of the Western Alliance, show that following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism, the West looked for a new perceived threat for its armed power in order to affirm the importance and guarantee the continuity of NATO. For some, this threat is Islam.

Is Islam really a danger for the West? If not, why such concern? For what reasons is the West conceiving of Islam as a threat? One fears that if such a conviction establishes itself, a rhetoric recalling the Crusades might reappear. The tragedy which is unfolding in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the eyes of an international community unable to stop it has once again shown the extreme dangers such a fanatical spirit can carry.

I would like first of all to look into the question of why and how the Western world tends to see in Islam a threat and a common enemy. The first possible reason that comes to mind is that the collapse of communism left a great vacuum on one side of the previous balance which was established after World War II, with communism and the Soviet Union on one scale, and the Western world on the other. The sudden emptying of the eastern scale after nearly fifty years disturbed the equilibrium. The resulting feeling of emptiness is reflected in Francis Fukuyama's theory alleging the end of history. Later, the search for new enemies and targets found expression in Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilisations" hypothesis, a scientifically deficient argument that is far from hitting the mark.

It is observed that in the meantime there appeared feelings of uncertainty in the public opinion of many Islamic countries about the current state of relations with the West, which also entailed claims to revise those relations. Such claims were reinforced by Western

attitudes over some recent issues of concern to the Muslim world. Although the West claims to uphold the principles of democracy and human rights, it failed to set a good example when it came to putting them into practice. The policy of the West in the face of the Bosnian war and the war in Chechnya gives rise to serious doubts as to a globally applicable "human rights" system. If "human rights", including the right to live in peace and security, are not respected and protected in the very region where they were originally formulated, can one expect them to be observed elsewhere? Is democracy, described as a universal and ideal system, applicable only to those selected by the West? As an example of double standards, one recalls that when the Russian parliament was bombed and parliamentarians were jailed this incident was seen as a victory for democracy and reform, while other, much simpler incidents happening elsewhere were labelled as attempts to suppress democracy and freedom of expression. All these problems regarding the interpretation of human principles on a geopolitical scale have aroused serious doubts in Muslim countries and world opinion at large as to the likelihood of establishing a multicultural and peaceful world.

- II -

A discussion of relations between Islam and Europe would benefit from taking into consideration the cultural and historical dimensions of the respective attitudes of the Muslim world and the Western world towards each other. Muslims, in the lands where they live today, as well as in the past, during their rule in the European continent, in the Iberian Peninsula and the Balkans, did not impose matters of religion and culture on anyone; they set a historic example of liberalism. In the Balkans, members of the Greek Orthodox, Bulgarian, and Serbian churches lived side by side with Muslims for centuries, in a faithful application of the Islamic principle that "there is no compulsion in religion". Had Muslim states imposed their culture on the different religious and ethnic communities living under their rule, the present cultural identity of the Iberian peninsula and the Balkans would be comparable to that of the territories which were conquered as a result of the European voyages of discovery. However, during the long centuries when Muslims ruled in south-east and south-west Europe, the language, religion, ethnic and cultural characteristics of the

various peoples who lived there were protected. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden pointed out in her invitation letter to this meeting, there existed, in those lands, historical examples of a multicultural society to which one should pay heed in the present world.

On the other hand, in seeking expressions of the Western response to the attitude Muslims took towards other religions, one cannot help recalling the Inquisition, which began upon the fall of Granada, and the treatment of Muslims and Jews in Andalusia. These events were remembered a few years ago, in 1992, during the quincentennial celebrations of the discovery of America. This brilliant anniversary was at the same time reminiscent of forced conversions, expulsions and killings of Muslims and Jews. Much later there took place the expulsion of Muslims from the Balkans, which happened when the five centuries of Ottoman rule in that region ended towards the close of the nineteenth century, concluding with the Ottomans' retreat from this area after the 1912 Balkan War and the First World War. These examples, together with the Western attitude to the Bosnian question, show that the European attitude has indeed been different from that of Muslims when it came to sharing the same continent with Muslims under European rule.

The success of the Andalusian and Ottoman experiences in the past and the Malaysian example today, referred to in the background documents for this meeting, is rooted in the Islamic principles of tolerance and respect vis-à-vis other religions. These principles are explicitly set out in the Qur'an: "There shall be no coercion in matters of faith" (*al-Baqara*: 256) and "To you be your way, and to me mine" (*al-Kafirun*: 6). From the early period of Islam they were reflected in social ethics, traditions and ways of life. The respective geographical positions of the above-mentioned lands must also have played an important role in making peaceful coexistence with different people a norm. Throughout history, North Africa, Eastern Mediterranean lands and Anatolia had a cosmopolitan coastal population, and their hinterlands were meeting places for migrant and sedentary peoples from different backgrounds. The same situation is observable in east and southeast Asia. Europe for its part preserved its Christian character for most of its history. European contacts with the rest of the world generally took place outside the continent. For this reason,

Europeans were historically less experienced in accommodating foreigners in their homelands.

- III -

Political attitudes over international issues would have been much more egalitarian, in history and today, if people had really put theoretical human rights into practice and/or if they were inspired by certain fundamental principles which are common to all major faith systems. Principles of respect, love, and tolerance towards others, irrespectively of religious, ethnic and national differences, are common to all religions. Unfortunately, the West's approach to and understanding of Islam tends to focus on what it is not rather than what it is, despite the fact that the common elements between the major religions are more numerous and much more essential by nature than the differences. In history, violations of the principles of tolerance and peace, contradicting the tenets of the Holy Books and teachings of the Prophets, stemmed largely from the political wills of rulers. Evidently, then, it is incumbent upon rulers and governments to put the principles of peace and tolerance into practice.

In our time societies live in an increasingly intermingled and interdependent way. It seems the biggest problem facing mankind is how to learn to coexist in peace, in Europe and in all other continents. Unless communities realise that their common interest lies in friendship and not in an emphasis on matters of potential conflict, the tendencies towards global disorder and insecurity, which are on the rise since the end of the Cold War, are likely to persist. Therefore today, more than ever, the world community needs to disseminate the principles of mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among various cultures and religions.

More than fifteen million Muslim workers live in Western Europe, including the first and second generations of the workers who migrated from Turkey and other Muslim countries in Asia and Africa to Europe starting in the 1960s, when low-cost labour from developing countries was in demand among industrialised countries. Although some went back home after the economic crises of the 1970s, their numbers increased gradually through new immigrations. At the beginning, despite the striking difference of their lifestyles as

compared to Europeans', these guest workers were not seen as a problem by the host countries. At that time, even their high rate of population growth was not considered a problem by the host countries because it would lower the average age of the general population. The potential causes of the present issues of concern were not yet then perceived as such. Later, however, their presence often came to be seen as a source of economic and social problems, including the rising rates of unemployment. The immigrants themselves faced problems of various kinds relating to education for their children, social marginalisation, cultural identity problems, and many others.

The problems of Muslims in Europe are not only related to differences of culture and religion but also have important socio-economic dimensions. Many of the poorly educated immigrants are settled in the lower quarters of the cities, where they live in quasi-isolation from society with high levels of unemployment. Some depend heavily on the state's social security system. Organised extremist movements spread most easily among these groups of low economic status. Their lifestyles and expectations from state and society seem repulsively different to the native population. Some unfamiliar manifestations of cultural and religious identity, as reflected in clothing and daily conduct within these groups, can best be interpreted as a reaction to their social status and an expression of dissatisfaction. On the other side of the coin are those immigrants with a high status and high level of education who engage in professional careers and feel themselves to be members of European society. Unlike the first group, the latter are well integrated with the urban communities. A large variety of cultural, social and religious behavioural patterns can be observed within each of these groups. No single one of them cannot be taken to represent fully the Islamic culture or way of life. It can be expected that coming generations of immigrants will integrate more successfully with the European way of life and that today's problems will be alleviated in the long run. At present, so long as these groups abide by the laws and rules, public order and ethical norms, it is understandable that they live and behave in line with their own customs. It must also be admitted that adaptation to a European way of life cannot happen by a sudden sacrifice; it is rather a gradual process. This also requires that a psychological milieu be established where foreigners settled in

Europe could feel like members of mainstream society and expressions of their customs and traditions would not be derided as strange and unusual. Also, just as it would be incorrect to attribute the problems associated with Muslim immigrants to Islam in general, these must be tackled as problems of all immigrants and not exclusively of Muslims.

Taking into account the native Muslims in the whole of Europe, i.e. Bosnians, Albanians, Pomaks, Torbesh, Gypsies, etc. together with Asian and African immigrants, the total number of people who can be classified as Muslims is around twenty million. Besides, there are also an increasing number of Europeans who embraced Islam of their own free will. This reality of the new European panorama can be seen against the background of the fruitful contacts which took place between Renaissance Europe and the Islamic civilisation starting with the end of the Middle Ages. Taking an optimistic outlook, one may expect similar cultural exchanges to develop gradually between Europeans and resident Muslims, which would help to establish a mutually enriching coexistence of different cultures.

- IV -

It appears that the Muslim world and the Western world are not well-informed about each other's culture and civilisation. Efforts to establish mutual confidence between the two cultures ought to start with better acquainting them with each other. Leaders and thinkers can play an influential role in correcting perceptions of mutual threat and hostility and eliminating the misunderstandings that exist. The need to eliminate misunderstandings was underlined by H. R. H. the Prince of Wales in his address on "Islam and the West" at Oxford in 1993, in which he stated that "misunderstandings arise when we fail to appreciate how others look at the world, its history, and our respective roles in it ..." We may also recall that to claims that Islam was a threat to the West, the President of the United States of America Mr. Clinton responded by pointing out that "... the behaviour of a group of fanatic people cannot be attributed to the one and a half thousand million-strong Islamic world." It is indeed important to distinguish between religious belief and fanaticism, between those who live according to their religious beliefs and those who exploit those beliefs for political purposes. Moreover, incidents of fanaticism

or extremism are not provoked exclusively by Muslims. Depending on their religious, ideological, or ethnic roots, fanatical currents appear in the East or the West, in the North or the South. On the other hand, dissemination of prejudices against a particular culture or religion may stir up fanatical or extremist movements in the community concerned.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that as a general rule, any conflict arising in the framework of relations between Islam and the West is not a conflict between religions or cultures, but one of political motives and economic interests. The latter are bound to change, while religions and cultures are eternal. Therefore, the Western and Islamic cultures can and should endeavour with mutual goodwill to eliminate prejudices and misunderstandings about each other and establish a permanent framework towards building a harmonious relationship between Muslims and Western peoples.

A EUROPEAN ISLAM POLICY AND ISLAM IN EUROPE

Islam has been increasingly used as an explanation for social, cultural, economic and political conflicts. This applies to relations between Europe and its Muslim neighbours, between North and South and also to divisions within many Muslim states. As examples we might recall how Willy Claes, the former Secretary General of NATO, tried to give NATO a new role by depicting what he termed Islamic fundamentalism as a greater threat to Europe than communism. Three years ago, in an article which appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, Samuel Huntington, a Professor at Harvard, predicted an imminent "clash of civilisations" between the Western world and its Muslim neighbourhood.

The growing gap between North and South, between "the haves and the have-nots", tends to lend weight to this argument. Islam could serve as a rallying cry, focusing the bitterness of the Third World against what is regarded as Western dominance over the economic and political order after the Cold War. As the non-aligned movement becomes less relevant, Islam is increasingly emerging as the strongest political force in the Third World. Perhaps radical Islamic movements will be linked up with other radical groups, and maybe they will cooperate with them, adopting the motto "my enemy's enemy is my friend". From a Western perspective, therefore, the security policy and political agendas of the Third World and Islam would appear to be coinciding to an increasing extent.

In many parts of the world, Muslims currently feel themselves to be besieged and cornered by the Western world. They see themselves as victims of military aggression in Iraq, Libya, Lebanon and Iran; they encounter Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories and in Lebanon; they are on the losing side in wars which have been given religious motives in Bosnia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Chechnia; and they are squeezed by Hindu sectarianism in Kashmir. In addition, Muslims in the United States and Europe feel themselves to be discredited, on probation and under suspicion on the grounds of their religious beliefs; this feeling was confirmed when the first accusations regarding the motives behind the Oklahoma City bombing a year ago were more or less automatically targeted at Muslims and Islam.

The many internal conflicts and domestic antagonisms in the Muslim world are adding to the political instability. The deterioration in the political and economic situation gives the Islamic movements increasing political scope. We might say that the Islamic movements have acquired a "monopoly by default". In many states, they often constitute the only credible and effective genuine opposition to the regime in power, since all official political opposition is banned and, furthermore, has been physically eliminated in many cases. Even in parts of the Muslim world which are characterised by rapid economic and social development, Islam will prove attractive to those who feel that they have lost their bearings and long for what used to be firm frames of reference. As a result, if political systems in the Muslim world are not opened up to allow broader ideological competition, the Islamic movements will be the sole heirs when the existing regimes collapse.

In political terms, however, Islam is not a cohesive ideology which is just waiting to be implemented. Instead, it might be characterised as several different visions of how society should be arranged so as to meet the needs of its citizens in a better manner, and of the form that politics should take. Like nationalism, Islamic ideology also lacks a cohesive political agenda which offers concrete solutions for specific problems. Instead, Islamic political ideology is often a question of vague references to Islamic law. Few Islamic movements currently appear to be capable of interpreting Islamic principles so that they can be applied in today's society, complying with international norms as regards human rights, minority questions and treatment of women.

Political Islam is not completely static, however, blindly trying to turn the clock back to the age of the Prophet. Political views and approaches to political action cover a broad spectrum, ranging from democratic reformers to radical activists who advocate violence and reactionaries who have no concrete vision of society. As a political phenomenon, as it acquires new experience, Islam will also develop a greater awareness of the political difficulties and a fuller understanding of Western political systems and institutions, political theories and fundamental democratic values.

Today, when Islamic tendencies are gaining strength, the Western world has two political alternatives for action. One is to influence and

encourage Muslim states to follow the path of political pluralism and enter into a dialogue with "moderate" Islamic movements. The other is to try to pursue a "containment" policy. The latter alternative - trying to stop Islamic movements by supporting the regimes which are oppressing them - would undoubtedly prove much more difficult than the struggle against Communism.

Challenging an ideology based on an unsuccessful economic system is one thing, but demonising and fighting a culture and a faith which has been in existence for almost fifteen hundred years is quite a different matter. Furthermore, the regimes which the Western world would have to support in this case could not be regarded as natural allies. It is politicians like Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Hafez al Assad in Syria and Muammar Qadhafi in Libya who are the most determined opponents of the Islamic movements. These are rooted in serious and deep-seated political, social and economic problems which will not be solved by repression. If the West encourages the existing regimes to resist fundamentalist tendencies on the grounds that in any event fundamentalism is harmful to our interests, there would be a risk that we would ignore or not be sufficiently sensitive to tendencies and trends which may be genuinely democratic and which would therefore favour our long-term interests. A policy of this nature would also lead to fully justified accusations of a hypocritical attitude and approach to democratic ideals.

As already mentioned, the fact that Islam has been excluded from the political process has contributed to polarisation and radicalisation. One aspect of our policy should therefore be to encourage the current regimes to bring Islamic movements and groups which are not inclined to violence into this process. This would "social-democratise" them, to use an expression coined by Olivier Roy, encouraging them to move more rapidly in the direction of moderation and a pragmatic policy which aims at dealing with current problems. As a result, we should endeavour to maintain a dialogue with "moderate" Islamic movements. The arguments against this approach which are commonly cited - both in the West and in the Muslim world - are that the fundamentalists would exploit it to "kidnap democracy", applying the motto "one man, one vote, one time". And in fact the parliamentary elections in Algeria in December 1991 demonstrated that a liberalisation of the political system involves a risk that strong

forces will emerge whose belief in democracy is by no means unambiguous. Despite all the rhetoric about the need for pluralism, political reform and democratic systems, the combination of Islam and democracy seems to be the source of just as much anxiety amongst Western governments as amongst the despots and authoritarian regimes of the Muslim world.

So far, however, Islamic fundamentalism has threatened family dynasties and one-party states rather than liberal democracies. As a result, the current alternatives to Islamic government are often conservative monarchies, military regimes or formal democracies which in reality are one-party systems. If the Western world made it completely clear, right from the start, that it accepted the results of democratic elections, no matter who came out on top, it would then be easier to adopt a firm position when democratically-elected Islamic governments abused their power. This would mean that criticism could not be dismissed as an expression of anti-Islamism. The question of Islam's compatibility with democracy could have been tested in Algeria. For far too many people in the Muslim world, the Algerian elections have instead to some extent become a test case for Western attitudes to Islam and democracy. The Western world's reaction to the military coup might be described as passive - or perhaps it was even an expression of tacit approval.

A dialogue would be even more important since the prospects of the marginalisation of the religious movements in the short term as a result of economic and social reforms which benefit broad groups in society are not particularly good. Nonetheless, one of the objectives for a policy towards Islam must be to contribute to reforms in the economic and social area, and hence European assistance should be employed to promote and exert pressure in favour of economic and social reform. States such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Turkey, which are close to Europe, will play a key role in establishing a stable relationship between Europe and the Muslim world. As a result, high priority must be given to support for social and economic development in these states. Assistance and political dialogue can never be of more than marginal importance, however. The kind of economic development which is required to marginalise the fundamentalist groups assumes, in its turn, that European markets will be opened up. The emphasis must therefore be on "trade not

aid", and this applies in particular to the European Union's Mediterranean policy. A policy of this nature is also essential if it is to be possible to control immigration pressures.

Religious and cultural divisions between Islam and Christianity can be seen from the Far East to the Mediterranean, and in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans. These areas are potential trouble spots but, at the same time, it should be noted that the most serious rifts are between Islam and the Orthodox churches - there are often close links between local nationalism and Orthodox Christianity. Furthermore, antagonism between the West and the Muslim world tends to be on functional rather than geographical lines. The problems may, however, accumulate and become consolidated to such an extent that Huntington's picture of the clash of civilisations gains credibility. This, in turn, could be exploited by the extremists on both sides. This makes specific, concrete problems more difficult to solve since they assume an ideological disguise which blows them up out of all proportion and hides the possibility of achieving a negotiated solution.

We must therefore keep the question of Islam and the concrete issues separate - we must "de-Islamise" them. As a result, the problems which exist should not be presented as a cultural confrontation with Islam. Bilateral differences with Islamic countries must not be described in Islamic terms unless there is direct evidence that Islam is causing the problem. Instead, criticism of the relevant phenomena *per se* must be presented in precise terms; for example, criticism of human rights violations or support for international terrorist activities - matters which we all condemn, irrespective of the religious or cultural background of the perpetrators. If a fundamentalist Islam is presented as the source of all evil, this will strengthen such movements since marginalised and dissatisfied groups will get the impression that the fundamentalists must be on the right track if they can scare and shake the Western world to such an extent. If Islamic groups come to power, the European Union must agree on certain minimum conditions which must be fulfilled if bilateral relations are to be maintained. These conditions should be linked to human rights and the norms for relations between countries. This must be the primary guiding principle, not the domestic Islam-based legislation which regimes of this nature might introduce.

Islam is a central factor in several explosive national and ethnic conflicts - in Bosnia, the West Bank and Gaza, Cyprus, Kashmir, Nagorno-Karabakh and Southern Sudan. The way in which the Western world reacts to and intervenes in such conflicts will be reflected in our relationships in a broader sense. Cooperation with Muslim states in peace-keeping operations within and outside the Muslim world may be one element in a confidence-building policy.

Despite the continuous expansion of contacts and growing interdependence, there is also increasing suspicion and misunderstanding between the Muslim world and Europe. Countering the hostile and threatening scenarios produced on both sides will become an increasingly important aspect of a European Islamic policy. As a result, there must also be a greater focus than in the past on confidence-building measures in the cultural area. This was one of the aims of the Conference on "Relations between European and Islamic Cultures and the Position of Muslims in Europe" which was held at Stockholm last June on the initiative of the Swedish Foreign Minister and which will have a follow-up in Jordan in June [1996]. These conferences should not just be one-off events but should be followed up and given a broader content. Immigration and integration policies will become increasingly important components in a European Islamic policy. Only a depoliticised and liberal Islam can be integrated into Europe, and integration of this nature is only possible if it runs parallel with economic and social integration. If this is successful, the Islamic religious communities may become bridges between Europe and their countries of origin.

Racism, intolerance and a narrow nationalism are currently gaining strength throughout Europe, in reaction to a level of immigration which is insignificant compared with what we are likely to encounter in the future. These problems are already so serious that they can only be solved by joint European endeavours and a consistent European immigration and refugee policy. There are several questions which need to be faced. To what extent should European countries be opened up to non-European immigration, including the reception of refugees? What religious, cultural and linguistic elements in the identity of immigrants are to be furthered, tolerated or resisted? Multiculturalism has become a prestigious concept, but it has a broad spectrum of meanings, ranging from the question of whether the

genital mutilation of girls should be tolerated or whether girls should be allowed to wear veils in schools, to the issue of home-language training and multicultural curricula.

One essential prerequisite for successful integration is that we build up our knowledge of the diversity of Islam and the varied nature of Muslim immigration. Now that the "Red Peril" has disappeared, we are urged to believe that it has been replaced by a green Muslim threat. There is clearly a risk that this image will be exploited to reinforce a feeling of European unity - something which is now at a low ebb in all West European states after the euphoric years of the late 1980s. In view of the fact that there are already more than fifteen million immigrants with a Muslim background in the European Union - a number exceeding that of the Scandinavian members - and that immigration from the Muslim world is going to continue, we must rid ourselves of this false negative scenario as soon as possible - a scenario which is often depicted in terms of uniform, fanatical Muslim masses preparing to storm the bastions of the West's welfare system under green banners of Islam, with scimitars in one hand and the Qur'an in the other.

The Muslims in Europe are not a featureless Third World mob, but consist of people from all classes in society and with varying degrees of religiosity. The majority not only have a relaxed relationship to religion but are in fact more interested in worldly pleasures than many European puritans. Only a minority of Muslims are organised members of a religious or political community. As a result, Europe is not currently facing the threat of a fundamentalist fifth column of Muslim immigrants. Instead, Islam's internal splits are clearly reflected in the Diaspora. Muslims in Europe are not only divided by their different languages, cultures and skin colour, but also by the various branches and sects of Islam which, in addition, are often in bitter competition with each other for Islamic souls. Furthermore, we must also take political antagonisms into account; for example, between Kurdish and Turkish immigrants. Perhaps the greatest problem now faced by Muslim immigrants is that their diversity has meant that they often lack a common spokesman or a representative organisation which can present their case.

