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RELIGION AND STATE

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In the Name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

**“My success is not but through Allah. Upon him I
have relied, and to Him I return”**

(the Quran, ١١: ٨٨)

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon the last of all prophets and messenger, our master Prophet Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullah and upon his family, companions and those who follow them sincerely up to the Day of Judgment!

The relation between "Religion" and "State" is not enmity and must not be. In fact, the right religiosity contributes to the building and stability of modern democratic states as based on deeply established national foundations. Likewise, the rightly-guided state never clashes with the pure human nature that seeks the right faith. Those who may think that a conflict will inevitably arise between the religion and the state do not understand the concept of religion or that of state in the right manner.

The source of this misconception is neither the religion nor the state, but the misunderstanding of the nature of religion or state, or even them both or the relation between them.

As usually seen in titles of short stories, a title of one story is given to the whole collection; I then chose the title of the book to be “Religion and State” for two reasons: first, the most important article of the book addresses the dialectic relationship between the religion and the state to remove all relevant falsities. Second, other articles of the book explore different areas and issues about the right understanding of religion and the true establishment of the state. I hope the book presents vivid religious and national experiences worthy of readers' attention and time.

I wrote it in lucid expressions apart from rhetorical techniques and complicated structure. If I did it rightly, it is but Allah's grace and support, or else I am to be excused for I have did my best. It is Allah whom we seek to please; He

is Sufficient to fulfill our needs and He is the best Disposer
of all affairs!

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Religion and State

The rightly-guided state guarantees the right practicing of religion. The relation between "Religion" and "State" is not enmity and must not be so. In fact, the right religiosity contributes to the building and stability of modern democratic states as based on deeply established national foundations. Likewise, the rightly-guided state never clashes with the pure human nature that seeks the right faith. However, we shall differentiate between practicing religion and extremism. Practicing religion leads to tolerance, mercy, honesty, moral ethics, and peaceful existence with oneself and with the other, which we all encourage. Extremism and terrorism call for corruption, mischievous consequences and destruction. They violate blood and properties, which the incurable disease in need of strict combat and eradicate it entirely. In this difficult situation, it is highly important to differentiate between the

right religion and the terroristic thinking. We know for sure that the conflict between truth and falsehood is eternal and eventually the truth shall overcome the falsehood.

Allah, the Almighty, says, “Rather, We dash the truth upon falsehood, and it destroys it, and thereupon it departs. And for you is destruction from that which you describe” (the Quran, ٢١: ١٨). Like the good word and the bad word, the truth and the falsehood stand. The Quran states, “Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky? (٢٤) It produces its fruit all the time, by permission of its Lord. And Allah presents examples, for the people that perhaps they will be reminded. (٢٥) And the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, not having any stability” (the Quran, ١٤: ٢٤-٢٦).

Finally, the truth and its advocates will prove victorious; Allah, the Almighty, says, “And Our word [i.e., decree] has already preceded for Our servants, the messengers, (١٧١) [That] indeed, they would be those given victory (١٧٢) And [that] indeed, Our soldiers [i.e., the believers] will be those who overcome” (the Quran, ٣٧: ١٧١-١٧٣); “O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet” (the Quran, ٤٧: ٧); “ It is incumbent upon Us to support the believers” (the Quran, ٣٠: ٤٧). We defend a fair case; a case of religion and nation. The case of the right religion, seated on the true humanity, that encourages all means to construction, development, work, production and human happiness, security and stability. As such, all calls to corruption and destruction go against all religions, noble values and right nature.

Religion and state never conflict; they both establish the foundations of equal citizenship in rights and duties. We shall all work for the welfare of our nation and of humankind entirely and wish for others the same we wish for ourselves. Religions reflect mercy, humanity and kindness. Religion and state encourage us to build social solidarity and let no person suffer hunger, deprivation, nakedness, displacement or need. They both motivate us to work and production, excellence and perfection. Likewise, they discourage unemployment, idleness, terrorism, negligence, corruption, destruction, sedition, treason and betrayal.

We affirm that those who may think that a conflict will inevitably arise between the religion and the state do not understand the concept of religion or that of state in the right manner. The source of this misconception is neither the religion nor the state, but the misunderstanding of the

nature of religion or state, or even misunderstanding them both or the relation between them.

However, it is necessary to respect the national constitution and laws in full submission to the state of laws. No parallel authority shall arise within the state or claim rights equal to the state regardless of the source of these authority. It is only one flag under which we all stand. No foundation, group or body may bear a flag equal to that of the state. It is a danger that would destroy both religion and the state.