A policy designed to facilitate the integration of Muslim immigrant groups must take into consideration the following:

- * There are already large Muslim communities in most Western European states. These communities will not only expand but will also demand greater political influence as increasing numbers of Muslims become naturalised citizens and become enfranchised in their new home countries.

- * Muslims are not as easy to integrate and not as willing to allow themselves to be integrated as previous immigrant groups. An Islamic identity encompasses customs and traditions which deviate from those which are regarded as normal in the societies in which many Muslims are now living. Demands will be made for special rights and for special status, in addition to the entitlements enjoyed by the native population. In many cases, these demands will not only be difficult to satisfy but also impossible, and this will lead to tension.

- * Undesirable and undemocratic political tendencies existing in the migrants' countries of origin may be channeled into their immigration countries. Both the governments of Muslim states and the various sects and organisations might attempt to exploit the immigrants for their own purposes.

In the light of these factors, what is the best way to integrate Muslim immigrants? Although Jews and Christians are accepted as "Peoples of the Book", Islam has always been a dominant religion in historical terms. In Europe, Muslims must learn to live as a minority and to accept the fundamental pillars of modern European societies; that is to say, pluralism and a secular social system characterised by tolerance of people with a different political or religious viewpoint.

The objective must be integration which is as rapid as possible, taking into account and respecting those who, while respecting our values, wish to maintain their own cultural and religious identity. Taking into account special religious features must not, however, extend to excusing pupils from aspects of their education which do not suit their parents. Just as a full education in one's own religion must be regarded as a private matter, immigrants must also take responsibility for home-language training - something which is currently hindering

integration. Muslims must themselves become active in working for young people, so as to give a generation which has grown up in Europe a cultural background of their own while at the same time integrating them socially into their new environment. The Muslim communities must cooperate with each other and avoid fighting out their theological disputes openly on European territory. As a result, a "domestic" leadership will have to emerge, thus permitting the elimination of the label attached to Islam as an alien and dangerous cult. This domestic leadership will not only consist of Muslims born in Europe, but perhaps also of native converts.

Most Muslims consider that they must comply with laws and regulations in their new home countries, but this willingness is undermined in many quarters by external appeals from organisations which prefer a "pure" Islam, without compromise. As a result, we must not tolerate the establishment of parallel political institutions, as now exists in Britain where there is a separate Muslim parliament. This is due to an excessively broad interpretation of the concept of multiculturalism or perhaps, as in Sweden, a misguided general spirit of goodwill, sweetness and light, or simply flabbiness.

Furthermore, we must not be too easy-going in dealing with religious and political fanatics who utilise their exile in Europe for subversive activities directed against their home countries or for internal disputes. Under no circumstances should tolerance be extended to totalitarian views or ideas. While we should demonstrate sympathy for Islam as a religion and ensure that the prerequisites for the exercise of religion are as favourable as possible, we must also demonstrate firmness as regards compliance with our own laws. At the same time, we must beware of regarding all religious expressions as signs of fundamentalism, or unwillingness to adapt and to become integrated into Swedish society. A process of Islamisation amongst immigrants is only dangerous if it comes into conflict with the norms of a pluralistic society and a democratic state. For many immigrants from Muslim countries, religion and a general sense of piety are one way of counteracting the feeling of rootlessness which they experience. Thus, religion may be a by-product of the break with their own cultural background and not necessarily a protest against the new society in which they are living. Hence greater religiosity is not the same thing as suspicion and intolerance of a secularised European environment

but may instead create an inner tranquillity which promotes tolerance and hence integration.

Individuals who devote themselves to preaching a doctrine of hatred directed against Europe and against Christianity, and who abuse our pluralistic societies, must be dealt with firmly and rejected. But at the same time we must not regard radical Muslim groups as an expression of an overall campaign to attack the Western world from within. There is no such plan and, furthermore, there is no Muslim leadership capable of drawing up such a campaign. Antagonism and enmity between different sects are often stronger than hatred of the Western world. Apparently, only 6 per cent of the Arabs in France regularly visit a mosque and only a few of the 60-70,000 Muslims in Sweden who practise their religion are fundamentalists. As far as the vast majority are concerned, the cultural and identity-supportive aspects of their religion are the most important factors.

Only a de-politicised and liberal Islam can be integrated into Europe, and such an integration is only possible if it is paralleled by economic and social integration. In turn, one prerequisite for a development of this kind is controlled immigration and a common European immigration policy designed to create a liberal and tolerant Islamic community in Europe. If this is to be achieved, those who are willing to become integrated must feel that they are welcome and that they belong here. The feeling of "where do I belong?" is one of the primary breeding grounds for fundamentalists who want to create and exploit a spiritual ghetto with the message "You have no affinities either here or with your corrupt and morally decadent government in your home country - you have to fight against both of them".

If Muslim immigrants are to be able to feel that they belong, it is essential that:

* Islam be recognised and regarded as a "domestic" religion. There is nothing which intrinsically indicates that a Muslim cannot be as good a Swede as a member of the Pentecostal Brethren or an adherent of the Jewish faith, or that mosques cannot be as natural a feature of Swedish cities as churches have always been in Aleppo, Damascus, Mosul or Cairo.

* Education in the Islamic faith not only be improved, but be made mandatory in our schools. Demonisation needs to be eliminated on a mutual basis. Ignorance breeds prejudice and hatred. As a result, the media must also rectify the stereotyped and oversimplified view of Islam which is currently conveyed.

* Society protect everyone who wants to be integrated into European society, but who is under threat and under pressure not only from local extremists and groups which are hostile to immigrants, but also from Muslim extremist groups.

* Immigrants be given an opportunity to formulate and articulate their views and wishes.

* We pursue development cooperation and foreign policies which are designed to reduce the pressure of immigration and to make immigration more manageable in human and political terms.

If immigrants are integrated in this way, the Islamic community in Europe can become a bridge between Europe and immigrants' countries of origin. "Euro-Muslims" will then be able to set an example, and transfer democratic approaches and liberal ideas and reforms to their native countries. This would enable a fruitful triangular relationship to develop between the Islamic communities, their native countries and their new home countries, since many people living in the Diaspora want to maintain close contacts with their origins. On the other hand, if integration fails and immigrants with a Muslim background feel that they are subject to religious tutelage, forced into ghettos and socially marginalised, with continuing high rates of unemployment, we will have to reckon with the emergence of underground fundamentalist Qur'an schools in our immigrant suburbs, and with teachers who urge their pupils to fight with all the means at their disposal against what they regard as an oppressive Swedish society. Instead of a modern, tolerant "Euro-Islam" we will see a development of a "ghetto Islam", supported by fundamentalist forces in the Islamic world. Radical mullas throughout Western Europe are currently attempting to exploit the psychological, cultural and material problems of Muslim immigrants for their own purposes, and politicians such as Jean-Marie Le Pen, Franz Schönhuber and Jörg Haider are giving them wind in their sails as a result of the

polarisation which they have advocated in France, Germany and Austria.

If developments move in this direction, we must reckon that militant Muslim organisations will also endeavour to pursue their struggle with the Western world - which they regard as the incarnation of all evil - in Europe. In this case, a "holy war" can become a reality in Western Europe sooner than we suppose, not in the form of a military struggle between the West and the Islamic world or the clash of civilisations that Huntington has in mind but as a kind of permanent guerrilla warfare in the ghetto-suburbs of our major cities.

One of the aims of the Conference on "Relations between European and Islamic Cultures and the Position of Muslims in Europe" which was held at Stockholm in June 1995 was to initiate a discussion on how, by common efforts, we can prevent this scenario from becoming reality. Few tasks can be more important on our common agenda in the years to come.

BOSNIA: A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHRISTIAN- AND MUSLIM-INFLUENCED STATES IN EUROPE

Introduction

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you. In Istanbul, about an hour that has exceeded me since it began. The war against Bosnia. The prime aggressor was Serbia, followed by a second aggressor, Croatia. "It is Europe's task to take care of Bosnia": this statement was often heard by European diplomats and foreign ministers at the beginning of a European and in fact a Western, international crisis concerning one of the thousand years of aggression since World War II. Before I address the general responsibilities of the great, and even the specific challenges to both the Christian-influenced and the Muslim-influenced states as a joint challenge, I want to remind you briefly, according to my best though limited knowledge, of what happened.

I will discuss three questions in this lecture. First, what happened and why? Second, what was and is the responsibility of the great states of the international community and especially the West and Europe? Third, what are today the most important challenges to meet the crisis and contain the danger to Bosnia and as Yugoslavia?

BOSNIA: A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHRISTIAN- AND MUSLIM-INFLUENCED STATES IN EUROPE

*Prof. Dr. Hajo Funke**

Lecture given at IRCICA,
Istanbul, on 24 May 1996

Prime aggressors and perils

The first part
was based
led by
Bosnian Serbs

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BOSNIA: A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHRISTIAN- AND MUSLIM-INFLUENCED STATES IN EUROPE

Introduction

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you, in Istanbul, about an issue that has concerned me since it began: the war against Bosnia. The prime aggressor was Serbia, followed by a second aggressor, Croatia. "It is Europe's task to take care of Bosnia"; this statement was often heard by European diplomats and foreign ministers at the beginning of a European, and in fact a Western, international crisis concerning one of the bloodiest acts of aggression since World War II. Before I address the specific responsibilities in the past, and then the specific challenges to both the Christian-influenced and the Muslim-influenced states as a joint challenge, I want to remind you briefly, according to my best though limited knowledge, of what happened.

I will discuss three questions in this lecture. First, what happened and why? Second, what was and is the responsibility of the other states of the international community and especially the West and Europe? Third, what are today the most important challenges to meet the crisis and contain the dangers to Bosnia and ex-Yugoslavia?

I tried to follow closely the Bosnian conflict from the moment it erupted first as a visiting professor in Berkeley, then as a professor at the Department of Political Science at the Free University. I have travelled in this region since early 1994, most recently in February 1996; and in Berlin I have tried to support refugees as well as people in Sarajevo by organising support for the cause of a hospital and in the inter-faith Jewish-organised welfare institution La Benevolencija in Sarajevo.

Prime aggressor and genocide

The first point to discuss is what happened from the middle of 1992. It was clear to all serious observers that aggression against Bosnia was led by the political and military leaders of Serbia as well as the Bosnian Serbs and the Krajina activists, the aim being to divide

Bosnia and to conquer it. This was executed by the former Yugoslavian army and intensified by national extremists like Karadzic, Mladic, Martic and others. The aim was to "ethnically cleanse" Bosnia, meaning to expel and murder civilians by all means possible: by torture, mass rape, death camps, mass killings, involving killing of children, women, the elderly, and any man who might be able to fight back. This adds up to the worst war crime in Europe since Hitler's occupation of Europe between 1939 and 1945. As Europeans, but especially as Germans, we have to take responsibility and employ internal and foreign policy to contain and condemn this kind of war. Cherif Bassiouni, the Chief Commissioner of the UN Investigation Group, a brilliant researcher, was invited to come to the World Political Science Conference in Berlin. In a speech based on extensive research, he came to the conclusion that this war waged by the Bosnian Serbs under the lead of the military and political leadership of Serbia - that is to say, of President Milosevic - was a genocide as defined by the Geneva Convention, which was enacted by the international community because of the Hitler war. Bassiouni explained how it had been violated, by describing the systematic character of the extermination, with murder and rape, of Muslims in the Prijedor region and by examining and describing the bloody character of the siege of Sarajevo and other cities. These strategies have been described as systematic attempts to eradicate the Bosnian people.

I had the chance, if I may say so, in September 1995, to follow the liberating troops of the Bosnian army in the region of Kljuc. In various parts of the area, they found, as we could observe, hidden mass graves. Similar judgements to that of Bassiouni were given by the highly respected former Premier of Poland, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who resigned as the representative for human rights of the United Nations after new war crimes were openly committed in Srebrenica in July 1995. Mazowiecki believed that this crime might well have been avoided if the international community had decided to prevent it. One of the serious journalists who described the death camps publicly and precisely in the American press was Roy Gutman, who spoke at our Institute of Political Science. This tells us that it was clear since June, at least July of 1992, what was happening.

Mitterand knew: he got his information from President Izetbegovic himself. The Americans, the Germans and the French also knew. But before I go into the responsibilities of these dominant international players with respect to the crisis, I want to cast a glance at the international scene, why these events were allowed to happen.

"Turkish danger"

From the mid-eighties, from at least 1986-87, it was clear that Milosevic was trying to use the nationalist card to reshape his power structure. He learned, so to speak, by doing; he realised the value of exploiting the Kosovo issue to gain more and better-based power. He used the dependent Muslim Albanians in the Kosovo region as scapegoats; the Serbian military presented the Kosovo Muslims, totally unrealistically, as a deadly danger to Serbia; the Serbs then claimed that they were forced to persecute the Muslims, because otherwise the Serbs would be persecuted and killed. This sequence was a total reversal of the real situation in the region. The extremist Serbs falsely presented themselves as persecuted persecutors. This term, "persecuted persecutors", is borrowed from Theodor Adorno, one of our leftist liberal theorists who analysed the horror of Hitler's antisemitism. For that perverse justification of what the Serbs did, the aggressive Kosovo myth was used. According to that narrative, over 600 years ago, Prince Lazar lost his life defending the Orthodox Christians against the Muslim, so-called Turkish danger. Although historians cannot reconstruct the actual historical data, this story has been cooked and recooked again and again over centuries. The moral of the story is told as follows: "We have to defend our history, we have to defend our sacred land, and our graves; even though it be fatal, even if we are killed in this fight, we will be in heaven like Lazar. To be killed would ensure our life in another world; you will be honoured and blessed like Jesus Christ. Whoever risks his life gains eternal life, and if you fight and you are killed you will get eternal life. So let us fight and defend our land, defend our graves, wherever they are, even if they are in Croatia, even if they are in Bosnia, let us fight." This is the basis of the rhetoric of Milosevic and his crew. This myth was then intensified by the memory of the slaughter and terror of the Second World War. An imaginary myth was mixed with real trauma for Serbs: especially under the National Socialist Croatian Ustasa regime installed by the German and Italian fascists, hundred

thousand Serbs were massacred. Since then, the Serbs share a collective memory of this real traumatic event. But in wrongly presuming that this past is our present and has to shape politics as a direct consequence of a past traumatic event, the Serbs change the perspective by saying "we are the victims of genocide now". You can see this attitude in their statements, when they refer to the Albanian Muslims as "the Turks" - a dependent minority which is oppressed by the Serbs under conditions of extreme social insecurity and a deep identity crisis during the breakaway of the Eastern bloc and the Yugoslavian system. Yet the creation of a false myth, the abuse of a distorted memory, worked successfully. Milosevic took the chance to organise a wide mobilisation around a new, yet also old, extremist nationalist ideology. "Nobody will beat us, otherwise we will fight back and beat them, and this fight will be bloody".

Of course there are a lot of differences between the situations in 1942 and 1992. But once this behaviour was established, it caused an escalating spiral of aggression, first between Serbs and Croats, using extremists like Mladic against a totally innocent and insufficiently armed country, i.e. the new state of Bosnia, in 1992. According to all rational sources, the military and political leadership of Serbia is the prime aggressor, fuelled by other nationalists like Tudjman and of course by a kind of wind of nationalism all over the former Yugoslavia.

Fatal intervention; responsibilities of the West

I turn now to the second point, the responsibilities of the West. The Western states did not live up to the principle, voiced just a year before in their rhetoric, that aggression should not be rewarded. Some of them more or less took the side of the Serbs, imagining they supported an authority, and they kept their distance, simply waiting and wavering; the U.S.A. and Germans tried to secure the new states against aggression by acknowledging their independence. All these parties of the West regressed to a stage similar to the situation after the First World War, coming back to their own agendas and thus being used by the various factions within ex-Yugoslavia for a period of at least three years. The courageous former Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic told us despondently in a long conversation in his office in September 1995 that the West was good at talking and even better at

technologically monitoring - but not at acting. As is well known, it was only after three years of more or less helpless discussion of policies that for reasons more internal than external the U.S.A. finally intervened, with the help of others, by bombarding the commanding and communication structure of the Bosnian Serb troops. As a result the Bosnian troops were able to gain, with limited help from the Croats and the U.S.A., some territories, especially in north and northwest Bosnia. But soon after that, in early October 1995, they were forced by the U.S.A., to the best of my knowledge, to accept a cease-fire, although the Serbs then still held nearly 50% of the Bosnian territory.

According to my reading up to now, Dayton is little more than an accepted cease-fire. We had a short conversation with Prof. İhsanoğlu about this and if I understand it correctly, he agrees. It is paradoxical to the point of absurdity: on the one hand, we have a real important cease-fire, killing has basically ended, for now, thanks to the help of the troops who are there; but if they were removed the conflagration could break out again. But on the other hand, the Dayton Agreement basically accepts the *de facto* division into two entities, and the same terrorists are still holding power. These terrorists like Karadzic and Mladic are in power, in the Serb-dominated territory of course, and they are accepted by a big majority. I saw this myself when I followed, with a friend of mine who is a journalist with the New York Times, the refugee trail from Vogosca to Pale, in the February days of 1996. There the irresponsible authorities under Karadzic forced their own people to leave Vogosca, the suburbs of Sarajevo, under inhuman conditions, threatening and even murdering their own people. Nothing has been done that is sufficient to implement the civil dimension of the Dayton Agreement up to now. Of course there are lots of attempts to implement the agreement, and there is a lot of trust placed in the IFOR troops to enforce it. One of the most vital things is to get Karadzic and Mladic to Den Haag, before an international tribunal on war crimes. But attempts to do so have failed so far.

No peace without moral justice – joint international challenges

This brings me to my last point: the challenge. I think the challenge is threefold. First, it is to stop the extremist nationalist aggression and

genocide. This has been partially achieved with a decisive first step, the cease-fire. Second, it is important to impose the international rules and conventions of basic human rights of democracy and moral justice which are not being implemented, currently, for the larger part of the Bosnian territory. Third, it is important to rebuild the Bosnian territory as a whole: the society, the economy, the basics of the political communication and culture. This is a very heavy task, as you know: 90% are without work, 60% of the houses have been damaged or completely destroyed, around 200,000 people have been killed, hundreds of thousands are in various ways handicapped or victims of torture. Nearly 2,000,000 more are refugees, within the country, within ex-Yugoslavia or around the world. Of this latter category, around 300,000 are in Germany. In one very crowded city, Berlin, there are 32,000 Bosnian refugees. One can say unequivocally that these are refugees who are really traumatised.

This brings me to the fourth challenge, i.e. that of at least giving some moral justice, compensation or recognition, to the victims. In that respect, it is important to support the Den Haag international trial of war criminals in ex-Yugoslavia. I call upon the various Governments, and we are doing this in Berlin too, to support the Den Haag tribunal publicly and financially as a matter of urgency; the Government of Turkey, the Government of Germany, the Governments of France, Great Britain and the U.S.A. should support the international tribunal at Den Haag more strongly and also financially. This court tries to provide a forum for international justice and international law. This is a unique opportunity to go further and to publicly press for those war criminals to resign. This is a way to draw public international attention to this dimension. If they were actually kept out of power, this would help the whole situation in ex-Yugoslavia. So I urgently call upon all the respective Governments to support this cause.

These four dimensions, these four challenges, are not insurmountable; they are concrete challenges to change the state of affairs. As my task here is to talk about the challenge, I have to evaluate whether and how these challenges can be met. Therefore, in conclusion I have to briefly evaluate the capacities of our respective societies and policy elites to see whether and how it is possible to meet this challenge. This is of course a matter for public and for the political elites who govern the respective countries. We have already

discussed the first problem, to continue the prevention of mass murders, and this implies that we have to think about the retention of the IFOR troops over a period of time beyond the period of existing commitments, which is only this year. It now looks like as if the IFOR will have to stay for at least several years.¹

In terms of the effectiveness of democracy in this area, the principles of international conventions and human rights have to be instated, or reinstated, and it seems to me that awareness for that is on a very high level. The Dayton Agreement would be finished if at least decisive steps are not taken in this direction. There cannot be free elections without these basics, and if there were no free elections the whole Dayton Agreement would collapse. The reconstruction efforts too should be stepped up because it is my intuition that only if we actively intervene in the process will events not stagnate or even go backwards. There has to be, given the conditions of the destroyed territory in Bosnia, a very high and sophisticated level of intervention in economic, military, social and legal realms.

My final question is, how our respective societies would be prepared to do this? With respect to your country, it is up to you to judge. But I know from the Bosnian perspective, from what I have personally experienced, that your country is of especially high importance in terms of economic and military assistance. I met the officers in the Turkish battalion near Zenica; it was very clear that this battalion was of great importance during the war and acted very effectively in comparison with some other battalions. It seems to me that your public intervention and your foreign policy aimed at helping to restructure and reshape an integrated Bosnia, could help achieve the multiethnic, integrated Bosnia that Silajdzic is speaking about. It may also be that interaction between the more religious segments of the country is of importance. I learned from my close cooperation with the Jewish-founded, multiethnic welfare organisation, La Benevolencija Sarajevo, how important the inter-religious dialogue in Bosnia is. It can serve to underscore and support the idea of human rights as stated in the Qur'an and the Bible. I have the impression that it may be of great interest to have an exchange of views between religious leaders here in Turkey and there in Bosnia. I learned a lot about

¹ In the meantime SFOR has been established.

Muslim belief systems and the importance of the Revelation in the texts of Muslims. All three monotheistic religions have, at least from this perspective, one thing in common: their scriptures state very clearly that all men are equal in their relation to God, and thus they are equal in their relations with each other. Secondly, they have to take care of each other, of the neighbour and the stranger. And thirdly, they all address the issue of social justice.

It is clear that after having had the horror of Hitler, we have had to come to terms, at least step by step, with this past, and draw some consequences about the importance of liberal values and the values of tolerance. Step by step, through serious conflicts - especially in the 1960's, as you may recall - we came to society-based liberal-democratic principles. These political and cultural trends can help by encouraging us to care, at least in our minds, for others, for Bosnians at home and Bosnian refugees in our countries. With respect to religious communities, we have to see if and how the religious groups are doing what they ought to do, that is to say, according to their respective religious texts, to take care of neighbours as well as of strangers. Political, cultural and even religious efforts must be combined to support the Bosnian cause, as I have described.

It is not right to shake hands with perpetrators of war crimes. It is not right that Bosnian refugees face terrible hardships. It is not fitting and in fact counterproductive, that political scientists like Samuel Huntington in the U.S.A. and others in Germany should say "We have to fight the new fight between the West and Islam". Yet it is encouraging that even the conservative deputy leader of the Christian Democratic Union, Wolfgang Schäuble, stated recently at our university that we cannot go on seeing pictures like those we have seen in the last years; it is our moral obligation as Europeans to do all that is necessary to stop this and to change the course of events. It is all the more encouraging that both of the Christian churches are energetically defending the cause of the Bosnian refugees in Berlin. They are trying to make their life easier, through a joint effort involving scientists, bishops, refugee workers and social workers. Finally, it is the duty of the countries of the West and the East, the Muslim-influenced and the Christian-influenced countries, especially in Europe, to meet these challenges head on.

EXCERPTS FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF
THE LEADERS OF THE DIFFERENT FAITHS REPRESENTED
IN TURKEY CONVENED AT IRCICA ON THE OCCASION OF
THE VISIT OF MRS. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,
FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Welcoming address of IRCICA Director General
Prof. Dr. Etmeleddin İsmailoğlu

Dear Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, distinguished guests,
I am delighted to welcome you to IRCICA. On behalf of the Centre
and myself, I would like to thank you for the honour given to us by
your visit. I also welcome the distinguished guests who accepted the
invitation to attend this meeting. Your visit to our Centre is another
positive step in your effort towards promoting inter-religious
understanding, a mission which we share. Our Centre, which was
established fifteen years ago as the first inter-governmental cultural
institution of the OSCE and was the first inter-religious organization to be

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FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

The First Lady of the United States of America, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, visited IRCICA on 28 March 1996 within the framework of her official visit to Turkey. Mrs. Clinton chaired a meeting of the leaders of the different faiths represented in Turkey which was held at IRCICA on this occasion.

The meeting underscored the necessity to reinforce the spirit of mutual understanding between peoples of different religions and cultures.

The participants were: Mr. Selahattin Kaya, Grand Mufti of Istanbul;

Mgr. Georges Marovitch, General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference in Turkey; the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Fener, Bartholomew I;

Metropolitan Filuksinos Yusuf Çetin of the Syrian Orthodox Church;

Grand Rabbi David Asseo; Karekin II, the Armenian Patriarch in Turkey; the Chaldean Archbishop Mgr. Paul Karataş;

Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç, member of the Turkish Parliament and former President of Religious Affairs in Turkey; Prof. Dr. Mehmet Aydın, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Dokuz

Eylül University (İzmir); and other guests from diplomatic and academic circles.

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**Welcoming address of IRCICA Director General
Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu**

Dear Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, distinguished guests,
I am delighted to welcome you to IRCICA. On behalf of the Centre and myself, I would like to thank you for the honour given to us by your visit. I also welcome the distinguished guests who accepted the invitation to attend this meeting. Your visit to our Centre is another positive step in your efforts towards promoting inter-cultural understanding, a mission which we share. Our Centre, which was established fifteen years ago as the first intergovernmental cultural institution of the OIC and also the first international organisation to be set up in Istanbul, endeavours to strengthen cooperation among Islamic countries and to promote understanding between the Muslim world and other nations. With this aim, we try to inform world opinion about the civilisation of Islam, the history and culture of Muslim nations, their cultural and scientific exchanges with other civilisations, particularly with the West. For many years now, we have been participating in various forums which brought together representatives of different religions. We have also undertaken a great many activities in cooperation with major international organisations and with hundreds of institutions engaged in Islamic studies, including eminent institutions in the United States of America, such as the Library of Congress, the Center for Middle East Studies of Harvard University, and the Middle East Studies Association of North America. Around three hundred universities, research centres and libraries in America and approximately ten thousand institutions in other parts of the world receive our publications. The main purpose of these activities is to present a true image of the Islamic civilisation and foster affinities between peoples of different cultures. We included a number of relevant research projects in our work programs and are currently building up the endowment of a foundation that we have established to help the success and continuity of these efforts.

We believe that inter-religious dialogue ought to be based on the principles of tolerance and respect of others which are shared by all religions and shape the ideal human values of major civilisations. Guidance comes from the religions themselves. All three revealed religions teach man to strive to live his short life on earth in peace. Despite this, relations between religions and cultures still suffer from misunderstandings, intolerance and distrust. Some go so far as to suggest that conflict and confrontation between civilisations are inevitable. Furthermore, statements are made characterising Islam as violent - a label that is in total contradiction with the essence of Islam, a religion of peace. Such assertions overlook the fact that economic, political or other reasons of acts of violence are fundamentally the same in all cultural or religious contexts.

These and other views prejudicial to inter-faith relations are fraught with danger and can be disastrous for the future of mankind, all the more so in the present international environment where new balances of power replace the old bi-polar system. This process, more than ever, calls for joint efforts to prevent religious hatred, which went to the extent of ethnic cleansing in the very recent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Therefore, inter-faith dialogue carries the utmost importance in our time. I believe that your valuable efforts, and in particular this meeting at IRCICA, will help to reinforce this understanding. Your visit to Istanbul is also highly significant because this is a city which for over five centuries has been one of those rare lands of peace where peoples of different religions live together in an environment of perfect harmony. Your presence in the atmosphere of this historic Yildiz Palace, with the distinguished representatives of our different religious communities, is another meaningful manifestation of inter-cultural dialogue. Towards this goal, our Centre, for its part, will continue to make all efforts possible in cooperation with the institutions concerned all over the world. ...

**Address of Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton,
First Lady of the United States of America**

Thank you very much, Director General. I feel privileged to be here, and I feel privileged to be here with all of you. Istanbul, as the Director General has already said, has been and remains the meeting place of the world's great religions. I am grateful that the leaders of these religions should gather here this afternoon to assist me in understanding and being part of a dialogue on behalf of peace and tolerance and respect among all people. It is an honour for my daughter and me to be here at the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture. My daughter has studied Islamic history in school in the United States and has a deep and abiding interest in Islam.

My visit today to just a few of the religious sites that are part of this great city's heritage underscores the deep history and importance of this city and this country to religion. I also had the opportunity yesterday to speak to leaders of the communities of business and academia and other institutions, and I spoke about the dramatic costs of ethnic and religious conflict in the past and in the present.

I saw at first hand in Bosnia just a few days ago, what the failure to respect and tolerate can bring to innocent people. While I was there I met with some religious leaders and leaders of the communities represented in Bosnia, and we discussed how each of them will attempt to play a major role in bringing peace to that troubled land. They know very well that reconstruction consists not only of rebuilding the physical plant, repairing the houses, once again opening the roads, and enabling people to live their lives, but it also involves spiritual reconstruction and reconciliation. They told me they knew that peace cannot be realised unless there is both physical and spiritual renewal, and unless peace, tolerance, respect and understanding replace the hatred and violence that marred their lives.

The leaders gathered here already know the importance of dialogue, community, tolerance and reconciliation. And I am very grateful that we have such leaders representing the major monotheistic religions here in this city, because this city has so much symbolic and religious importance to people throughout the world. As the Director General

said, we face enormous challenges in the future and the religious community will have to be at the forefront in assisting the rest of us in meeting those challenges, in creating conditions for coexistence and harmony, in making it possible for all religions and religious people to exemplify their own spirituality in ways that enhance their lives and the quality of life among all of us. I am very grateful that I have this opportunity to meet with leaders who stand against those who, as the Director General said, would use and misuse religion for political or other reasons. And I am also grateful that there are efforts such as those that emanate from this Centre to bridge the divides that too often separate us, man from man, woman from woman, people from people, and instead, attempt to bring reconciliation to all the children of God.

I look forward to our opportunity to exchange ideas and views, and I am appreciative of the chance I have been given to listen to these leaders gathered here who speak for so many others and whose voices have been strong on behalf of the need for all of us to be humbler, to work harder and to understand our obligations to make it possible for each of us to fulfil the divine mission that we have been given as believers. And I thank you very much for convening this gathering.

ISLAM AND PEACE

All religions are concerned with peace. The establishment of peace is among the first and foremost objectives of any religion. One reasons that all religions aim at man's happiness and welfare and it is only by peaceful means that they can lead men to save their souls and live in harmony with each other. Certainly Islam is no exception in this respect. But I must say Islam does constitute an exception, not in the negative sense, on the contrary, positive it not only strongly encourages peace as the other religions do, but its very name 'Islam' is derived from the same root as the word 'peace'. The word 'Islam' comes from a root which means 'peace' and 'submission'. The concept can be interpreted as the attainment of peace through submission to the will of God by conforming to divine law and guidance. In the Islamic context, divine law includes all the laws that aim at universal peace and order, the latter being essential for material, moral and spiritual well-being.

One of the attributes of God is the God as 'The Source of Peace and the Bestower of Security' (Qur'an, al-Baqara: 21). The establishment and maintenance of peace and security in this world must therefore be the objective of mankind. Accordingly, the Muslim greeting in all parts of the world is *assalamu alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa birkatuh* ('Peace be on you, and the mercy of God and His blessings').

The ideas of peace and tranquility are essential to Islam and closely tied to its central concepts of 'submission', 'faith' and 'merit'. Therefore, dealing with the meaning of peace and tranquility according to Islam, one inevitably has to refer to those central concepts. 'Peace' and 'tranquility' stem directly from them and are always related to them. This is a consequence of the essential qualities of Islam, a religious unity of principles.

ISLAM AND PEACE

Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu

the starting point is the uniqueness of Allah, the One, the Lord of the Universe, Whom everything returns. The fundamental principle of Islam is that there is no god but He; He is the One God, God the Eternal, the Uncreated Cause of all things, the Creator of all things, the Sustainer of all things, the Begotten, and there is no other deity with Him (Qur'an, al-Baqara: 160).

Address delivered on behalf of the Muslim participants
at the Religious Summit Meeting
on Mt. Hiei, Kyoto, Japan, 3-4 August 1987

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The ideas of peace and tranquillity are essential to Islam and closely tied to its overall concepts of "universe", "life" and "mankind". Therefore, dealing with the meaning of peace and tranquillity according to Islam, one inevitably has to refer to these overall concepts. "Peace" and "tranquillity" stem directly from them and are always related to them. This is a consequence of one of the main qualities of Islam, a religion of unity of principles and concepts, where the starting point is the uniqueness of the One Who gives life and to Whom everything returns. The fundamental expression of Islam in this regard is, "Say: 'He is the One God: God the Eternal, the Uncaused Cause of All Being. He begets not, and neither is He begotten; and there is nothing that could be compared with Him'" (Qur'an, *al-Ikhlās*).

The uniqueness of God in itself eradicates any reason for disparity and conflict. The Qur'an says: "Had there been in heaven or on earth any deities other than God, both would surely have fallen into ruin" (*al-Anbiya*: 22); "Never did God take unto Himself any offspring, nor has there ever been any deity besides Him; for (if there had been) each deity would surely have stood apart in whatever it had created and they would surely have overcome one another" (*al-Mu'minun*: 91).

Man is the most exalted of all beings. He was created out of the first substance of all existence: "We created man out of the essence of clay" (*al-Mu'minun*: 12). All people who proliferated from the first man on earth are basically the same and there is no difference between them. As the Prophet said, "You are the sons of Adam and Adam was created from clay".¹

All mankind are created so that they may know each other and establish good relationships; certainly not to fight and spring on each other's throats: "We have created you all from one male and female, and have made you as nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another" (*al-Hujurat*: 13). All people are equal as regards creation, origin and existence. Islam condemns any conflict and struggle based on differences of race and skin colour and never tolerates them. The establishment of peace and tranquillity is an unshakeable rule, while fighting is only justified by exception, in cases where it is needed against the mischievous and the cruel so that universal harmony and order be protected.

In the same context, "... If anyone slays a human being it shall be as though he had slain all mankind" (*al-Ma'ida*: 32). This principle has an important place in Islamic doctrine. Another principle is that "There shall be no coercion in matters of faith" (*al-Baqara*: 256). God ordered His Prophet not to do more than enlighten and remind while inviting people of different religions to embrace Islam: "Ask: 'Have you surrendered yourselves unto Him?' If they surrender themselves unto Him, they are on the right path; but if they turn away, behold, your duty is no more than to deliver the message" (*Āl-i-'Imran*: 20).

¹ Al-Tirmidhi, Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa b. Sawra, *Sunan*, 2nd ed., Matba'at Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, Cairo 1975, Vol. 5, p. 387.

Another important aspect of Islam is that it imposes acts of worship and religious duties to train and perfect man's soul; in principle this ensures inner peace for the individual and the society. The first act is the prayer through which one comes face to face with God five times a day, keeping his attention away from all disturbing thoughts, physically facing the direction of the Ka'ba, morally and spiritually oriented to God, with a clear conscience and peace of soul. The practice of praying together with others is particularly meaningful: to this peaceful state of mind and spirit is added the feeling of "sharing with others". Another act of worship in Islam is fasting. The underlying purpose of these and other practices is that a person who attains inner peace and tranquillity should behave accordingly in society. If this were fittingly observed, peace would be ensured on a larger scale, at the communal and universal levels.

People of all religions share the belief that another world war involving today's military technology would bring human existence to an end. What are the chances of success for peace efforts? This is a big question. Would it not be reasonable to think that religions can play a role in this respect? One can hardly claim that the history of religions is free from conflicts, but these certainly did not stem from the essence and spirit of religion. The fact is that their real purposes were sometimes dissembled under the mantle of religion. We are convinced that existing measures for world-wide peace would gain much from a realistic action plan inspired by the fundamental teachings of religions.

THE WEST: INTERNATIONAL MORALITY

A necessary condition for the success of such collaboration between adherents of different religions is that an agreement on the principle be reached. Then, methods and procedures that are relevant in the context of each religion can be set to work, with the ultimate objective of awakening humanitarian thoughts and feelings based on faith, to implant in the minds the concept of peace and understanding. Convinced that our present meeting is a most meaningful manifestation of such a common will shared by different religions, I would like to conclude my address with the following Qur'anic verse: "Oh Believers, enter in peace, all of you" (*al-Baqara*: 208).

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**HUMAN RIGHTS
IN ISLAMIC CIVILISATION AND IN THE WEST:
INTERNATIONAL MORALITY AS
A CROSS-CULTURAL FOUNDATION**

The basic contention of the following presentation is that Islamic and Western civilisations have different worldviews; on the one hand, while on the other hand - in our age of globalisation - they are under pressure to come to terms and find ways of peaceful co-existence. The means to this end is intercultural dialogue and the framework should be the concept of international morality. In my view as a Muslim scholar living in the West, human rights are the substance of international morality. In addressing the issue in this manner, my aim is to raise questions regarding the differences and then ask in what way it would be possible to bridge the gap between the West and Islam.

- 1 -

Cultural diversities are not a novelty. They are as old as humanity itself. The history of mankind is equally a history of clashes and exchanges between cultures and civilisations. It is impossible to figure out any human civilisation which grew isolated in an ethereal market, i.e. only in its own terms without cultural borrowing from others. This is equally true for the West and Islam as well. By way of introduction, I will first discuss the historical background of the

study which
the issue in point

**HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISLAMIC CIVILISATION AND IN
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The pertinence of the dialogue between Islam and the West has become more acute since the end of the Cold War and the end of bipolarity and the East-West Conflict, the two superpowers have again to the fore. The death of the Soviet Union and the invention of the 'New World Order' by the American President Bush have raised the issue that has to be dealt with - in a different way, however, from the one suggested by Huntington himself. My view is, accordingly, that

*Prof. Dr. Bassam Tibi**

Lecture given at IRCICA,
Istanbul, on 14 April 1995

* Professor at the Department of International Relations, University of Göttingen, Germany. Prof. Tibi has taught in leading universities of the U.S.A., as well as in Khartoum (Sudan), Yaoundé (Cameroon) and Al-Ahram Center in Cairo. His publications focus mainly on human rights in Islam and ideological currents.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISLAMIC CIVILISATION AND IN THE WEST: INTERNATIONAL MORALITY AS A CROSS-CULTURAL FOUNDATION

The basic contention of the following presentation is that Islamic and Western civilisations have different worldviews, on the one hand, while on the other hand - in our age of globalisation - they are under pressure to come to terms and find ways of peaceful coexistence. The means to this end is inter-cultural dialogue and the framework should be the concept of international morality. In my view as a Muslim scholar living in the West, human rights are the substance of international morality. In addressing the issue in this manner, we have to raise questions regarding the differences and then ask in what way it would be possible to bridge the gap between the West and Islam.

- I -

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The pertinence of the dialogue between Islam and the West for world peace after the end of the Cold War revolves around the issue that with the demise of the artificial umbrella of world politics, i.e. bipolarity and the East-West Conflict, the true dividing lines among humanity have come to the fore. The clash of civilisations is not an invention of the Harvard professor Samuel Huntington, but a real issue that has to be dealt with - in a different way, however, from the one suggested by Huntington himself. We need to acknowledge that civilisations have different worldviews and then search for models and frameworks of peaceful coexistence. An international morality of human rights based on cross-cultural foundations promises to be the best avenue.

We live in an age of overwhelming globalisation. The international system of nation states, the world economy and the shrinking of the world through global communication and transportation systems underlie the globalisation processes. Some people argue that modern popular culture does function as a world culture. I contest this view. Videos and other items of the culture of consumption do not bring people with different worldviews and outlooks any closer. To reach the goal set in this presentation for bridging between cultures, people need to pursue dialogue, not to drink Coca-Cola and enjoy American television soap operas. To elucidate my approach I need to outline what I mean by culture and civilisation, and then to relate these issues to our efforts in this realm.

Cultures are always local. They are an expression of the social production of meaning which is ultimately regional and could never assume a global framework. It is for this reason that there can be no world culture; consumption manners do not create a world culture. In the world of Islam as well as in the West, there exists a great diversity of cultures. These local cultures can group in civilisations on the basis of similar worldviews and outlooks. In this sense there exists only one Islamic civilisation that unites all Muslim cultures, despite their great diversity. Islam in Indonesia and Morocco are different cultures. However, despite the locality of the many Islamic cultures and their diversity notwithstanding, they do to a certain extent share some essentialities of this cultural system and are for this reason cultures related to one another to the extent of forming an Islamic civilisation.

The very same can be said about Western civilisation, which unites a variety of European and North-American cultures. The difference between the West and Islam is that Western civilisation has undergone processes of secularisation leading to the separation of religion, politics and society. This is not the place to discuss whether that process can take place in Islam as well. In approaching my inquiry into human rights as the substance of an international morality to be shared by Islam and the West, I want to restrict myself to discussing the divisive as well as the uniting elements in these two civilisations.

1) Among the leading seven civilisations in our current world only Islam and the West have universal outlooks and therefore clash with one another. How can we limit their universalism to the point of making them live together peacefully?

2) In the medieval period Islamic civilisation was able to accommodate a major source of Western civilisation, i.e. Hellenism, and develop out of it one segment of its own legacy. Moreover, it was the Islamic civilisation itself which passed Hellenism to Europe at the eve of the Renaissance and thus made it possible for Europe to change its orientation from Rome to Athens, i.e. from the authority of the Pope to the authority of human reason as taught by Aristotle. By then, Muslims and Europeans shared the enthusiasm for the primacy of 'aql (reason) and a high regard for Aristotelian rationalism. Can this legacy be revived for a new encounter between the West and Islam? I believe human rights do provide an opening for this new encounter.

3) For a fruitful dialogue it is imperative to determine those issue areas that split, and those that unite. Political religion, i.e. fundamentalism on the side of the Muslims, and cultural and political hegemony on the side of the West, separate both civilisations. On the other hand, cultural borrowing and dialogue on the grounds of rationality and international morality unite these rival civilisations.

4) The most pivotal issue in this respect concerns the idea of international morality based on a minimal consensus shared by all civilisations. In my view, the idea of human rights and the ethics related to it lie at the hub of this morality.

In addressing an international morality based on human rights, I want to focus my pondering on Islam. My first point is that an international morality accepted by all civilisations has to be secular in the restricted meaning of a separation between religion, as an ethical belief, and politics. In my work, I make a distinction between secularism and secularisation. Whilst the first can exist in ideology, the latter refers to a social process related to the functional differentiation in society, thus something real, unlike the "ism" of secularism. As an avowed Muslim who is, however, committed to the separation of religion and public life, my presentation reflects a secular position vis-à-vis the Islamic challenge. In assuming the task I rather speak of secular



morality while relating this commitment to the global context. To be sure, the Muslim community I belong to is only a part of the entirety of humanity. To establish common grounds for bridging the gaps dividing humanity, we need an international, non-religious morality. In my article published in the Spring 1994 issue of Human Rights Quarterly, I argue that this morality must be based on human rights. There are Muslims who believe that there are specifically Islamic human rights. In response I, as a Muslim myself, ask: "Are we Muslims not human beings like all other humans?" Human rights are not restricted to one religious community. As Muslims we have our distinct religion, but as humans we are like all others. For this reason rights are secular human rights on the grounds that they are for the whole of humanity. There is a need for all religious communities to consent to join a cross-religious morality and develop a consensus on secular human rights.

For the sake of a clear inquiry it strikes me as imperative to outline the meaning of the terms employed and to locate them historically. On this basis we may then proceed to ask in what way we can determine the modern concept of human rights as universally acclaimed rights, as a shared international morality in a culturally plural world.

In the scholarly literature on human rights it is clear that this term refers to an utterly modern concept of individual rights in so far as these are entitlements of the individual defined as a right-holder. Thus human rights are understood to be claims, not obligations. This concept is based on the central ideal of the European Enlightenment that man is an autonomous subject and thus is the master of his fate. This concept is the underpinning of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens adopted by the French National Assembly on August 26, 1789 at the beginning of the French Revolution. In this declaration human rights are defined as natural rights of man. These rights were not restricted to French people insofar as the declaration addresses the entire humanity.

A prominent Muslim scholar who teaches at the Sorbonne, Mohammed Arkoun, concedes that this concept of human rights is a Western concept alien to Islam. In an interview published in *Le Monde* he clearly states: "*La perception des droits de l'homme dans*

une pensée occidentale ... renforce le malentendu avec l'Islam, qui a pensé de ces droits de l'homme dans le cadre ... des droits de Dieu".

Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is based on this secular concept of human rights as natural rights, the focal problem to grapple with in this presentation is related to the question whether this concept of human rights in the understanding of natural rights of man is compatible with Islam. Given that there is a conflict, the question to which I as a Muslim seek an answer is whether we Muslims can speak the language of human rights in our own tongue: that is, practice a secular concept not imposed on our civilisation and so share it with the rest of humanity.

The focus on the cultural aspect of the issue addressed notwithstanding, I want to make clear that human rights are basically political and institutional, not religious. Human rights are not restricted to a cultural concept based on norms and values and so confined to a particular *Weltanschauung*. Human rights are a practice which requires institutional enforcement as a basic element of their existence. Without this underpinning these rights may continue to exist in the sense of being a claim of man. However, there can be no material human rights in a society which denies the exercising of these rights. Nonetheless, the point of dealing with human rights as a cultural concept and in cultural terms is that the norms and values which justify these rights in a specific cultural context contribute to establishing these rights culturally.

In Islam the *umma*, the community, i.e. the collectivity, comes before the individual and has the highest ranking. The individual is bound to the *umma* within the framework of the doctrine of religious obligations (*al-fara'id*). In the Islamic cultural heritage there is no tradition comparable to the Western theory of natural rights in the sense of a concept of natural rights as individual entitlements of an individual vis-à-vis a community, and of their institutional enforcement. Though it is true that in historical terms this modern concept of human rights originated in Europe, the name of it implies that the concept is a universal one. The universality of human rights is the universality of humanity as such. Saying this is not tantamount to a universal reading of European history into Islam. This consideration is rather a contribution to placing Islam in the context of the entire humanity in a

culturally and religiously plural world. Political Islam and other varieties of fundamentalism stand in the way of cross-religious values and also impede a cross-cultural foundation of human rights. Fundamentalism and exclusiveness are two sides of the very same coin and they place Islamic civilisation in a ghetto of global society. The embracing of secular human rights facilitates placing Muslims in their proper place: humanity. It is important for us Muslims to underline the open-mindedness of Islamic civilisation and to draw a clear line between tolerant Islam and its opposite, fundamentalism.

Having outlined my secular options, I proceed on the assumption that establishing a tradition of individual human rights requires a cross-cultural consent regarding acknowledged values as well as the development of an institutional set-up that guarantees the legal enforcement of these rights. To reach these ends we need to explore the avenues for establishing a synthesis between Islam as an open-minded ethics and the secular concept of individual human rights. Early Muslim secularists wanted to put Islam aside. Secularity cannot be imposed on Muslims. It has to be introduced on Islamic grounds and be made compatible with Islamic ethics. To be sure, compatibility is not meant as a different term for imposition. The target is rather to make us Muslims speak the language of secular human rights in our own tongue.

- II -

Methodologically, Islam can be dealt with in two different ways: one can employ either scriptural or social scientific methods. Social scientists study Islam, like any other religion, in the scholarly tradition of the French sociologist of religion, Emile Durkheim, as a *fait social*, i.e. as a social fact. Thus they focus on how Muslims act and place social actions into existing social structures. Scripturalists, in turn, focus on religious texts and address the question of whether or not Muslims act in line with Islamic precepts. They believe that the revealed text is ahistorical, i.e. valid for all times and places. They thus overlook the problem of meaning. Social scientists, who go beyond the mere empirical-descriptive study of religion and deal with the problem of meaning in employing an interpretative approach, realise that believers socially produce historically different meanings and impute to them the symbols implied in the respective texts. Since

I am a social scientist, it is the latter method that I will be employing in the present paper. Secularity embodied in human rights represents a new meaning related to the social context, for which I use the term "world time" as shared by the entire humanity. By "world time" I mean the global framework establishing networks that link diverse civilisations.

In the first place I want to state that human rights are an outcome of cultural modernity. Before modern times they did not exist in any civilisation. It is unfortunate that - despite this fact - apologetic Islamic writers argue in a very unspecific way that human rights have always existed in Islam. Scriptural reference to the Qur'an and to the sayings of the Prophet serves as the ground for the needed evidence. The Islamic sources are, however, referred to in the light of our age. Old symbols are filled with new meanings. The choice between scriptural understanding of Islam and a social science analysis also applies to the legal discussion of Islamic law and to its compatibility with human rights. Thus, the discussion of human rights in Islam encompasses the interpretation of Islamic cultural values concerned as well as the legal tradition. The values of secular human rights require an institutional underpinning for their enforcement. We know from the work of the German sociologist Max Weber that there are three types of rule: traditional, charismatic, and legal. The last-named is based on an institutional system of law providing the legal body that ensures basic rights, which are at the core of human rights. Without acknowledging this modern concern, some Muslim authors interpret Islamic *Shari'a* as the underlying legal structure of political rule and thus project a modern understanding into Islamic law. This is obviously a reading of modernity into Islam. These authors further refer to the *shura* concept mentioned in two passages of the Qur'an and reinterpret it as a legal concept that calls for political participation in an Islamic system of government. It is not my intention here to discuss the notion of *al-nizam al-Islami* (the Islamic system of government) represented as a fundamentalist challenge to secularity. I want rather to examine the relevance of this legal debate to the topic of this paper. In my conclusion I will assess these efforts with regard to their contribution towards developing a truly Islamic tradition of human rights consonant with the universal one. An Islamic understanding of human rights not exclusive to Muslims is needed - one which does not lapse with apologetic concerns, i.e. with the self-

congratulatory claim: "We Muslims had everything, including a human rights tradition, before the Europeans did." The need to establish human rights on cross-cultural grounds as a substance of international morality is not consonant with any culturally exclusive attitudes. To state the point again: individual human rights are secular because they are designed for the whole of humanity, not exclusively for one religious community. To state that religious criteria separate humanity is not an anti-religious statement but rather an insight into the need for establishing tolerance and individual rights on non-religious grounds for all mankind.

- III -

The interaction between different local cultures and grouping civilisations is a process that we can observe throughout most periods of history of mankind. It is difficult to find in history a pure culture or civilisation in the sense of one not affected by others in its environment. Prior to our modern age processes of interaction were, however, restricted to a local or regional setting. There are a few notable exceptions which demonstrate that a culture can generate dissemination processes far beyond its own boundaries. Islamic civilisation is one of those rare exceptions. Widely disseminated as it is, Islam has not constituted a global framework, for the simple reason that globalisation is a contemporary issue related to modernity.

In the following, I want to relate this argument of cultural borrowing and exchange to the focal point of this paper. We must frankly acknowledge that our understanding of human rights is inexorably linked to the basic rights of the French Revolution and to the earlier articulated concepts in the European philosophy of Enlightenment. It would be dishonest to overlook the fact that values of human rights as secular rights originate in this European tradition of Western civilisation and are deeply affected by it. However, these rights are no longer confined to the West. This tradition has become a part of the general human heritage, as the term "human rights" suggests. At issue is not the validity of human rights but rather how to base them on an international morality compatible with the norms and values of non-Western civilisations. Abstract individualism, mere political rights devoid of social justice, and formal participatory politics are flaws in

liberal Western theory that have been discussed by many scholars in their reassessment of liberalism in our age. In arguing that our modern understanding of human rights is based on the globalisation of the secular understanding of democracy and goes back to the liberal values of this tradition, I definitely do not subscribe to a liberal Western approach for understanding the modern world, nor do I read liberalism into non-Western history. My concern is how to establish a cross-cultural international morality shared among others by individuals, Muslim and Western.

- IV -

Having outlined the core argument of my inquiry, I want to emphasise my awareness that the European expansion did not contribute to the global dissemination of the heritage of the French Revolution and the political culture of the Enlightenment. The expansion was rather directed at constituting an international framework for Western hegemony. This helps explain the understandable unwillingness of Muslims to accept the foreign standards imposed on them. No prudent scholar can assess cultural impact favourably if it takes place to the detriment of the other. Despite the context of imposition, it is conspicuous that non-Western intellectuals reassess their own cultural heritage in the light of the effects of the "world time" generated by European expansion. They read a new meaning into the inherited indigenous norms and values greatly affected by Western civilisation. To be sure, European colonialists did not conquer Asia and Africa in order to disseminate their humanitarian heritage, nor to establish a world-wide tradition of human rights. They were looking for raw materials and markets rather than aiming at universalising the values of human dignity. The side effects of the conquest were, to use a Hegelian term, "List der Vernunft" (cunning of reason): the dissemination of the European cultural heritage in which human rights have a crucial meaning. Except Khomeini, who once did so, no prudent Muslim would dismiss human rights simply because the concept is European in origin.

The late Hedley Bull, an eminent Oxford scholar of the discipline of international relations, made the observation that the shrinking of the world into an international system (means of communication and density of transportation) is accompanied by conspicuous cultural

fragmentation. It is clear "that the shrinking of the world, while it has brought societies to a degree of mutual awareness and interaction that they have not had before, does not in itself create a unity of outlook and has not in fact done so ... Humanity is becoming simultaneously more unified and more fragmented ...".

It is sad to observe that this cultural fragmentation also applies to the issue of human rights. In the tradition of the Age of Enlightenment, however, with awareness of the effects of its globalisation, scholars ought to simultaneously acknowledge cultural pluralism and to dismiss cultural relativism when it comes to human rights. The understandable lack of unity of outlook should not affect the search for a cross-cultural foundation of human rights on an international morality acceptable to all civilisations.

In keeping this "world time" context in mind while tuning to the world of Islam, we can observe the exposure of this civilisation to the modern Western political, economic as well as cultural impact, positive and negative alike. This exposure has generated different responses. The recent call for a return to pure Islam, underlying the re-politicisation of Islam, has followed earlier efforts at adjustments and reconciliation. The "Islamic Declaration of Human Rights" of December 1981 is aimed at establishing specifically Islamic human rights and thus, implicitly, divorces Islamic civilisation from the rest of humanity.

It is sad to observe that the increasing structural unity of the present international system is parallel to the intensification of cultural fragmentation. From this observation I infer the necessity to accept cultural pluralism, while rejecting cultural relativism. For those who are concerned with human rights as universal rights, cultural pluralism cannot be extended so far as to become tantamount to cultural relativism. Thus to consider practices related to the violation of human rights (for instance torture as suppression of freedom of expression) as being an expression of a different culture cannot be tolerated.

The pluralism of cultures is a supposition which refers to means but not to ends. In particular with regard to human rights there can be no compromise as far as these ends are concerned. In this sense we

may speak of the universality of human rights coexisting and consonant with cultural varieties, and of how to create these rights on cross-cultural foundations. We may go further and argue that cultural pluralism in the realm of human rights cannot mean more than a cultural indigenisation of basic individual human rights in local cultures.

With regard to Islam, the "Islamic Declaration of Human Rights" declared and published in Paris and London, though flawed, can be considered as progress as far as it imparts to all basic human rights an Islamic character. The emphasis on the authentically Islamic character of these rights, i.e. the denial of their secular origin, is regrettable, however tolerable with a somehow stretched reference to the norm of cultural pluralism as a ground for creating different foundations for the same values. By the same token, the most recent Islamic debate on Islamic law as a legal system which should bind the behaviour of the political rulers to legal norms can in principle - however subject to limitation - be admitted as an Islamic contribution to the establishment of legal rule. However, without a system of legal rule being a system of institutional control, there can be no guarantee for the implementation of human rights.

There is always a place for true Islamic ethics in an international morality based on a cross-cultural foundation. This morality, if developed, promises to close the gap between Western and Islamic civilisation.

GLOBALISATION FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: EAST MEETS WEST

Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

Address delivered at the International Forum on Globalisation
and Cultural Pluralism - Contribution of Academics
which was held at the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam,
The Netherlands, on 26 May 2002

GLOBALISATION FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: EAST MEETS WEST

The world is shaken by new and more complex equations of political and socio-economic trends. The fusion of liberal capitalist-civilisation and communism ended the ideological confrontations of the post-World War II period and relaxed the tensions of a bipolar balance of power. At present, many countries and society groupings are going through periods of transition. The political and regional landscape of many regions is changing. The changes are not limited to the newly independent states and their processes of adjustment to capitalism. Other changes are going on in the external political and economic structures of many nations. Many developing countries are uncertain of their position in regional and world politics. Industrialised countries are not excluded from this: they too face uncertainties and new challenges: the perspectives of a united Europe; technological competition between the United States, Europe and the Far East; the prospects of Western economic expansion into new markets; pressure caused by the differences of the level of welfare between Eastern and Western Europe; and the potential danger that ethnic and religious differences (amplified under authoritarian regimes or distorted against democracies) may give rise to conflicts.

In this environment, a debate on globalisation versus diversification becomes indispensable, because it will help to develop a better understanding of the issues involved and make it easier for all the parties concerned to meet the challenge. I think such a debate has to begin with an attempt to define the term "globalisation" itself, which appears to be rather ambiguous term and some of its possible links:

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In this environment, a debate on globalisation versus diversification becomes indispensable, because it will help to develop a better understanding of the issues involved and make it easier for all the parties concerned to meet the challenge. I think such a debate has to begin with an attempt to define the term "globalisation" itself, which appears as a rather ambiguous term, and agree on its possible trends, features, and present and future implications.

In its present growth and expansion, liberal capitalism asserts itself as the generally accepted economic system. The system goes beyond national boundaries. Capital, goods, services and information circulate on transnational level. International business mechanisms on one hand and the State as an institution on the other appear as interdependent determinants in world affairs. In societies where it prevails, liberal capitalism also spreads as a "way of life", manifested in all codes of conduct regarding business, administration,

consumption patterns, intellectual, cultural, and even leisure activities. Liberal capitalism also introduces a value system into the society, with a renewed commitment to democracy, human rights and freedoms. Basically two major factors influence the expansion of this value system. One is the dissemination of all kinds of information through mostly West-centred global networks. The second factor is the influential role international organisations have assumed in the post-war era, the United Nations and other international standard-setting mechanisms having taken the lead in defining concepts of human rights, liberties, equality, and others. When stated as propositions or theorems, such concepts ascribed to the Western value system, seem to be self-evident principles which raise little controversy. One may wonder whether they are really so. It is still to be seen to what extent these values and virtues can be applied and assimilated in the whole world, and whether principles of equality, ethics and morality are properly established in the expanding system itself.

Is there a value system which could be applied as a general rule? When one compares the Western countries among themselves, one sees that concepts of freedom, democracy and equality carry different meanings and applications in different contexts, depending upon governments' choices, internal legislation, degrees of governmental intervention, etc. Stable factors like the historical experience of each nation, and its popular and cultural characteristics, also play a role.

One can hardly assume that there is a "model" capitalist economy or a "model" democratic system that could be emulated by others, one that can translate norms into facts in a standard manner. The West has been the advocate and promoter of democracy. A consequence of this fact has been the West's support of those countries seen as democratic, which raises the question as to whether objectivity has been observed. Recent phenomena suggest that there is no single generally accepted standard in the way international affairs are run. The attitude of the West to conflicts around the world seems to be determined on a pragmatic basis and governed mainly by its own interests depending upon the context. Profit maximisation and expected returns seem to be the criteria for political decisions as well. A clear example is the West's indifference in the face of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the conflict in Azerbaijan as compared to its

active involvement in the Gulf and Northern Iraq. Another clear and classic example of Western double standards is the continuing tragedy of the Palestinian people for the last half century. One may argue that norms and notions developed by the West are themselves in flux and may contain inherent contradictions. While it exports some values, norms and notions, the West may export conflicts and contradictions as well.

Therefore, globalisation must not take place in such a way that values are imposed by one part of the world on the other. For it to be "global" in the true sense of the word, the trend should allow all parties to play roles on an equal footing. At the same time, it has to be taken into account that even if a particular set of norms is adopted and assimilated by a society other than the place in which it originated, the same set of norms may acquire different connotations and have different applications in its new context. The interaction of norms and values with the historical, legal, cultural, and social characteristics of their environment will give different results in different places. I think if we agree on this, we will be able to conceive the world of the future as a pluralistic one, as it should be. Then we will also admit that in its expansion to other parts of the world the Western culture will experience new challenges. It will also have to learn more about itself and other cultures in its neighbourhood.

Here we come to the cultural dimension of the globalisation process. The end of communist regimes and, in consequence, of confrontation between Western and Eastern Europe, uncovered considerable new evidence of Western economic, scientific and technological superiority. The destruction of the old order has put an end to one of the many conflicts around the world. Now, in the process towards a new order, we may ponder on the nature and degree of the influence that Western economic and technological superiority will exert on other countries and country groups.

Meanwhile, new areas of understanding are being established between the Western communities of Greco-Roman and Germanic cultural background and Catholic and Protestant faith on one hand, and those of Slav background and Orthodox faith on the other. What will be the relationship of these ethnic, linguistic and religious communities with those outside their realm?

The subject of this session is "East meets West, an Asian perspective", but I feel I should treat the subject from my own viewpoint because I come from Turkey, which holds a unique position as a meeting point between the West and the East, and has the historical Ottoman experience of encounters between the two. When we speak of Asia, the continent includes a variety of cultures and vast communities of diverse religious and ethnic origins.

The topic "East meets West" may be considered under two distinct categories. First, there is the Far East. The Far East competes with the West in economic, scientific and technological fields; in the cultural field, however, there has not been any notable tension or confrontation. Therefore "globalisation" with respect to the Far East has to be studied as an entirely distinct case. Secondly, there is the Islamic world in general and the Middle East in particular. Of course the Islamic world is not engaged in any economic, scientific or technological competition with the West. On the contrary, transfers of science and technology, as well as trade and financial relations, have continued between the Islamic world and the West for centuries. The urban landscape of Islamic countries is a combination of Western architecture with traditional buildings. Western-style fashion, food and entertainment are juxtaposed with traditional ones. It is true that this acculturation has created a duality in many societies. Western-type behaviour, habits and lifestyles are common among the urban population in Middle Eastern countries, but with economic development expanding to rural areas in future, the influence may be generalised. Even in that case, the characteristics of local culture, religion, ethnic and linguistic identity will not disappear. The value they will retain in people's lives in the long run will depend on many factors.

One factor is the political choices and guidelines of development policies, according to how much weight they give to issues of national culture and its preservation. Another factor related to this is the degree to which a country preserves its cultural characteristics and remains tied to its traditional culture in its history. Another is of course the system of faith prevalent in the society, which will determine the basics of life styles. It is hard to make predictions for particular societies as to the picture that would result from the combination, or coexistence, of these local cultural elements with Western ones.

Furthermore, the picture will not be uniform throughout a given society. The Islamic world, and particularly the Middle East, comprises many countries which share the same religion but have very different political and legal systems. Similarities in their national cultures come from their common religion, history and geographical proximity. Let us take Turkey as an example. Turkey differs from other Muslim countries of Asia in many respects. She benefits from a long tradition of relations with the Western World which started in the Ottoman period. The Turkish Republic has adopted the Western legal, educational and administrative system and has been an ally of the West. At the same time, the secular state has recognised the individual's freedom of belief within the democratic system and capitalistic economy.

Do nationalist or fundamentalist currents stem from a reaction to the expansion of liberal capitalism? In part, perhaps. It has been suggested that such currents emerge as potential ideologies to rival liberal capitalism. If history is seen as mankind's intellectual development process, ideologies will inevitably emerge. Whether they develop into alternative "systems" depends on many factors. It depends partly on trends associated with the expansion of liberal capitalism, on the extent to which the expanding culture makes room for others' values and allow for multiculturalism. Such ideological currents could appear in the West and the East, in the North and the South. For decades in the West, those who were disenchanted with liberal capitalism took refuge in communism as an ideology and political system. The dissolution of the communist bloc created a vacuum in ideology, and it is hard to predict how the vacuum can be filled. A question of great concern nowadays is whether the extreme rightist and racist movements appearing in Europe signal a revival of the "National Socialism" which led the world into the disaster of the Second World War.

The new global order has to be one of objectivity, pluralism and dialogue. It is a fact that for the Western world Islam is still an enigma, regarded with some suspicion, because it is not well known and understood. Some Western writers foresee a world of confrontation and conflict between Islam and the West. Surprisingly, those of the Muslim world who share the same opinion are often labelled as fundamentalists. Here is a basic misunderstanding which

calls for objectivity. In this context I would like to recall two essential aspects of the relationship between the Western and Islamic worlds. The first aspect is the common fundamental principles of the three revealed (Abrahamic) religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. If the adherents of these three religions free their minds from past conflicts and compare these three religions with other belief systems, they will find that the similarities between these three can constitute effective unifying factors. The second essential aspect of the relationship between the West and the Islamic world concerns the interactions that have taken place in their scientific and philosophical history. Greek philosophy played an important role in the progress of Islamic philosophy and learning. Science and philosophy were transferred from ancient Greek civilisation to the Islamic world and were enriched with contributions made by Muslim philosophers and scientists during the Middle Ages. The new, enlarged and developed corpus of knowledge, which was later transmitted to Europe and constituted one of the rich sources of the European Renaissance and Scientific Revolution, carried many elements of the Greek and the Islamic cultures which in the final analysis, are common to both. Thus, despite apparent diversities between the Western and the Islamic cultures, both underwent mutual influences, had common roots and left a common legacy.

Liberal democracy, by definition, emphasises individualism and the liberty of conscience and ideas. It creates "space" for the cultivation of the mind and for spiritual achievement. If these principles are properly applied in a given society and on a global scale, the system will by definition accommodate a plurality of beliefs and ideas together with their intellectual products. On the other hand, notwithstanding the almost universally admitted virtues of liberal democracy, other systems of belief have their own universal values with regard to human rights, equality and happiness.

All this leads us to expect that if all players in the game of cultural interactions were allowed equal rights, the globalisation of the Western way of life would not be a mere inculcation of one culture in others but would perhaps, and ideally, lead to a multicultural world - a world which agrees on universal concepts regarding human, economic and environmental issues, based on mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence between different cultures.

BUSINESS ETHICS IN A MULTI-FAITH CONTEXT: PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS IN ISLAM

Introduction

This paper aims to contribute to the comparative analysis of business ethics according to the major religions by delimiting the rules and principles of property transactions and trade that are established by Islamic law.

Islam cannot be limited to the same meaning of the word "religion" as is used in Western languages and encompasses only issues concerning man and his relation to God. Having much depth and wider contents than law, Islam stands out with its own outlook. It has two main principles: to regulate the personal and social life of man in this world and, what is more important, to prepare man for everlasting happiness in the eternal world to come. The Qur'an states this in its historic explication "God, grant us good in this world and good in the life to come..." (Al-Baqara: 201).

In order to regulate worldly life to the best interests of mankind, Islam has laid down different virtues encompassing its various aspects, and imposed material sanctions in order to make sure that these norms would function in a healthy way. Taking into consideration that it is not possible to maintain the desired order only by applying material sanctions, Islam also prescribes moral sanctions. Furthermore, Islam necessarily emphasises individual responsibility in the life after death. This principle of responsibility is expressed in the following way: there will be reward or punishment in the hereafter for every action performed in this world.

BUSINESS ETHICS IN A MULTI-FAITH CONTEXT: PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS IN ISLAM

Together with the ethics of the individual, the ethics of the community between man and God, Islam has a social ethics which is of great importance and which governs the relations between individuals and towards the society. Among these, working life and business ethics occupy an important place.

Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu

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Together with the important norms which regulate the relationships between man and God, Islam has also norms which are no less important and which govern the relations between men or, in other words, of society. Among these, working life and business ethics occupy an important place. I should now like to discuss some aspects of the subject.

Islam attaches great importance to work and business life. In spite of all the prevalent misunderstandings, Islam should never be thought of

as a religion of naive fatalism or determinism that requires the Muslim to submit to destiny without working or taking the necessary steps towards it. We see this reality very clearly in the behaviour of the Prophet Muhammad towards one of his Companions. One day the Prophet was walking and met a man who was sitting motionless, doing nothing. He passed without greeting him. On his way back, the Prophet found the same man this time stirring the sand with his finger; this time he greeted him as he passed. The man ran after the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of God! When you first passed you did not greet me, and I was very sorry; but on your way back you did greet me. Why did you deprive me of your greeting when you first went past?" The Prophet answered: "When I first passed you were not doing anything, and you were motionless; and for that reason I did not greet you. But on my way back you were at least stirring the dust and earth with your finger, and that was work and an activity. That is why I greeted you." When we look at the matter in the light of this incident which has been conveyed to posterity in the form of a *hadith*, we can easily understand the great importance Islam attaches to activity and work.

Let us now turn to our main subject. Islam has two different approaches to the problem of business. The first approach is taken by writings on *fiqh*, or jurisprudence. The primary question, in this perspective, is whether a given type of work or form of behaviour is lawful or not. The second approach is based on the concern to find how to do the best or how to attain to the best form of behaviour rather than looking for the lawfulness of a matter. While in the first the decisions are based on "lawfulness" or "*fatwa*", in the second the principles of "*taqwa*" (piety) and "*ihsan*" (beneficence) are observed. These two approaches are not contradictory: they are complementary. The principles of "lawfulness" and "*fatwa*" belong to the domain of *fiqh*, whereas the bases of "*taqwa*" and "*ihsan*" are considered within the science of ethics. According to this second approach, when a person sells his goods to a poor man it is expected of him to seek much less profit than allowed in Islamic law. Alternatively, a man is expected to sell his goods to a poor man in a self-sacrificing manner, accepting in advance that he may not receive the payment at all when he sells it on credit.

In the following Qur'anic verse we see the best example of this behaviour: "If, however, [the debtor] is in strained circumstances, [grant him] a delay until a time of ease; and it would be for your own good to remit [the debt entirely] by way of charity ..." (*al-Baqara*: 280)

In the second source of Islamic law – the *Sunna* or the exemplary conduct of the Prophet - there are commands such as the following: "Whoever lets his debtor feel free (i.e., does not put him under pressure), gives him time and respite until he can pay his debt, or remits [the debt from him], will be under the protection of God's Throne on the Day of Judgement".¹

Here we will deal with the subject according to the principles of the first approach and will concentrate on property, which is the most important element in the process of business. Islam has laid down a legal system which recognises private property. Although this private property can be restricted in certain conditions and it can be limited by the state authority, in principle it is always respected and preserved. According to Islamic law, property can be owned in four ways:

1. Property acquired by getting hold of an asset which is not under anyone's ownership. For example, one might claim ownership of the water of a well which is owned by no one; or of wood, trees, etc. in grazing land and in wilderness which again are owned by no one. Other examples of acquiring property in this way are hunting and fishing. The acquisition of property in this way is allowed on condition that these things are not owned by anybody. It is not based on verbal means but on actual means. This takes different forms.

a) Cultivating barren land to make it productive: This applies to land in the countryside and owned by nobody. The main source of this ruling is a *hadith* which states: "Whoever cultivates a piece of barren land [making the land productive by working it], that land will become his property". Becoming the owner of a property does not depend on the permission of the state authority. Only Imam Abu

¹ Al-Darimi, *Sunan*, Dar Ihya' al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya, Beirut, n.d., Vol. II, p. 262.

Hanifa and Imam Malik held that the permission of the state was necessary.²

b) Hunting: The same principle is applied in this category. In other words, it is to seize a free thing which belongs to nobody. To acquire ownership in this way is not legitimate for those who are in the state of *ihram* for *hajj* (pilgrimage) or *'umrah* (minor pilgrimage) only while they are in Mecca and Medina. This rule is based on the Qur'anic verse: "Lawful to you is all water-game, and what the sea brings forth, as a provision for you [who are settled] as well as for travellers, although you are forbidden to hunt on land while you are in the state of pilgrimage. And be conscious of God, unto whom you shall be gathered" (*al-Ma'ida*: 96).

c) Grass on high plateaux and trees in dense forests are regarded as common public property. According to the preferred use accepted by the four *madhhabs* or schools of law, "People have co-ownership over three things: water, pasture and fire"³ - without any condition or reservation, these being freely usable.

d) Minerals and treasures. Islamic jurists hold two different opinions about the acquiring of possession of minerals in this way. According to the Maliki *madhhab*, the right to keep any kind of minerals may not be acquired merely by getting hold of them, nor does it necessarily depend on the proprietorship of the land where the mineral is found. The one who owns the land may not be the owner of the mineral found in it. The ownership of minerals belongs directly to the state.⁴ According to the preferred views of the Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali *madhhabs* the ownership of minerals depends on the ownership of the land: whoever owns the land will own the mineral. If the land is owned by a person then the ownership of the mineral belongs to that person, and if it is owned by the state the mineral belongs to the state. If the mineral is found on a land which is owned

² Wahba al-Zuhayli, *al-Fiqh al-Islami wa adillatuhu*, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus 1984, Vol. IV, pp. 70-71.

³ *Mecelle-i Ahkam-ı Adliye*, article 1257, Hikmet Yay., Istanbul 1979, p. 256; 'Ala al-Din Abu Bakr ibn Mas'ud Al-Kasani, *Badai' al-Sana'i fi Tartib al-Shara'i*, Matba'at al-Jamaliyya, Cairo 1910, Vol. VI, p. 193.

⁴ *al-Sharh al-Kabir ma' al-Dusuqi*, Matba'at al-Babi al-Halabi, Cairo, Vol. I, p. 486; al-Zuhayli, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 73.

by nobody then it belongs to the finder.⁵ The views differ according to the type of the mineral and whether it is underground or near the earth's surface.⁶

2. Property acquired through contracts. The most common contracts are those which transfer ownership: sales, donation, wills and other contracts. There are two kinds of contracts that result in the transfer of ownership⁷: first, there are compulsory contracts, which effect trade as a consequence of a court decree, e.g. by selling the property of a debtor in order to pay his debt. A person may become the owner of this kind of property through a public contract of sale based on a court decree. The second may occur as a result of abrogation of a proprietorship by a court decree. This can take two forms: pre-emption or legal expropriation for public benefit. We will not explain these here, for they are known in all legal systems.

3. Property which is acquired through transfer of rights. This is the substitution of one person for another as far as the ownership is concerned, or the substitution of one thing for another. The substitution of one person for another may be realised through inheritance. The substitution of one thing for another is called compensation. Inheritance is the necessary cause of proprietorship: the heir legally succeeds to all property of the testator. As for compensation, it means the acquisition of property by a person when the property is used to compensate any loss caused by another person, or the acquisition of property when a person pays for wealth he has usurped and consumed. Blood money too is considered within this category.

4. Property which is produced by wealth that one already owns. The goods produced by a person's property belongs to the owner of that property. Such products may result from labour contributed by the owner, or, from its natural disposition. For this reason, according to

⁵ *Radd al-Mukhtar 'ala Durr al-Mukhtar*, Matba'at al-Babi al-Halabi, Cairo, n.d., Vol. I, p. 61; Ibn Qudama, *Al-Mughni wa Sharh al-Kabir*, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut 1972-73, Vol. III, p. 28.

⁶ al-Shafi'i, *al-Umm*, Bulaq 1321, Vol. III, p. 267; al-Mawardi, *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*, Cairo 1973, p. 197-198; Ibn Qudama, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 522.

⁷ al-Zuhayli, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 76.

many experts in *fiqh*, if a man usurps and cultivates land, because the seed belongs to him he will be the owner of the products of that land; he will only be compelled to pay the rent for the land as well as to compensate the rightful owner for any loss caused by this use of the land. The fruits of trees, the young of animals, the milk and the meat of flocks also belong to their owner.⁸

Trade and Partnership

Because business is not always run by one person only and it is often necessary for the business to be run by more than one person, in Islamic law there are separate sets of rules about partnerships. It should be regarded as natural that in these sections partnerships have been divided into different categories according to the needs of the time. For this reason one may come across some kinds of partnership which are in use today, and which are not mentioned in the classical sources of Islamic law. But this cannot mean that the door of Islamic law is closed to new types of partnership which may come about as a result of expansion of business capacity. Every kind of trade tends to expand in pursuit of new profit objectives. There are three main sources of legitimate profit: buying and selling ready-made goods (trade), manufacturing of any kind, and agriculture. Some of these activities may be undertaken by one person only but they usually require mutual help. We need not examine the reasons for this here. Cooperation between human beings occurs in the nature of things and all monotheistic religions have accepted the system of working in partnership. The Qur'an narrates a statement made by the Prophet David: "... Truly many are the partners [in business] who wrong each other; not so do those who believe and do righteous deeds - but how few are they!..." (*Sad*: 24).

The kinds of commercial partnership vary and multiply according to the expansion and diversification of work and business. Despite the fact that the names of some of the partnerships today are not mentioned in the classical works of Islamic law, it is wrong to conclude that Islamic law does not have sufficient rules to regulate today's complex institutions of partnership and management. As a matter of fact, any researcher who is expert in law will never come to

⁸ *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 77.

that conclusion if he studies the main principles of Islamic law concerning commercial partnership.

The main principles of Islamic law concerning partnerships can be summarised as follows: the common consent of the people who are in partnership; abiding by the principle of justice; observance of private and public interest; and acting within those general customs and practices which do not contradict Islamic laws.⁹ By virtue of this wide and comprehensive principle of Islamic law, we can justly say that any sort of partnership which exists within the conditions of this principle is approved as far as Islamic law is concerned.¹⁰

Islam never permits the acquisition of property by unjust means. For this reason usury is unconditionally prohibited. There are several Qur'anic verses concerning this matter: "Those who devour usury will not stand except as stands one whom the Evil One by his touch has driven to madness. That is because they say: 'Trade is like usury'. But God has permitted trade and forbidden usury ..." (*al-Baqara*: 275). "God will deprive usury of all blessing, but will give increase for goods of charity: for He loves not creatures that are ungrateful and wicked" (*al-Baqara*: 276). The Prophet Muhammad too said in his famous farewell sermon: "... All kinds of usury are abolished; they all are disregarded, although it is necessary that the original amount of the debt be repaid. You should neither wrong nor be wronged. Now, by the command of God, dealing in usury is forbidden".¹¹

Islam requires that trade be carried out according to ethical principles, and prohibits usury so that human beings should not have recourse to it. This helps to prevent capital from accumulating in the hands of a small minority of society. Moreover, by enjoining *zakat* (alms) on the rich, it takes the necessary measures not to let an excessive economic gap arise between different groups of people.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 875.

¹⁰ For detailed information about partnerships in Islamic law, see al-Zuhayli, *op.cit.*; Osman Şekerci, *İslam'da Şirketler Hukuku*, İstanbul 1981.

¹¹ Zayn al-Din Ahmad b. Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Latif al-Zabidi, *Sahih-i Buhari muhtasarı Tecrid-i sarih tercemesi*, translated from Arabic by Kamil Miras, Ankara 1972, Vol. X, p. 397.

Business ethics in Islam

Let us now look briefly into how Islam deals with problems concerning business, from both the legal and the ethical point of view.

Profiteering: Islam, taking human weakness into consideration, always takes the necessary measures to minimise its bad consequences. Most people who fail to restrain themselves from the ambition to constantly make an excessive profit have recourse to various plans to gain more by selling their goods for high prices. One of the ways used to reach this aim is profiteering. Profiteering is an exploitative strategy usually based on storing goods, especially foodstuffs, waiting for the prices to go up, and then marketing and charging exorbitant prices for them. Islam categorically forbids profiteering and emphasises that it is cruelty, for it is practised especially in times of difficulty and scarcity. The rules of *fiqh* see no harm in storing goods in times of abundance and keeping them there for some time. But, according to the moral norms which Islam deems it essential to observe, profiteering is not allowed even in times of abundance, for it causes prices to rise and results in bad consequences from the economic point of view.

In its first meaning, profiteering is definitely forbidden. The *hadith* according to which "The provision of a man who brings goods from abroad will prosper, but the profiteer is damned"¹² aimed at bringing a complete end to this immoral behaviour. The expression the *hadith* uses is very strong. The profiteer is described as damned: that is, he is dismissed in disgrace. In another *hadith* it is said: "Woe betide any slave who is a profiteer, so that when God reduces the prices he gets worried and when they go up he is pleased".¹³ Muslim jurists explain that when the *hadith* mentions prices as high or low, it refers to the prices of goods which people need. But in the text of the *hadith* the prohibition is expressed in a general statement. Basing the argument on this general statement, from the moral point of view we can conclude that profiteering by waiting for the prices to go up in order to

¹² al-Darimi, *Sunan*, Vol. II, p. 262.

¹³ Muhammad 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Manawi, *Fayd al-Qadir, sharh al-Jami al-saghir*, 2nd ed., Beirut 1972, Vol. III, p. 212.

maximise one's profit on any goods on the market, regardless of kind or quality, is not permitted.

It is one of the general principles of Islam that "Man should not wish for others what he does not wish for himself". From this principle we understand that man should not do to others what he would dislike for himself. The same principle is valid as far as business ethics and trade are concerned.

Praising goods: The seller should not praise his goods excessively in order to convince the customer. This is because if the goods do not have the qualities claimed for them then it is obviously a lie; if the goods are of good quality, one has spoken unnecessarily about something which is obvious. Neither of these is regarded as good behaviour according to either Islamic law or Islamic ethics. As for swearing by God in order to persuade the customer, it is firmly prohibited. The Prophet clearly expresses this proscription in a *hadith* which says: "Beware of swearing by God frequently in trade: even if this helps one to earn his living [temporarily], in the end it sweeps away [the blessing] of what has been earned."¹⁴ Although swearing by God may help to sell goods quickly it is harmful in the long run. It damages people's confidence and prevents the merchant from making progress in his trade. Even though this swearing by God may not be perjury, it is not right. Perjury itself is in any case unlawful.

Pointing out any defect in the goods: It is necessary to make known any defect in the goods to be sold. We find the canonical ordinance on this matter in a *hadith* which is unequivocal: "Whoever sells goods without disclosing their faults will constantly remain under God's wrath, and the angels too will curse him continually".¹⁵ As a matter of fact, this is nothing but deceiving the customer. It is known to everybody that deceit is a bad quality unworthy of mankind. Moreover, this kind of behaviour by the seller leads first to quarrelling with the customer, and then to disputes that may even lead to violence. In practice we see that it is really bad behaviour. In societies

¹⁴ al-Nasa'i, *Sunan*, Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, n.d., Vol. VII, p. 246.

¹⁵ Ibn Majah, *Sunan*, ed. by Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi, Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, Cairo 1952.

where commercial morality is high, it is rare to encounter such behaviour. But in societies where morality is low this sort of behaviour is one of the causes of everyday criminal acts. Because Islamic law aims at raising mankind, individually and collectively, to a higher level, it lays down special and decisive principles to stop bad acts from arising in trade.

Giving short measure in measuring and in weighing: Normally, it is the way of the Qur'an not to lay down all the rules about a subject: it mentions only a few of them together with the underlying principles, and leaves the rest to the *hadiths* to regulate. We can understand how seriously this subject is taken from the fact that the Qur'an has a special *Surah* dealing with this matter, beginning "Woe unto those who give short measure" (*al-Mutaffifin*: 1).

To adhere to the market price when selling: It is necessary to tell the customer the market price if he does not know it, and it is strictly prohibited to sell at a higher price than the market value, a practice which al-Ghazali brands as cruelty.¹⁶ That is because in this case the seller benefits from the unawareness of the customer and consequently, by deceiving him, causes him an unjustifiable loss. In Islamic law there is a principle that "There is no [permissible] way to harm anyone or to return harm for harm". I think al-Ghazali deemed this to be manifest cruelty with that very principle in mind.

Truthfulness in trade. I will not discuss all the views expressed in the *fiqh* books concerning this topic, but I must emphasise that it is necessary not to exceed a reasonable proportion of profit and that one must observe the general principle of truthfulness. According to a *hadith* "The merchant whose words and transactions are righteous and who is a trustworthy man will be [resurrected] amongst the martyrs in the Day of Judgement."¹⁷ The *hadith* means that those who are righteous and trustworthy will be considered in the same high category as martyrs.

Having the correct attitude towards the poor. In the view of Islam the aim of trade is not simply to make a profit. For this reason, al-Ghazali

¹⁶ al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'ulum al-din*, Dar al-Ma'rifa, Beirut, n. d., Vol. II, p. 74.

¹⁷ Ibn Majah, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 724, *Hadith* no. 2139.

says that it is more appropriate to make sacrifices in favour of the poor and the weak when trading with them.¹⁸ He states his conviction that it is more humane to sell cheap when selling to the poor and to buy at a higher price when buying from them.

Politeness and easiness: Islamic law approaches the subject of trade in such a sensitive way that it attaches special importance to politeness next to easiness in buying and selling. We see this matter explained in the following *hadith*: "Verily God loves easiness and politeness in selling and easiness and politeness in buying".¹⁹

Bribery. Bribery in any form is strictly forbidden in Islam. The following *hadith* shows that bribery will result in the most severe punishment: "Both the one who gives and the one who takes bribes will incur damnation by God"; that is, they will be far from God's mercy.²⁰

Employer-employee relations. Since a detailed analysis of this topic, which has an important place in Islamic law, would exceed the limits of this paper, I will just refer to the pertinent *hadith*, which says: "Pay the employee his wages before his sweat dries" (do not delay it).²¹ This Prophetic command is of great importance, because it depicts how the employer's attitude towards the employee should be. If the statements mentioned in other *hadiths*, such as: "Feed your servants the same food you eat and clothe them with what you wear" are also taken into consideration, it is easy to see that employers are expected to pay for the work of their employees in such a way as to enable the employee to enjoy a reasonable standard of living relative to society as a whole.

¹⁸ Al-Ghazali, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 80-81.

¹⁹ Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Cairo 1976, Vol. III, p. 600, *Hadith* no. 1319.

²⁰ Ibn Majah, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 775, *Hadith* no. 2313.

²¹ *Op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 817, *Hadith* no. 2443.

Summary and conclusion

In this paper, before studying business ethics and trade in Islam, we have tried to examine briefly the problem of property and the ways in which property is acquired, which constitute the most important processes in business and trade. Here we see that Islam sets forth a law system which accepts private property. However, although private property may be limited by state authorities under certain circumstances, it is considered as a fundamental principle and an essential right. And in the same context we explained that in Islam, property may be acquired in four different ways: property acquired by getting control of an asset to whose possession there is no legal obstacle, and is not under anyone's ownership; property acquired through contracts; property acquired through transfer of rights; and property which is produced by assets that one already owns.

In addition, we touched briefly upon the principles of Islam which concern partnerships and which encourage working in cooperation. In Islamic law there are different sets of rules about partnerships. All commercial work develops by aiming to make a profit. We understand that legal gain has three main sources: buying and selling a ready object (trade); any kind of production; and agriculture. In the last part of the paper, we tried to explain, by studying general principles, how Islam approaches business ethics which constitutes the main theme of this meeting. We recalled how Islam regards some problems concerning business and commerce, explaining that Islam completely prohibits deception, profiteering, giving short measure when weighing and measuring, and bribery. In addition, Islam enjoins us not to praise goods but to disclose any defect in them, to observe the market price when selling, to be truthful in trade, to help the poor and debtors, and to be polite during transactions. Islam orders that relations between employer and employee be established on mutual understanding, respect and consideration and that both sides should observe one another's rights with a sense of responsibility. This is a brief account of a topic which is in fact very broad and complex. It is my hope that this introductory study has been useful in providing you with a general picture.

THE EUROPEAN MENTALITY AND ISLAM

- 1 -

Let me take you, by way of introduction, to the contemporary religious supermarket in Europe. The old continent, formerly nothing but Catholic or Protestant (either Lutheran or Calvinist), nowadays offers something for everybody: from Anthroposophy with its popular belief in reincarnation to radical carnal Satanic cults, and to sects which try to influence their religious adherents through drugs à la Carlos Castaneda.

These phenomena of decadence, accompanying the cultural decline of the established churches, meet with extraordinary instances. Boys, their heads clean-shaven, who publicly celebrate the praise of Hans Richter, or pseudo-fervid adepts of the Hindu Ganesha movement do not provoke opposition. When a woman like the late Richard Gere becomes a Buddhist, no questions are raised. On the contrary, if you should decide to become a Shaman in the tradition of the Dobele Indians, you would certainly find much sympathetic interest both from television and from environmentalists. The same is true of modern Druids, women assuming the role of Celtic priestess, when they travel from Germany to Cappadocia in Turkey in search of flame-red societies of oil and their female deities.

THE EUROPEAN MENTALITY AND ISLAM

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Lecture given at IRCICA,
Istanbul, on 27 October 1995

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THE EUROPEAN MENTALITY AND ISLAM

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Let me take you, by way of Introduction, to the contemporary religious supermarket in Europe. The old continent, formerly nothing but Catholic or Protestant (either Lutheran or Calvinist), nowadays offers something for everybody: from Anthroposophy with its popular belief in reincarnation to rather carnal Satanic cults, and to sects which try to enhance their religious awareness through drugs à la Carlos Castaneda.

These phenomena of decadence, accompanying the continuous decline of the established churches, meet with extraordinary tolerance. Boys, their heads clean-shaven, who publicly celebrate the praise of Hare Krishna, or proselytising adepts of the Hindu Bhagwan movement do not provoke aggression. When a movie star like Richard Gere becomes a Buddhist, no questions are raised. On the contrary, if you should decide to become a Shaman in the tradition of the Dakota Indians, you would certainly find much sympathetic interest both from television and from environmentalists. The same is true of modern Druids, women assuming the role of Celtic priests, when they travel from Germany to Çatalhöyük in Turkey in search of matriarchal societies of old and their female deities.¹

Jewish religious life, even in its most extreme, fundamentalist form, meets with the same positive approach. The Lubavitchers in New York and Jerusalem practice strict separation of the sexes; men always wear hats and let their forelocks grow. During Sabbath, all activities cease. And, of course, they do not eat pork, and eat other meat only if the animal has been slaughtered ritually, exactly the way it is done at Eyüp Sultan. Never do the Western media question whether these Jewish traditions might violate human rights; never do they qualify orthodox Jews as "fanatical" or "obscurantist".

Indeed, in religious terms the Occident has become pluralistic. The Prussian king Frederick II (the Great) already in the 18th century

¹ Christa Mulack, *Auf den Spuren der Göttin*, Marl 1992.

expressed the idea that everybody should be allowed to seek salvation in his own way². His advice was heeded. Today, in Europe, you can be a Neo-Marxist or Neo-Thomist, a non-denominational mystic, a believer in astrology, an agnostic or atheist, and nobody will ear.

The one thing you had better is not be a Muslim. In fact, modern pluralism and its seemingly limitless tolerance disappear abruptly in the face of Islam. Habits and practices which are easily accepted from others, in case of a Muslim are condemned as fanatical, primitive, unconstitutional, and backward. In the case of a Che Guevara, a beard is progressive; in the case of a Muslim, the same beard is reactionary. The Virgin Mary is never depicted without her hair covered. But if a Muslim woman wears a scarf, she will be evicted from school in France.

If you have doubts whether this is the situation, try to build a mosque in France or Germany. Unless you are unusually lucky, you will have to resort to the law courts for every step along the administrative process. In the end, after eight or ten years, you will probably win permission to build your mosque - somewhere behind railroad tracks or near the slaughterhouse.

There will be wrangling with the authorities over every meter of elevation planned for the minaret. You will hear that cement factories and gas works fit into the European countryside, but not minarets. Yet permission to build a minaret does not include permission to use it as a minaret! It has therefore been suggested by some joker to change the call to prayer: If the *mu'adhdhin* would shout imitating the sound of church bells, shouldn't that be acceptable?

If as a Muslim you should seek permission to obtain *halal* meat the way the Jews do in France and Germany, it will be refused to with arguments which should have excluded ritual slaughter by Jews as well. Double standards! The same is true when Muslims seek to be officially recognised, like the Jewish communities, as a religious corporation under public law. This is granted to a community of

² "Jeder soll nach seiner Façon selig werden !"

30,000 Jews in Germany but denied to two million Muslims. Double standards!

If you need further confirmation of this disquieting situation, watch how Western media report on terrorism and belligerence. At their time, nobody thought to qualify Adolf Hitler as a Catholic or Stalin as an Orthodox Christian; nor was Franco ever called a "Catholic" fascist or Dr. Karadzic an "Orthodox Christian" warmonger. If, however, anybody from the Muslim world - whoever they may be - uses a weapon, he will be labelled a "fanatical Muslim", even if he is an atheistic, communist or Baathist Arab or a Palestinian Christian.

Have you ever heard that Nagasaki and Hiroshima were destroyed by a "Christian" bomb? Of course not. But when a Muslim country like Iraq or Pakistan is suspected of developing a nuclear device, it is referred to as an "Islamic bomb". Indeed, certain derogatory adjectives like "fanatical" and "obscurantist" the media seem to have reserved exclusively for Muslims. A Qadhafi, Khomeini, Saddam Hussein is "fanatical", a Milosevic is not. Terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland or Spain are not committed by "fanatical" Protestants, Catholics, Basques, Catalans. But whenever a Muslim uses force, even in legitimate self-defence, Western media are likely to qualify him as a fanatic. According to these criteria, I too am a fanatic; because I pray, fast during the month of *Ramadan*, go on pilgrimage to Mecca, and spend in the cause of God. ...

- II -

The facts are clear. The enmity described is real. How about their causes? My hypothesis is that the above-described anti-Islamic symptoms result from an anti-Arab attitude - a modern form of selective anti-Semitism - and memories of Turkish campaigns, as well as from some other deeply-anchored roots that evoke the following factors:

- * Bunker mentality and demonisation
- * Crusader mentality and shock
- * Syndromes of prejudice and jealousy, including sexual jealousy
- * Particular anxieties about Arabs and Turks.

All these factors make up the Western mentality vis-à-vis Islam. To isolate them is not racist. I am not saying that anti-Islamic attitudes

run in people's blood. However, several of the factors mentioned are indeed "inherited", in the sense that everyone nilly-willy shares in the collective memory of his nation.

1. Bunker mentality and demonisation

People in the Occident are still aware that Islam from the seventh century expanded with extreme rapidity into most of the known world.

a) That Christianity should not be the last and final religion, that there should be another major Prophet after Jesus luring Christians away from their faith by the million, was not only incompatible with the Christian world view: the very idea was a monstrous provocation.

In order to save face and faith, the Christian world invented the legend that Islam has spread, and always will, "through fire and the sword". This conviction is very much alive even today, even though the "fire-and-sword" legend has scientifically been disproved: the Christian populations of course accepted Islam either because Islamic rule was more benign than, for instance, Byzantine rule, or because the Christology of the Qur'an corresponded to their own (basically still Arian) beliefs.

b) The second strategy of ideological defence was crude defamation, particularly of the Prophet of Islam, who became demonised as a devilish Antichrist. Professor Annemarie Schimmel once wrote: "More than any other historical figures, Muhammad has aroused fear, hatred, and even contempt in the Christian world. Dante, in his "Divine Comedy", only expressed what innumerable medieval Christians felt when he condemned Muhammad to the lowest pit of Hell."³

Denigrating the Prophet of Islam continues to be acceptable (and applauded), as demonstrated by Salman Rushdie. No one thought of invoking the existing anti-blasphemy clauses of Western criminal codes. When Professor Schimmel dared to point out that Rushdie had hurt the feelings of millions of Muslims, all hell broke loose in

³ Annemarie Schimmel, *Und Muhammad ist Sein Prophet*, München 1981, p. 7 (translated into English as *And Muhammad is His Prophet* by Murad W. Hofmann).

Germany - proving that even in 1995 it was still "politically incorrect" to show sympathetic understanding for Islam.

In this respect, positive biographies of the Prophet, such as those by Emile Dermenghem, Muhammad Hussein Heikal or Karen Armstrong, have not had much impact. As Professor Hans Küng likes to point out, even the Catholic Church which during the Second Vatican Council accepted Islam as a way to salvation, still fails to accept Muhammad as a guide on that very way.

2. Crusader mentality and shock

If you scratch a little the veneer covering European civilisation, you will discover, close to the surface, unhealed scars and virulent motivations dating back to the Crusades. Indeed, the traumata caused by the Crusades are deeper in the West than in the East. One trauma resulted from the shock the Crusaders received when they realised that the supposedly barbaric and heathen Muslims were more developed, more civilised, and more advanced in natural sciences than they. Indeed, the wisdom, chivalry, honesty, tolerance, generosity, and spirituality of the great Kurdish military leader Salah al-Din ("Saladin") became legendary in the West.

In addition, many Crusaders discredited themselves through their cruelty and avarice. The sack of Constantinople in 1205 - their greatest "feat" - left deep scars: a lingering bad conscience and nagging doubts about their superiority. Nevertheless, the impetus and rhetoric of the Crusades have been kept alive to this day. The expulsion of the Muslims and Jews from Andalusia after 1492 - an early case of religious cleansing à la Karadzic - was a continuation of the Crusades, and so was the foolish attempt of the young Portuguese king Sebastiao to re-Christianise North Africa in the 16th century.⁴

Western imperialist colonialism, too - was it not crusading, now at a global scale? Did not the White Fathers come with the second boat, if not the first? Did the French not dot the North African coast with large cathedrals, dedicated to "Notre Dame d'Afrique"? Even so, it is

⁴ It ended in 1578 with the Battle of the Three Kings near Ksar el-Kebir in Morocco, where he was killed.

almost incredible that the king of Greece saw himself as a Crusader when disembarking with his army at Smyrna in 1920. Why else did he chose to touch land at the very point outside the harbour where King Richard I "the Lionheart" had first set foot on the soil of Anatolia in 1190, as a knight of the Third Crusade?

This Crusader mentality is wide awake and alive and explains the cultural imperialism of Francis Fukuyama⁵ and Samuel Huntington⁶. Their idea that the Muslim world sooner or later will either disappear or become fully marginalised can be traced back to European thinking since the Age of Reasoning.

In my high school days we were still aware of what Europe owed to previous civilisations like Greece and Rome. All this, including memories of the glories of Muslim Andalusia, has faded away. From the 18th century, European man, in his arrogance, convinced himself that he was the measure of everything and that his supreme reason will assure him to reach the highest peak of peace, welfare and happiness ever achieved in human history. It is amazing, but two savage world wars, atomic warfare, the Holocaust and Stalinism and have not shaken these convictions. On the contrary, Western man has fully convinced himself that his civilisation - the so-called "Project of Modernity" (better called the American Way of Life) is the best, the ultimate civilisation, bound to become dominant world-wide. His International Law, his Code of Human Rights, his economic system, his scientific approach and his philosophy, like that of Ludwig Wittgenstein who condemned all metaphysics, are seen as essential ingredients of an emerging world culture made in the U.S.A. and in Europe.

It is not far-fetched to consider the Western civilisation as an obligatory model for the rest of the world because many in Asia, Africa and South America - not to speak of the Islamic world - are frantically trying to copy the Western lifestyle. Eating habits, fashion, male and female ideals of beauty, the management of leisure, sexual

⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York 1993.

⁶ Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, no. 3, Summer 1993.

manners, architecture and music - you name it - all tend to converge on the Western model. Part and parcel of this trend towards uniformity is the marginalisation of religious aspects from public life. Religion is replaced by a pervasive crass materialism serving as a pseudo-ideology. Making faith a private affair is the first step towards eliminating it altogether. Already, the typical Western man and woman have no antenna anymore for religious phenomena. They see their own religions melting away, so quite naturally they believe that Islam too is destined to disappear and have no qualms in helping to speed up this process. In spite of the fact that several Nobel Prize-winning natural scientists are deeply religious, intelligence and religious convictions are still seen as incompatible. The implication is that a Muslim is naturally suspected of being less than bright.

3. Syndromes of prejudice and jealousy, including sexual jealousy

Against this background, Islam - refusing to disappear and even resurgent - is a provocation, if not an insult. Imagine, these backward Muslims reject many of the blessings of Western civilisation and even go so far as presenting Islam as an alternative model for the twenty-first century! (I am alluding here of course to my own book, *Islam: the Alternative*⁷). Worse still, many Europeans who convert to Islam are academically trained, intellectuals and scientists. How can they turn their backs on their own culture?

What is more, historical research into the bases of Christian dogma has led to extraordinary developments inside both the Catholic and the Protestant Churches. For one thing, it is now established that - in contrast to the unquestionable authenticity of the Qur'an - most parts of the New Testament are unreliable sources, to say the least, with interpolations of a much later date. Many Christian professors of theology now admit that it was a mistake, in 325, at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, to define Jesus as God "consubstantial" with the Father. As a result, quite a few Christian churchmen and their followers, after a delay of 1600 years, now believe about Jesus more or less what the Qur'an has to say about him - or even less. Can you imagine what happens to one's mind

⁷ Murad Wilfried Hofmann, *Der Islam als Alternative*, 2nd ed., Munich 1993, English edition: *Islam, the Alternative*, Reading 1993.

realising that the people one had learned to despise - the Muslims - were right all along?

In the context of hidden Western jealousies, sexual jealousy is a very real phenomenon. For Western man, the Orient is the sphere of the Kama Sutra, of the Eastern culture of love, of eroticism writ large. Professor Edward Said⁸ revealed in his famous book on Western orientalism the extent to which the Occidental image of the Orient as being lascivious, sexually licentious, indulging in polygamy at will is but a projection of suppressed Occidental wishes and erotic dreams.

There is a more genuine and valid background of the Western yearning for things oriental. The saying "Ex oriente lux" (the light comes from the East, also the title of Sezen Aksu's last recording⁹) reflects the fact that all the major religions were born in the East - from Hinduism and Buddhism through Mazdaism and Zoroastrism to the three monotheistic world religions. Also, up this day, the Orient has preserved a quality of life not yet fully dependent, as in the West, on the quantity of commodities available; up to this day, human relations in the East, including Turkey, have remained cordial while more and more tending to grow cold in the West.

4. Particular anxieties about Arabs and Turks

a) Anti-Arabism

It is a significant fact that the average European views Islam as an Arabic religion, even though Arabs are a minority within the Islamic world. As a result, all prejudices against Arabs - of which there are plenty - are transferred to Islam. To witness how this prejudice is reinforced, one should see a Hollywood film in the Arab world. Invariably, Arabs are shown there as lazy cowards - always good for a stab in the back - stupidly naive, fanatical and over-sexed. You see Arab *shaykhs* surrounded by topless women, reposing near their oil-well: a contemptuous picture, yet feeding on hidden desires of the Western viewer!

Whenever Islam itself appears in such films concretely, it is portrayed as a religion for simpletons without spirituality. Prayer is performed as

⁸ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York 1979.

⁹ *Işık doğudan yükselir.*

a physical exercise, *Ramadan* as a time for nightly orgies, pilgrimage as an absurd heathen custom. Alas, this form of anti-Semitism is not at all taboo in Europe or the U.S.A.

Yes, we did have personalities like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who with great sympathy made efforts to know more about Islam. But on the whole many Western orientalists and Islamologists until recently seem to have studied their subject with disdain, frequently using their knowledge as a weapon in the interest of colonialist penetration of the Muslim world.

b) Anxiety about Turks

In the Middle Ages, Europeans did not associate Islam so much with Arabs as with Turks. Some of the earliest translations of the Qur'an into European languages presented it as "The complete Turkish code of law"¹⁰ or the "Turkish Bible".¹¹ To know this is important because the Ottoman sultans had a habit of organising a campaign against the German Empire roughly every second year. They never occupied Vienna, but their light cavalry (*akinci*) made it into Bavaria. In short, until some 250 years ago, the Turkish threat was a constant European reality.

Today, Turkish workers do not arrive at the Austrian border with scimitars, bows and arrows but with visas and working permits. Nevertheless, they meet with reactions caused by fear of Turkish aggression from so long ago. With their visas, they not only reach Vienna but Berlin, and in such numbers that simple-minded people in Germany and the Benelux countries start worrying whether they can live their traditional lives without learning Turkish. No wonder their reaction is emotional, particularly towards people who refuse to drink alcohol. Such people are a living reproach, and somehow fanatical, aren't they?

The problem posed by sizeable minorities in Europe became more acute when they represent the most misunderstood religion of all, Islam. To say "represent" is not to imply that Turkish workers from the

¹⁰ Johann Lange, *Vollständiges türkisches Gesetzbuch oder... Mahomets Alkoran*, Hamburg 1688.

¹¹ David Friedrich Megerlin, *Die türkische Bibel*, Frankfurt 1772.

Black Sea or Eastern Anatolia are all capable of truly displaying or explaining Islam to their Church or Belgian neighbours. On the contrary, for many of them Islam becomes important only once they are in Europe, as a part of their identity and as a proud response to discrimination.

The result is more segregation and more confrontation. Indeed, we must admit that the possibility for Europeans to live near Muslims, rather than only read about them or see them in Antalya or Agadir, has not eliminated existing prejudices against Islam; often it even increases them.

The growing Islamic awareness and activity of foreign workers in Europe, and their virtual re-Islamisation there, has not only made integration more elusive; it has also probably convinced the majority of Europeans by now that these strange foreign people are so strange because they are Muslims. The so-called man in the street, I am afraid, now holds the view that these Moroccans, and Algerians, and Tunisians, and Turks do not quite fit into Europe. People in government will say that; but can you be sure they are not thinking the same way?

In terms of real integration, Europeans have not helped by appealing to the immigrant Muslim populations in England, France and Germany to become what they call "modern Muslims" or to develop a "European Islam". This slogan envisages Muslims who absorb a heavy dose of Europe and a very small dose of Islam.

Some German party functionaries have even proposed local *Alevi*s as a model for such a convenient, harmless Islam. People who do not build mosques, do not pray - or fast - during working hours, do not cover their hair or go on pilgrimage, but who drink wine and beer - such people pose indeed no problem for integration. Needless to say, these suggestions have led to more, not less, potential confrontation in Germany - both among Turks and between Turks and Germans.

The media have made matters worse by implying that the upsurge and re-emergence of Islam, its revival everywhere, are basically directed against Europe. Even at NATO Headquarters statements were made to the effect that after the demise of the Soviet Union the

Alliance had to prepare for a possible military North-South conflict. As a result, Europeans feel almost personally threatened whenever Islamic movements, be it in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt or elsewhere, challenge the legitimacy of their governments. They fail to realise - and this is tragic - that young Muslims almost everywhere are calling for the establishment of Islamic democracies, the accent being both on "Islamic" and "Democracy". Despite their occasional anti-Western rhetoric these movements are only concerned with reforms in their own countries. Rather than preparing an assault against Europe, their leaders value Europe for its rule of law, protection of human rights, absence of media censorship, and for its religious freedom. Indeed, the Muslim youth is calling at home for what they learned when studying in Europe. The anti-Western rhetoric will become even louder when the young Muslims in the Muslim world realise that Green Peace and Amnesty International seem to be more concerned with saving whales and rescuing prisoners in China than with aiding Bosnian Muslims or political prisoners in nearby Muslim countries.

- III -

The consequences of this European mentality for the Muslim world are far-reaching, and very serious. As the conflict in Bosnia proves, where an anti-Muslim mentality exists anti-Muslim propaganda can lead to religious warfare, even at the end of the twentieth century: The Serbian aggressors are not called Christians, but the victims are called Muslims, and they are persecuted because of it, and for no other ethnic, linguistic or historical reason. One may argue that the inactivity of the West through three cruel years, standing on the sidelines with "humanitarian aid" while massacres went on, had nothing to do with religious prejudices. Indeed, normal egotism and moral decadence might sufficiently explain the Western refusal to make significant sacrifices. In fact, the West behaves very much as it did in 1453 during the siege of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmet II. As Steven Runciman described¹², the Vatican, Venice, France and England at the time in much the same terms justified their inaction as NATO countries did vis-à-vis Bosnia some 500 years later.

¹² Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople 1453*, London 1964.

However, let us not delude ourselves; in 1455 decisions were also religiously motivated. Seen from Rome, the Greek-Orthodox Byzantines were heretics, stubbornly refusing to reunite with the Catholic Church. Such people deserved Hell; so why should one save them at great expense from Turkish rule?

I submit that in Bosnia as well, the negative European attitude towards Islam played a major role. Can you imagine the reactions of NATO and the big powers if the Serbs had been Muslims (and done all the Serbs did) and the Bosnians were Christians? Can there be any doubt that the West would have decisively intervened from the outset, in the name of human rights and the European humanitarian heritage? Can anyone imagine that the West would have imposed an arms embargo on a defenceless Christian population, threatened with annihilation at the hands of Muslims?

Also, let us not be fooled by the NATO bombardment of Serbian positions in September 1995. The West did not act out of concern for Muslims but out of exasperation with the Serbs, people who had even refused to accept a Western deal drafted in their favour.

At any rate, during the last three years, Western leaders have disregarded each and every lesson learned during the yearly crisis management exercises of NATO. Their threats came too late, with too much warning time, constantly signalling that they did not mean it. The politicians in question cannot be suspected of being incompetent. Thus the conclusion is inescapable: they never wanted to intervene, because the victims were not Christian but Muslim.

Constantinople in 1453, Sarajevo in 1993: what else is in store for the Muslims as a result of the negative European attitude toward Islam?

It guides the European attitude towards the struggle in Algeria. It colours the European response to Chechnia. In the European Parliament, it might be decisive for the vote on the admission of Turkey to the Customs Union. And it dominates Western, particularly American, Near and Middle Eastern policy.

This situation is so crucial that something has to be done about it. But what? Confrontation between Europe and the Muslim world around the Mediterranean would be disastrous and must be avoided at all costs. What then? Are the Muslims to emigrate from Europe, all sixteen million or so, in a new *hijra*? Where to? No, this is no solution either.

There is only one reasonable reaction to what I have been describing: we all, because we are all concerned, must make a personal effort gradually to reshape the Western attitude towards Islam. This is of course easier said than done. It presupposes on the Islamic side that the Muslims live like real Muslims: in a way, that is, which makes the spirituality, tolerance and other virtues of their faith manifest.

And both sides must seize on every opportunity for serious and honest dialogue, particularly between political parties, the media, universities, and the religious establishments.

The final aim of this multiple dialogue should, however, be more than just tolerance. As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe put it: "Tolerance should only be a transitional attitude: it must lead to acceptance. Merely enduring is a way of insulting"¹³.

MUSLIMS TORN
BETWEEN THE OCCIDENT AND THE ORIENT

Ambassador Ahmed W. H. El-Sayid

¹³ Maximen & Reflexionen, Nr. 121: "Toleranz sollte eigentlich nur eine vorübergehende Gesinnung sein: sie muß zur Anerkennung führen. Dulden heißt beleidigen."

Issued on 9 May 1990

MUSLIMS TORN BETWEEN THE OCCIDENT AND THE ORIENT

- 1 -

I am a German, and a Muslim. It might seem somewhat foolish for me to be proud to be a German -- did I choose my parents? In fact, I owe a great deal to having grown up in German culture and with the German language. Both are problem-solving kits, so to speak. And yet, I am very glad indeed to be a Muslim. It would also be foolish for me to be proud to be a Muslim -- did I choose Islam, or was I not chosen by Allah Ta'ala to revert to His religion? Consequently, I feel quite at home in the Muslim world, in fact, wherever I am not there, I feel homesick for Mecca. Am I torn between two cultures and two modes of behaviour? Is there something puzzling about being a western Muslim? Is to be criticised by him (and upholding) incompatible with being a Muslim?

I can deny all these questions. Islam from its *Waq* beginning was considered a universal religion, valid for all times and places. Why else would the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) have approached all potentialists around Arabia, even before the conquest of Mecca, inviting them to accept Islam? Why would the early Muslims have branched out into such far? This was the beginning of the globalisation of Islam which only now, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, is becoming a reality. When I attend the annual conventions of the Egyptian High Islamic Council I run into Muslims from Japan, Ukraine, Venezuela and Columbia, Canada and Argentina, Korea and Finland, Sweden and South Africa. The cultural plurality is such that I once counted forty-seven different languages, or forty-seven ways of how men covered their heads. These cultures have never been considered Islamic or Muslim.

MUSLIMS TORN BETWEEN THE OCCIDENT AND THE ORIENT

Ambassador Murad W. Hofmann

Christianity or Hindu or Zoroastrian, why not Portugal? Yes, our Prophet was an Arab of the Hashemite clan, but the tribe of the Quraysh, and the Quran has
Lecture given at IRCICA,
Istanbul, on 9 May 1998

MUSLIMS TORN BETWEEN THE OCCIDENT AND THE ORIENT

- 1 -

I am a German, and a Muslim. It might seem somewhat foolish for me to be proud to be a German – did I choose my parents? In fact, I owe a great deal to having grown up in German culture and with the German language: both are problem-solving kits, so to speak. And yet, I am very glad indeed to be a Muslim. It would also be foolish for me to be proud to be a Muslim- did I choose Islam, or was I not chosen by Allah Ta'ala to revert to His religion? Consequently, I feel quite at home in the Muslim world. In fact, whenever I am not there, I feel homesick for Mecca. Am I tom between two cultures and two modes of behaviour? Is there something puzzling about being a western Muslim? Is to be occidental by birth and upbringing incompatible with being a Muslim?

I can deny all these questions: Islam from its very beginning was considered a universal religion, valid for all times and places. Why else would the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) have approached all potentates around Arabia, even before the conquest of Mecca, inviting them to adopt Islam? Why would the early Muslims have branched out, like bush fire? This was the beginning of the globalisation of Islam which only now, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, is becoming a reality. When I attend the annual conferences of the Egyptian High Islamic Council I run into Muslims from Japan, Ukraine, Venezuela and Columbia, Canada and Argentina, Korea and Finland, Sweden and South Africa. The cultural plurality is such that I once counted forty-seven different headgears, i.e. forty-seven ways of how men covered their heads. These nations have never been considered Islamic countries. But had Iran been considered potentially to be an Islamic country before it became Muslim, or Afghanistan, or Turkey, or Morocco, or India? If they were able to turn into Muslim countries after having been for centuries Christian or Hindu or Zoroastrian, why not one day Denmark or Portugal? Yes, our Prophet was an Arab of the Hashemite clan from the tribe of the Quraish, and the Qur'an has been formulated in the

dialect of that region. But that does not mean that Allah is Arabophone or that, in order to become a real Muslim, everyone has to turn into a seventh-century bedouin of the Hijaz.

Islam and the Occident are not incompatible as such. But the relationship between the two is neither simple nor easy. In fact, some of my fellow Muslims in Germany, Britain, France or the United States are rejecting Western civilisation stock and barrel - even demonising it - as a culture of the *kuffar*, in which people live in a state of modern paganism similar to the old *jahiliyya* - the realm of the Great Satan as Ayatollah Khomeini had put it. Others, in contrast, are virtually enamoured of each and every feature of occidental culture. This is true mainly of Arab, Pakistani, Egyptian and Maghrebi students in the West and as well as of the second-generation children of Muslim immigrants at the working-class level. Many of them are ready to assimilate every feature of Western civilisation totally, to a point where they are no more than "cultural Muslims", not practising Islam any longer but indulging in the seductive consumer paradise of their guest countries. Strangely enough, both groups can advance rather good arguments in defence of their opposing positions.

- II -

Those who reject the West point out that Western history has been a series of unique disasters ever since the beginning of the so-called Enlightenment. From the late seventeenth century, the so-called Age of Reason dawned upon a Europe which until then had suffered under the obscurantism and oppression of corrupt clergymen. The leading minds of the day - Descartes, Hume, Kant, Voltaire, Goethe, Frederick II - were not preaching atheism when distancing themselves from Christian dogma. As "deists" - people not believing in the divine nature of Jesus or in Trinity - they basically affirmed what Muslims call *tawhid*. By emancipating people from the narrowness of their churches and by attributing supremacy to human reasoning they did not intend to spread atheism. But that was what finally happened - inevitably. By the end of the nineteenth century Nietzsche was already able to proclaim the "Death of God", and the ideology of Marxism had already turned atheist officially. This was inevitable because during and after the Enlightenment people had committed *shirk* by promoting man as the ultimate measure of all things. Ever

since, the Occident has been characterised either by an implicit deification of the state (men collectively) or by an implicit deification of man (as individual). In that sense, chauvinistic nationalism, Fascism (including Nazism), Communism and Liberalism without limits are all typically Western.

This is the first region and culture in world history which has become agnostic or outright atheist both in theory and practice. The West has entirely lost its transcendental moorings. While still profiting from its Christian heritage, it is no longer Christian in the true sense of the word.

The consequences are dramatic. On T-shirts you can read a perfect restatement of contemporary hedonistic philosophy: "I want fun. NOW." Once utmost sensual pleasure of the individual is given highest social priority, economic laws quite naturally become all-pervasive. Occidental civilisation nowadays is indeed all about the maximisation of profit and the optimisation of production. Ironically, in the process, human beings are reduced to no more than irrational factors likely to mess up production, statistics and cybernetics. Thus, the liberated Western man loses his dignity while supposedly "realising himself."

Dramatic are the consequences also in the moral field. Mass consumption, as propelled by the media, breaks down one taboo barrier after the other. Nowadays, "anything goes" is an operative slogan. In the process, crass materialism is ruining the family. In the U.S.A., currently, only 15% of all marriages are likely to last. Hundreds of thousands of women choose to be "single mothers". Can anyone foresee what will happen when so many emotionally disturbed, fatherless kids descend upon society? Women claim to "realise and determine themselves" when determining the death of their unborn babies through abortion. The difference from the *Jahiliyya* is only that nowadays also male offspring is aborted. Pornography has become all-pervasive: it takes you about two minutes to flip through the thirty or so available television programs on your set. During that short time, on the average you will have seen a couple of murders and one naked woman on your screen.

For Western people, time is money, and life is short. So they seek instant gratification, intensified through drugs. If you admit that cigarettes, alcohol, and the Internet are also addictive, Western culture is the first culture in history which has become structurally addicted. Of course, drugs and the sex market lead to crime. Currently, the only big towns where the streets are pretty safe are Muslim cities like Cairo and Istanbul. In many places in the West you better stay home after dark.

The West – in spite of being in such great trouble - offers itself as the obligatory model for every other nation. Cultures not willing to imitate the West are under the threat of being marginalised. This was the true message when Francis Fukuyama, in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, proclaimed the “end of history”. It meant to say that the so-called “project of modernity”, also known as the “American way of life” or as “McDonaldisation”, is the peak of civilisation, unsurpassable, for all time. For such people, the future globe will be divided only into the ever-expanding West and the rest. Samuel Huntington even predicted bloody clashes between the two realms. This breath-taking arrogance Muslims call “cultural imperialism” - a misnomer because there is no master plan behind it but an eternal teenager of genius called Bill Gates. Nevertheless, as a result, the techno-cultural globalisation we are all witnessing works like a non-religious, ideological continuation of colonialism.

Let us now take a good look at the record of that marvellous, self-appointed centre of rationality, the enlightened Western world. Since the eighteenth century, in contrast to the high ideals pronounced and exported, what one discovers in terms of actual behaviour is highly disturbing: slave trade and apartheid; two savage world wars; Stalinist massacres and the Nazi holocaust; ethnic (in reality religious) cleansing in Bosnia; and atomic warfare against civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These disasters were the bloodiest the world had ever seen. But even when Western people were not at war with each other, they behaved violently: against nature, both against fauna and flora, animals and plants, and minerals - to a point where the destruction of resources and environmental disasters like air pollution threaten the survival of mankind. None of the excesses I have mentioned took place in the Muslim world. And yet the Occident, in spite of such a record, asks

the rest of the world to follow its example and to deny not only the existence but even the possibility of an alternative.

You will now perhaps understand why I called one of my books, published in 1992, *Islam: The Alternative*. For there are many good reasons for criticising the West.

- III -

But there are also many good arguments for embracing that very same West - at least because it was there, and only there, that methods and procedures were developed for the effective protection of citizens against abuse by their governments. I am speaking of democracy and the rule of law. There, and nowhere else, poverty was virtually eliminated. There, and only there, science - including medicine - progressed in leaps and bounds. What I am saying is true, but sad, because the same development should have taken place in the Muslim world, as it did in terms of the arts and sciences during the Abbasid era and in Andalusia. Also in the political realm, a development similar to the Western one could have taken place in the Islamic world because according to the Qur'an each and every Muslim is a free man - he is even a *khalifa*, and because social welfare, equality, and justice are Islamic principles as well.

The reality, as you all know, is depressingly different. So much so that Muhammad al-Ghazali observed that there was much Islam in the West (in spite of the scarcity of Muslims there) but little Islam in the Muslim world (in spite of the many Muslims there). In a similar vein, Muhammad Asad, the most important western Muslim scholar of this century, told me that he was glad to have become Muslim in his youth, in 1926; given the state of the Muslim world today he might not have found his way to the *shahada*.

Let me illustrate some of the absurdities one discovers when comparing the Occident with the Muslim Orient:

a) The Qur'anic revelation begins with the command: "*Iqra!*" The Muslims are bound to be an *Ahl al-kitab* - *par excellence*. And yet, today illiteracy is typical of Muslim countries but virtually extinct in the West.

b) Muslims should have the most developed social conscience thanks to *sadaqa* and *zakat*. After all, a Muslim cannot even go to *hajj* as long as his neighbours suffer from poverty. And yet, the difference between rich and poor in Muslim countries is generally appalling. Before going to high-class dinners, representing Germany as an Ambassador, my wife sometimes complained that she could not equal local ladies in their display of emerald, ruby or diamond jewellery. I consoled her by explaining that we are individually not as rich as these individually rich local people because we represent a rich country, while their country was poor. Absurd, but true. In Germany an unemployed person receives more unemployment aid than somebody who works in a textile plant in the Muslim world.

c) In the West, if you help somebody in an official capacity simply because he is a blood relative of yours, you may be persecuted for corruption. In the Muslim world, however, nepotism is considered a virtue - as if the good intention of helping one's family justified doing wrong to somebody else. In real life, nepotism leads to a situation where many important positions in the state, the economy, and even in science, are occupied by unqualified or second-best people. Such a country can never perform beyond a limited level and will remain below its real means. This is the economic price of corruption that everyone has to pay.

d) In the course of Muslim history, the supreme authority of Allah Ta'ala somehow reflected on the extraordinary authority attributed to fathers, big brothers, policemen, and of course, teachers and members of the *'ulama*. This, combined with the unfortunate doctrine of *taqlid*, produced an uncreative copy-cat mentality. Excellence in sciences presupposes structural scepticism. The German poet Goethe put the idea very well when he wrote that "everybody has to acquire what he inherits in order to really possess it".

e) In the course of Muslim history, the sciences of *adab* won higher prestige than natural sciences. As a result, the Islamic world lost its technological superiority over the West. This decadence provoked the colonisation which soon followed. Decadence was not the result but the cause of colonisation. Even today, if we discount the Pakistani Professor Abdussalam, a Qadiani, there has not yet been one single

Nobel prize won by a Muslim in sciences, including medicine; and after Ibn Sina, Muslims still compete only in poetry and prose.

f) More than half of mankind are women. According to the rights and status accorded to them by the Word of God, women should not be treated *de facto* as second class citizens but as complementary partners of men, in accordance with the role they had played during the Battle of Uhud, for instance, and in accordance with the role played by Khadija. In contrast to that, the formulation "*ar-rijal qawwamuna 'ala-'n-nisa*" (*al-Nisa*: 34) has been interpreted by men in the best macho fashion and spirit of the *Jahiliyya* as assuring them superior status over and above women. Thus, they eliminated women from public life and reduced them to illiterate minors who, however, were supposed to raise their boys as proper men. This discrimination against women is causing double damage: first, to the image of Islam world-wide; second, to the chances of development of Muslim societies. It is a kind of self-mutilation. Muslim women should advise their husbands that the Qur'anic formula just cited can be read, and must be read, as: "Men are the protectors of women", meaning that men do not stand above them - they must place themselves in front of them, if need be, in responsibility, not in command.

g) In some Muslim countries there seems to be an unlimited supply only of the following: the sun, sand, children, and time. It is curious to see that western people - who consider time to be money - never have time. Their lives seem to accelerate constantly. In contrast, oriental people seem to have all the time. So they feel no guilt when they waste other peoples' time by being terribly late. In the West, trains depart for instance at 9.14 or 9.16. In the Muslim world they frequently depart either some time in the morning, or some time in the afternoon. The cumulative waste caused by the lack of punctuality is enormous. Is wasting time acceptable to Islam?

h) Germans tend to be perfectionists - which is not wholly a virtue - and therefore teach car mechanics from the Muslim world to service Mercedes or Volkswagen cars perfectly. But when these mechanics return home, they find themselves being ridiculed for working too hard for nothing. Who cares whether a car still runs in its ninth year as long as it will still run tomorrow? That is the logic of people who do not

understand that what counts in calculating the value of a machine is not its purchasing price but its lifetime cost.

i) In my country, if a person is about to be arrested, he will first ask the policeman to identify himself, and then for an arrest warrant. The officer will then inform the arrested person of his rights: how to contest his arrest in court, and how to be careful about what he admits. In court, the chances of the government winning a case are statistically slimmer than those of an individual defendant. If there has been intimidation - one never hears of torture - the case will be thrown out and the policemen involved persecuted in many ways, including by the media. Basic human rights are also guaranteed for foreigners, Muslim or not. Muslims can sue, and win, in order to be allowed to build mosques and to call to prayer from the minaret. They can sue, and win, in order to exempt girls from co-educational sports. Muslim women can sue, and win, against employers who object to their wearing an Islamic dress. I wonder whether this description would fit any of the Muslim countries, except perhaps Malaysia.

j) In my country, as in virtually all western countries, there are regular political elections where religious parties are admitted. There is no need for international observers. The ballot boxes are empty when brought in. Nobody dares to buy votes. The ballots are counted by representatives of all the parties right in the election bureau, not by officials at the Ministry of the Interior. Considering that there are always potential voters who are absent, sick or deceased, there is never an election turnout of 99%. The losing government makes room for the newly elected one. I leave it to you to judge which other countries follow such procedures.

- IV -

If you remember how critical I was vis-à-vis the West just a little earlier and how appreciative I have been of the same West right now, you may wonder whether I have been talking about the same phenomenon. Well, I have. The Occident is simply a very varied combination of what is terribly wrong and what is wonderfully right. Therefore, Muslims must not treat the Occident as an alternative, take it or leave it. To reject or to copy is easy. To choose is difficult. But we have to be selective, given what I have described so far.

In making the right choice, one difficulty is that seemingly innocuous gadgets – such as a car or a mobile telephone - may have far-reaching ideological or moral consequences. Therefore, when you reach Western technology with a finger, you may be seized by the entire hand. In part, but only in part, this is so because western technology grew out of a specific civilisation with its specific irreligious and amoral assumptions. The car represents the fundamental freedom to which Western man aspires, including freedom from observation by parents. The mobile telephone realises the dream of uninterrupted accessibility. But it also obscures whether a wife is at home or not when her husband calls her. Some machines are constructed in such a way that they must always run, which implies that men must service their technical servant around the clock, *Ramadan* or not, prayer time or not.

A second difficulty Muslims encounter in the West results from the fact that Islam is not only a religion but also a civilisation. It does not matter much if one lives in the Muslim world unless, in accordance with the true Wahhabi spirit, one tries to eliminate certain innovations which have been absorbed by Muslim societies and become customary, such as the cult of Muslim "saints" which developed around their shrines: e.g. the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab in Cairo and those in the outskirts of Damascus. In the West, the problem is different. Here, the Muslims have to decide whether what they do or are asked to do is Islamic, and if so, whether it forms part of their religion or only of Muslim culture. If it is a question of religion, we cannot and will not compromise. Therefore, when shopping for food, we spend an extraordinary amount of time checking whether ingredients in packages of dried soup contain pork. We will continue to fight for the right to *halal* slaughtering and for the right to bury our dead our way. This may seem to be of secondary importance, like the *adhan*, too. But once we start compromising where the *Shari'a* is concerned we descend a slippery slope. Where is the end of giving in? No Islamic dress for women? No fasting during military manoeuvres? No prayer at the work place? Some Western governments indeed hope that the immigrant Muslim population - now 2.7 million in Germany, for instance - will assimilate to a point where they pose as few problems as Christian workers from Spain or Italy. If this would happen, the Muslims would have lost their identity and thereby their chance of contributing something essential to cure

Western cultural shortcomings. Our policy must be one not of assimilation but of normalisation. Muslims do not have to disappear from sight in order to be accepted with their right to be different. On the other hand, we can compromise in areas which are merely products of civilisation or which concern the non-binding parts of the *Sunna*. Thus, we need not eat from a mat on the floor, or clean our teeth with a *miswak* if there is water, a toothbrush and toothpaste. We can eat with a knife and a fork, with both hands, since that way we are not touching food with the left hand. We do not have to wear a *galabiyya* or a *thaub*. Nor do we have to sprinkle our language with Arabic words. In other terms, we do not have to turn into an Arab of the seventh century AD in order to be a good Muslim. Islam is not an Arab religion or a religion for Arabs only. According to Islamic *fiqh*, as Muslims in the West we are allowed, even obliged, to abide by the local law, as long as it permits us to fulfil our basic religious duties. Muslims always acted that way when they had to live outside of *Dar al-Islam*. The presence of Islam in foreign lands has always been an advantage for our religion. Today, Muslims in the West can even do Islam an enormous service by helping it to rediscover and revitalise its democratic heritage.

The *Khulafa ar-rashidun* were elected, each one by a different method: in the case of Abu Bakr there had been an open debate on whether the first *Khalifa* should be from the *ansar* or from the *muhajirun*, and whether it should be Abu Bakr or 'Umar. Nowhere in the world had rulers been chosen so democratically at such early times. Muslims should therefore not only participate in Western elections, they should accept election processes as part of the Islamic heritage. Also, Muslims can nowadays understand that *Shura* as a consultation between the government and the population at large requires parliamentary representation and should lead to results which are binding on the government. This, too, is part of the Islamic heritage. We may recall that before the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (Peace be upon Him), against his own misgivings, abided by the majority decision about how to defend Medina.

I fully understand the misgivings attached to the term "democracy", given its ideological claim about the "sovereignty" of people, not of Allah - and also because of the role Western democracies played during the era of colonialism. If the word is not acceptable, let us

speak, like Shaykh Nahnah in Algeria, of "*shurakratiyya*". What counts is that we Muslims, in the West, like the modern Egyptian and Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood and the al-Nahda movement in Tunisia with its Shaykh Ghannoushi, come out strongly in favour of mechanisms which would allow the periodical renewal of governments and their control while in office, i.e. democracy in the original sense of the word.

- V -

I mentioned that Muslims have something important to contribute to the future of the West by helping it to overcome the moral and societal crises in which it finds itself. I am fully convinced that the West will either learn from Islam to honour again some of the most basic values which have been only recently forgotten there, or will collapse in turmoil. You can live against the divine order of things some of the time, but not all of the time. Let me highlight twelve potential contributions Islam can offer - not for the greening but for the healing of the West:

1. The West is suffering from racial prejudice almost everywhere. Islam has not managed to eliminate that vice entirely. But there is no other religion which has done so well in combating racism. Islam is a colour-blind religion if ever there was one.
2. The West, in spite of the Christian commandment of "loving one's neighbour as oneself", definitely suffers from a coldness of social relations. Some people do not even have contact with their neighbours. The Muslim *umma* and Muslims in the West demonstrate the very warmth, friendliness and readiness to help that Western children miss very much.
3. Young Western people hate hierarchies in every field, including their job, their church, and their family. Islam is pluralistic and does not even have sacraments which a clergy might administer. No Pope in Islam. Without any possibility for intercession, directly facing Allah on his prayer rug, a Muslim is the most emancipated believer one can imagine. And emancipation is "in"!
4. The West cherishes rationality. It is indeed dogmas such as Original Sin, the Trinity, and Divine Incarnation which set Islam apart as the most rational of all religions. Is it not the only one whose Holy Book constantly urges people to think, observe, and reflect?

5. Muslims are naturally sober people, always ready to appear before their Lord or to drive drunken people home after a party. In view of the addiction prevailing in the West, Muslims are the only hope for drug-infested city quarters, be it in Los Angeles or in Johannesburg.

6. No society and no state can survive for long the breakdown of the family. If the family disintegrates, society will disintegrate. In a region where only homosexuals seem to fight for the survival of marriage as an institution (that is, for themselves) the Muslim goal of protection of the family becomes essential.

7. Western women seek to defend their dignity. In their process of emancipation, by competing with men and copying them, they may have gained job openings and economic independence. But they did not manage to protect their dignity. Women in the West remain sex objects as much as ever, as any beauty contest will demonstrate. Against that background, Muslim women demonstrate how to protect their female dignity effectively.

8. Western people are constantly stressed and in need of psychiatric help. Prayer, a Muslim's regular link with God, is much more effective in healing the modern man's feelings of loneliness or alienation.

9. As Western societies are ageing, much capital is now held by widows and the saturated capitalist system is in danger of losing its vitality. Security is valued highest, and there is insurance against every possible risk, including the risk of being blessed with a child. Islam helps to protect and maintain the entrepreneurial spirit by insisting that capital be used not for fixed returns but in a profit-and-loss sharing modality.

10. At the same time, Islam can reacquaint the West with its long-obscured aim of putting the interest of man at the centre of economic policy, demanding that social justice and human dignity be given priority over other economic targets.

11. Western people are becoming more and more conscious of the risks involved in eating the wrong kinds of food. They may discover that the Muslims have been right all along in refusing the unhealthy meat of pigs.

12. In their growing concern for health based on the control of weight and on dietary principles, Western people might discover Islam and its pillar the *Ramadan* as a very modern thing indeed.

These are twelve individual contributions which Muslims can make towards the healing of western society. Any single one may not have

much impact but adopting these Muslim beliefs and attitudes in their totality would amount to a social and moral revolution. However, one may argue that some of these features are not exclusively Muslim. That is true, but the de-Christianisation of Europe - not of the United States- has reached a point where Christianity no longer has any chance of bringing about the moral revolution necessary to save the West itself. Nor can any artificial "religion" like modern Shamanism do it. Only a partial Islamisation of the West could turn the steering wheel sufficiently, driving the West away from its present course towards disaster. What now remains questionable is only whether or not the patient, the West, will swallow the pills on its night table. I leave it to you to guess.

THE ROLES OF ISLAM IN HISTORY, CULTURE AND
CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS: A VIEW FROM ISTANBUL

Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu

Lecture given at the meeting of the Ford Foundation (U.S.A.)
held in Istanbul on 11 June 1994

THE ROLES OF ISLAM IN HISTORY, CULTURE AND CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS: A VIEW FROM ISTANBUL

To reflect on the roles of Islam in world history, culture and contemporary affairs from the perspective of Istanbul is indeed a challenging exercise. Istanbul is perhaps one of the few cities in the world where symbolically speaking, history has put a whole civilization process in a nutshell.

The two thousand five hundred years' urban history of Istanbul cannot easily accommodate Babylon, Carthage and Constantinople. In five centuries the Ottoman capital ruled in many ways. The city has played a world history. With this in mind, I thought it might be stimulating to dwell on those aspects of Istanbul which have shaped the contributions of Islam to the development and dissemination of human knowledge and culture. This will also give a perspective on past relations and differences between Islam and other religions. After that I would also like to address some of the major issues which have a bearing on the wings of Islam in the world at the present time.

As a historian of science and culture, I have to emphasize, among all the particular features of Istanbul, its multicultural character. After being the capital cities of the Roman and Byzantine Empires, Istanbul became the Ottoman capital, which was considered by Muslims as the third holy city after Mecca, Medina, and Al-Quds. As the seat of the Caliphate, the religious leadership of the Muslim world, Istanbul came first chronologically, after Damascus under the Umayyads and Baghdad under the Abbasids. As the capital city of the Ottoman Empire from 1453 onwards, it was the political and cultural core of the empire for over three centuries when Ottoman power was at its peak until the beginning of the twentieth century. Developments that occurred in Istanbul during these three centuries have shaped the history of the

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The two thousand five hundred years' known history of Istanbul mirror several encounters between cultures and civilisations. Its five centuries as the Ottoman capital reflect in many ways the roles Islam has played in world history. With this in mind, I thought it might be stimulating to dwell on those aspects of Istanbul which best reflect the contributions of Islam to the development and dissemination of human knowledge and culture. This will also give a perspective on past relations and crossovers between Islam and other civilisations. After that, I would also like to address some of the major issues which have a bearing on the image of Islam in the world in the present time.

As a historian of science and culture, I tend to emphasise, among all the particular features of Istanbul, its multicultural character. After being the capital cities of the Roman and Byzantine Empires, Istanbul became the Ottoman capital, which was considered by Muslims as the fourth holy city after Mecca, Medina, and Al-Quds. As the seat of the Caliphate, the religious leadership of the Muslim world, Istanbul comes third, chronologically, after Damascus under the Umayyads and Baghdad under the Abbasids. As the capital city of the Ottoman Empire from 1453 onwards, it was the political and cultural core of the empire from times when Ottoman power was at its peak until the beginning of the twentieth century. Developments that occurred in Istanbul during these centuries reflect the political and cultural history of the entire empire. The architectural and literary heritage of Istanbul represents the juxtaposition of different cultures and traditions. I am sure all of you will have noticed that old districts of Istanbul reflect this multiplicity of cultural and social traditions. In this sense, Istanbul encapsulates the spirit of tolerance and pluralism which marked the Ottoman Islamic approach to world affairs. As soon as Istanbul was conquered by the Turks, Sultan Mehmed spoke to the people gathered in Saint Sophia, telling them to return quietly to their homes,

that everybody's life and properties were under protection, and that they could continue to practise their own religion and their trades. With the authority given by Islamic law, the Conqueror announced that the "Peoples of the Book", that is the adherents of the divinely revealed religions, would preserve their special status under the protection of the state.¹ A new Patriarch was elected. The Conqueror made Gennadios II, the new Patriarch, the civil as well as the religious head of the Orthodox *millet* ("nation"), as it would be termed under the nationhood system, and conferred upon him the rank of *beylerbeyi* in the Ottoman official hierarchy.² The Greek historian Kritovoulos, a contemporary of Gennadios, narrates that the Sultan "made him Patriarch and High Priest of the Christians, and entrusted him among many other rights and privileges with the rule of the church and all its power and authority, no less than that enjoyed previously under emperors".³ Starting from those times, Istanbul became the model city of peaceful coexistence among Muslims, Christians, and Jews. As a result of this policy, these communities preserved their identities as *millets* despite the centuries-long Islamic rule. Because of the freedom of action that the Ottoman state granted to non-Muslims, those large religious groupings acquired the character of communities which enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy. The first group to acquire this status were probably the Orthodox Christians, which included Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians and Christian Arabs. The religious leader of the community was its representative in legal and administrative matters and vis-à-vis the state.⁴ This system assuring peaceful coexistence between the different *millets* was disrupted when nationalist movements emerged among them during the period of decline of the Ottoman empire. After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the status and rights of non-Muslims living on Turkish territory were

¹ M. Süreyya Şahin, *Fener Patrikhanesi ve Türkiye*, Ötüken, İstanbul 1980, pp. 37-45; *Ayin Tarihi*, Oct. 1923, p.137.

² Sir Harry Luke, *The Old Turkey and the New*, Geoffrey Bles, London 1955, p.15.

³ *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, Benjamin Brause and Bernard Lewis (eds.), Holmes and Meier, New York 1982, Vol. I, p. 78.

⁴ M. Akif Aydın, "Osmanlı'da hukuk", *Osmanlı Devleti ve Medeniyeti Tarihi*, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (ed.), IRCICA, İstanbul 1994, Vol. I, pp. 424-5.

determined by secular laws in accordance with international principles of human rights.

Everybody will remember 1992 as the quincentenary of the discovery of America, which was celebrated world-wide. That glamorous number, five hundred, also marks the anniversary of another journey, one that began from the same place but went in the opposite direction, towards the Eastern Mediterranean. It was not a search for a new world, but a search for tolerance. After the fall of Granada, which put an end to eight centuries of Muslim rule in Spain, Jews fleeing an environment of fanaticism and persecution where there was no religious tolerance at all found refuge in Ottoman lands. From the beginning of its history, the Ottoman Empire had been virtually the only safe place for Jews escaping the persecution and prejudice endemic in different parts of Europe. In subsequent centuries, Jewish scholars and scientists contributed to the development of Ottoman science. Some held influential positions in the Ottoman Palace as diplomats, physicians, scientists and scholars.⁵ Let me cite another more recent example from Istanbul to illustrate the equality of treatment given to non-Muslims. Upon the orders of Sultan Abdulhamid II, who established the *Darülaceze* (the house of the destitute) in 1877-78, the complex was completed with the construction of a mosque, a church and a synagogue close to the main buildings. Many similar examples could be cited.

Istanbul in particular and the Islamic world in general benefited in many ways from this policy of multicultural coexistence. Science, literature, arts, crafts and techniques were enriched with a variety of multicultural influences. Tolerance and understanding towards other cultures and religions was the overall policy of the empire on its entire territory. This policy derives from the Islamic order to achieve peace, justice and harmony in relations among peoples. The Turks made this

⁵ Findings of my research on the contributions of scholars and scientists who came from Andalusia to Ottoman Turkey were communicated in detail in my paper "Travel to the East in its quincentenary: the Andalusian contribution to Ottoman science" presented at the University of California in 1992. The full text was published in Turkish in Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *Büyük Cihad'dan Frenk Fodulluğuna*, İletişim Yay., İstanbul 1996, pp. 85-137.

principle their rule and guide in internal and international affairs. In fact, all true religions call for peace and understanding between peoples and communities irrespective of religious, racial, national and cultural differences.

Before leaving the subject of scientific advances, let me mention a few facts about mutual contributions between Islam and the west. Ancient Greek philosophy played an important role in the advancement of science and learning in Islam. During the first five centuries of Islamic science, the period known as the "Golden Age" of Islam, works of science and philosophy from Ancient Greece were transferred to the Islamic world. Throughout the Middle Ages, this scientific knowledge was enriched by the contributions of Muslim scholars and philosophers. Thus, the knowledge that was later transmitted to the European Renaissance carried elements of both Greek and Islamic culture. As is well known, the Islamic contribution to the European Renaissance was transferred to the Christian West during the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth century by means of Arabic books of classical Islam and through Spain, Sicily, Italy, and other areas of contact between East and West, including trade and pilgrimage routes, the Crusades, etc. The Islamic contribution in fields such as medicine, philosophy and natural sciences is very evident in the translations made from Arabic into Latin and the names of Muslim scientists and scholars mentioned in western works of that time. Some studies⁶ in the history of culture have shown that in addition to these contributions, another movement which has long been considered of exclusively western origin has its roots in Islam. This movement, scholasticism, is that of the school guilds of the Middle Ages. The studies establish with firm evidence the influence of the *madrasa* system on the scholastic institutions of Europe. Furthermore, there are new research findings on the influence of Islam not only in the aforementioned fields of science but also in the field of letters - *adab* - in the framework of humanities studies.⁷

⁶ See especially George Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West, with special reference to scholasticism*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1990 and W. Montgomery Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*, Islamic Surveys 9, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1972.

⁷ Makdisi, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

As seen by Europeans, the historical base of western culture essentially originated in the southern part of Europe. Although it is impossible to distinguish all the individual elements that contributed to the creation of western culture, it is known that many of the roots of this culture can be traced back to the influence of travellers and migrants from distant eastern and southern countries who introduced non-European elements into that culture. It is also demonstrable that elements of European culture, in turn, were exported to many parts of the world by traders and religious missions as well as scientists and scholars. Without doubt, colonisation played the largest part in spreading the influence of western culture, particularly from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. From a historical perspective, it can be observed that interactions between different cultures have created mutual influences. The Islamic and the Western worlds interacted in many fields and in many ways, starting from the Middle Ages and continuing in modern times.

Therefore Islam should not be considered by Westerners as an alien culture and society. Despite these facts, there has always been and there still are misunderstandings between Islam and the West, and they may now be growing. A recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the contribution of the Islamic civilisation to European culture states that "Islam has suffered and is still suffering from misrepresentation, for example through hostile or oriental stereotypes, and there is very little awareness in Europe either of the importance of Islam's past contribution or of Islam's potentially positive role in European society today. Historical errors, educational eclecticism and the over-simplified approach of the media are responsible for this situation".⁸ With reference to intolerance and distrust towards Islam, the same recommendation observes that "... It must be recognised that intolerance and distrust unfortunately exist on both sides, Islamic and non-Islamic".⁹ It is true that both in the West and in the Islamic world there are people who believe that incompatibility and enmity are more likely than mutual respect and cooperation. It is hard to understand how, in the present age of mass communication and mass travel, Islam and the West can fear and suspect each other so much. Some Western writers suggest the

⁸ Recommendation 1162 (1991) adopted on 19 September 1991, Article 6.

⁹ Recommendation 1162 (1991), Article 8.

inevitability of conflict and confrontation between Islam and the West. The hypothesis formulated under the label "the clash of civilisations", according to which Islam is a threat to the West and the conflicts of the future will be conflicts between civilisations, is devoid of justification. It is also fraught with danger, as such an idea can sow discord among civilisations, all the more so because civilisations being permanent entities, conflicts among them would also be permanent, and therefore disastrous for the future of mankind. The concept of civilisation is eternal because it is inherent in the identity and character of nations and communities. Unlike the concept of ideology, that of civilisation is neither hypothetical nor transient. Therefore such theories, which may endanger the future of civilisations by strengthening antagonisms, should be rejected. Instead, all communities of the world should endeavour to promote dialogue between themselves and disseminate the principles of tolerance.

We are witnessing, in more than one region of the world, tragic examples of the denial of these principles, translated into denials of basic human rights. Atrocities committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown how deep-seated antagonisms and hatred are. Whereas for centuries members of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Bulgarian Church, and the Serbian Church lived together peacefully with Muslims in Europe and the Balkans, such an atmosphere of brotherhood and tolerance no longer prevails in the Balkans today. If the Ottoman State, at a time when it had the greatest political, territorial, and military power, had pursued a policy of Islamisation, Turkification, and annihilation of people of different origins under its rule, or a policy of colonisation similar to that practised by some European states did in lands they conquered in Africa, Asia and the Americas, then today the Balkans would not be inhabited by diverse ethnic and religious communities. In fact, Islam gave freedom to these communities not only in their religious practices but also in their language, culture and social traditions.

All this goes in line with the understanding that Christianity, Judaism and Islam have similar beliefs: the monotheistic approach to divinity, the Hereafter, the Judgement, and moral responsibilities which lead to similar sets of ethical norms. Despite this, there is a popular misconception that Islam is associated with extremism. In fact,

however, extremism is not a characteristic of Islam. Fanatical ideological, religious, ethnic, and racial movements may come from the East and the West, from the North and the South. It is important to distinguish between those who practise their religion devoutly and extremists who make use of faith and devotion for political ends. If the peoples of the world continue to perceive of each other as a sources of problems, it seems unlikely that *convivencia* can ever be achieved.

The ideal state of international relations would of course be one wherein principles of global peace and understanding are applied universally. According to the Muslims' belief, Islam recognises the other divine religions and complements them. Islamic principles are directed to the achievement of well-being for the entire humanity and not for Muslims alone. Therefore, it is desirable that such concepts as toleration, plurality and multiculturalism, inherent in Islam, be generalised to the benefit of the entire mankind. On the other hand, the West for its part has an elaborate system of norms and values. In our time, the technological lead and the ensuing economic and military power of the West have usually been accompanied by the dissemination of the ideas, value judgements and manners typical of the West. Indeed, the Western way of life is exported to other parts of the world, as manifested in business, administration, consumption patterns, arts and even intellectual and leisure activities in areas where Western culture spreads. Mass communication, as well as the dominant role that international organisations have assumed since World War II, have contributed to the expansion of the Western system of values. The United Nations and other international regulatory mechanisms have helped in spreading concepts of human rights, freedoms and liberties. However, it is important to admit that there are a considerable number of people in the Islamic countries and other regions outside of the western world who fear that the expanding system may constitute a threat to their own way of life.

It is also important to admit that principles of democracy, basic human rights and freedoms, and other values which originated in the West are not always respected fully and objectively. The way in which international affairs are run suggests that standards are not always observed. Profit maximisation and expected returns seem to be the criteria applied not only in economic but in political decisions as well. To cite two examples, the approach of the Western world to the wars

in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan have thrown serious doubt on the extent of its commitment to the concept of universal human rights. It is rather ironic that this happened soon after the dissolution of most communist regimes, at a time when the concept of democracy was expected to acquire wider applicability. If this concept is not conceived and applied universally in the region of its origin, one may question whether it can have any validity or applicability on a global scale. Furthermore, while disseminating its values, norms and concepts, the West also spreads problems related to the question of their suitability and applicability in different geographical contexts. It can be deduced from this reasoning that when it comes to the application of moral values in real life none of the cultures that make up the world community displays an exemplary performance. Sets of values and rules of conduct are in a state of flux in every society. The Western system of values emphasises individualism, freedom of thought and of conscience, encouraging spiritual achievement as well as economic progress. If these principles were applied properly on a global scale, then the system, by definition, would accommodate a plurality of beliefs.

One may ask whether the Islamic world for its part makes the necessary efforts to better acquaint others with its culture and its outlook on world affairs. The Islamic world has been increasingly active on this score for the last couple of decades. Some international organisations and academic circles of the Muslim world have developed activity programs to carry out objective research on the Islamic civilisation and disseminate its findings world-wide. The Islamic Conference Organisation, which has 51 member states¹⁰, is a representative example of an organised international effort to establish better relations with other cultures around the world. The OIC aims to foster understanding and communication among Islamic countries and with other peoples of the world. Its approach to international issues is conducive to solving conflicts, tensions and disagreements. In most cases, it is in harmony with world opinion as regards international affairs. I must add that the OIC is the only organisation in the Islamic world to have an international character in the proper sense of the term, because it is the only one to have intergovernmental status and thereby the authority to speak on behalf

¹⁰ The number of OIC Member States is 55 at the time of publication.

of its member states. In the OIC framework, the task of contributing towards fostering intercultural dialogue in the world is entrusted to IRCICA, the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, of which I have been Director General since its establishment in 1980. Here I can only say very briefly that a major objective of our research, publications, and many other types of activities at the Centre is to contribute to positive interaction and constructive dialogue between Islam and other cultures, and in particular, between Islam and the West. That objective is also reflected in the choice of Istanbul as the location of the Centre, where it is well placed to draw knowledge from its immediate surroundings and disseminate them in the world, and *vice versa*. I can say that we have obtained many promising results; but whether it is possible to have satisfactory achievements on this score on a global scale will depend on whether peoples of this world are favourably disposed towards each other. In other words, it will depend on whether we choose to maintain our relations around such concepts as "conflicts along bloody borders", or, instead, agree with Kipling when he says:

"Oh, East is East, and West is West ,
And never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and sky stand presently
At God's great Judgement Seat ,
But, there is neither East and West border,
Nor breed, nor birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
Though they come from the ends of the Earth!"

or with Goethe when he says:

"Those who know themselves and others
Will recognise that the Orient and the Occident
Cannot be separated anymore."

Meeting of the leaders of the different faiths represented in Turkey held on the occasion of the visit of Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, First Lady of the United States of America, to IRCICA (28 March 1996)



Mrs. Hillary R. Clinton and her daughter Ms. Chelsea Clinton were briefed by Director General Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu about IRCICA's activities



First row, from left: IRCICA Director General Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu; H. A. H. the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I; H. E. Grand Rabbi David Asseo; Prof. Dr. Mehmet Aydın, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, 9 Eylül University, İzmir; H. E. the Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop Filuksinos Yusuf Çetin; Mr. Francis Ricciardone, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of the U.S.A., Ankara



First row, from left: H. E. the Chaldean Archbishop Monsignor Paul Karataş; H. E. Monsignor Georges Marovitch, General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference in Turkey; H. B. the Patriarch of the Armenians in Turkey, the late Karekin II [passed away on 10 March 1998]; H. E. the Grand Mufti of İstanbul Mr. Selahattin Kaya; Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç, member of the Turkish Parliament and ex-President of Religious Affairs in Turkey; Mrs. H. R. Clinton



Left to right: Monsignor Georges Marovitch; the Armenian Patriarch Karekin II; Mrs. Clinton; Prof. Dr. İhsanoğlu; Archbishop Yusuf Çetin

the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,
of inter-faith dialogue



Thank you for your work on
behalf of understanding,
coexistence and peace.
Hillary Rodham Clinton

Mrs. Clinton signed the Visitors' Book:

"Thank you for your work on behalf of
understanding, coexistence and peace".



Left to right: The Armenian Patriarch Karekin II; the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I; Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu; Mrs. Hillary R. Clinton; Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç; Grand Mufti Selahattin Kaya; Grand Rabbi David Asseo; Prof. Dr. Mehmet Aydın

**H. R. H. Prince Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,
a patron and promoter of inter-faith dialogue**



**H. R. H. Prince Hassan bin Talal visited IRCICA twice,
on 10 July 1982 and 10 April 1984 respectively,
and received information about the Centre's activities**

The visit of UNESCO Director General Mr. Federico Mayor
to IRCICA (3 October 1995)



UNESCO Director General Mr. Federico Mayor and Asst. Director General Mrs. F. Fournier met with Prof. İhsanoğlu and visited the Centre's various departments



The visit of Cardinal Francis Arinze, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Vatican, to IRCICA (5 October 1995)

Cardinal Francis Arinze was accompanied by: H. E. the Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul Archbishop Louis Pelâtre; Monsignor Georges Marovitch, General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference in Turkey; Prof. Dr. Niyazi Öktem, Dean, Faculty of International Relations, Galatasaray University, Istanbul



Rabbi Arthur Schneier, Chairman of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, New York, visited IRCICA, accompanied by Archbishop Theodore Melarrick and Mr. Daniel Smith, Vice Consul of the U.S.A. (3 January 1992)



Meeting of the International Commission on the Balkans at IRCICA (31 October 1995)



Left to right: Mr. Leo Tindemans, former Prime Minister of Belgium and Commission Chairman; Mrs. Simone Veil, former President of the European Parliament; IRCICA Director General Prof. Dr. İhsanoğlu; Mr. Acar Tanlak, senior researcher, IRCICA; Mr. Dana H. Allin, Deputy Director of Aspen Institute (Berlin); Mr. Orhan Koloğlu, historian and writer

Ambassador Ingmar Karlsson's
lecture at IRCICA (9 May 1996)



Prof. Dr. Hajo Funke (at right)
spoke of "Bosnia: A challenge for
Christian- and Muslim-influenced
States in Europe" (24 May 1996)



Prof. Dr. Bassam Tibi's lecture
(14 April 1995)



Ambassador Dr. Murad W.
Hofmann gave two lectures at
IRCICA (27 October 1995 and
9 May 1998)





This book reflects a variety of approaches to some key questions regarding the present state and future prospects of the relationship between the Islamic world and the Western world. The papers collected in this book are the texts of lectures given at IRCICA by guest speakers, and papers and addresses delivered by the Director General of IRCICA on various occasions. The authors communicate their knowledge and experience concerning particular aspects of the theme which are part of their field of research or their assessment and evaluation of the subject from a general perspective in the light of developments in the 1990s.

Dialogue between people from different cultures and civilisations appears to be the most effective means to build a peaceful world for mankind in the new multicultural global order. In our time, establishing a durable, positive and productive dialogue is a highly challenging but vital task in which academic institutions, international organisations, political scientists and scholars around the world are already engaged. The intercultural debates carried out in various forums around the world are in themselves components of the dialogue process, as are the writings contained in this book.