Islam in a Nutshell!

Like a piece of gold that, once cleansed and polished, brilliantly shines, Islam does shine everlastingly. It is only in need to remove the fogs and dust away. Like gemstones, Islam never rusts regardless of the passage of times and their implications, trials and vicissitudes. However, Islam suffered many harmful crises following the rise of extremists and violent groups like ISIS, Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, the Disgrace Front, the enemies of Bayt al-Maqdis, the hosts of Satan and the group of supporting destruction and ruins, which is falsely named the group of supporting the Sharia. All these mercenary groups advocate the powers of evils against Islam. Thanks to the sincere followers and scholars, Islam is able to overcome all obstacles and express its greatness, tolerant civilization and pure humanity.

The essence of Islam suits the pure nature of human creation, for the Islamic Sharia follows the benefits of humankind. It aims to bring about human welfare, safety, security and peace. Allah, the Almighty, says, “We have not sent you except as a mercy to humankind” (the Quran, ٢١: ١٠٧).” Evidently, He does not say “a mercy to Muslims or believers alone!” It is a mercy to all humankind.

As a way of life, Islam never permits harms. A true follower of Islam is the one who promotes peace and abstains from evils and offenses. Likewise, a true believer is that one in whose presence people feel safe about their lives, wealth, family and dignity. When asked about a practicing Muslim woman who fasts daytimes and keeps prayers at night but she is hurting her neighbors, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said “She is in hellfire!” The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, even said, “By Allah, s/he does not believe! By Allah, s/he does not believe! By Allah, s/he does not believe!” It was said, "Who is that, O Allah's Messenger?" He

said, "That person whose neighbor does not feel safe from his/her evil." He further said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt their neighbors."

Islam safeguards human dignity from the evils of backbiting, gossip, envy, hate, malicious suspicions, and denigration. The Lord says, "O you who believe, let not any people ridicule other people, for they may be better than they. Nor shall any women ridicule other women, for they may be better than they. Nor shall you mock one another, or call each other names; miserable indeed is the name of wickedness after attaining faith. And anyone who does not repent, then these are the transgressors. O you who believe, you shall avoid much suspicion, for some suspicion is sinful. And do not spy on one another, nor shall you backbite. Would any of you enjoy eating the flesh of his dead brother? You certainly would hate this. You shall observe Allah. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" (the Quran, ٤٩: ١١-١٢).

Likewise, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Do nurse mutual hate! Do not envy each other! Do not turn away from each other. Be humble slaves of Allah as sincere brothers [and sisters]. It is not for a Muslim to shun his brother for more than three nights.”

In Islam, all offensive acts are forbidden, including wrongdoing, cheating and monopoly, be they against Muslims or others. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, makes it clear that monopolizing foodstuff is decisively forbidden and one who does it has no excuse before Allah. Likewise, a location in which a person continues his/her day hungry causes all the inhabitants of that location to suffer the loss of Allah's blessings and providence. Indeed, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, declared many directions for social honesty, solidarity and security, such as his statements “Only a wrongdoer will exercise monopoly!” (Muslim in his authentic collection of Hadith); and “S/He who cheats is none of us” (Muslim in his authentic collection of Hadith).

The Islamic mercy equally applies to all animate and inanimate things. Once the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, asked repeatedly, "Who is the owner of this Camel? A young man from al-Ansar (the Arab indigenous inhabitants of Medina) came and said "This is mine, Messenger of Allah." He said "Don't you fear Allah about this beast which Allah has given in your possession. It has complained to me that you keep it hungry and load it heavily which fatigues it." It is the Islamic mercy to animals.

Islam also forbids all forms of corruption, destruction or mischief. It safeguards human dignity, life and wealth. Allah, the Almighty, says, "Do not spread corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered" (the Quran, ٧/٥٦) and "do not roam the earth as corruptors" (the Quran, ٢/٦٠). He also says, "Among the people are those whose words you admire in this worldly life, but Allah is witness as to what is in his heart, for he is the worst in opposition. If he gains power, he seeks to corrupt the earth and destroy its crops, and people's lineage.

Allah does not like corruption. If he is told, "Be conscientious of Allah," his pride leads to more sin. Hell shall be sufficient for him; what a miserable abode!" (the Quran, ٢/٢٠٤-٢٠٦).

In his advice to Mu'adh—Allah be pleased with him, Prophet Muhammad, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, forbade him all forms of evils, wrongdoings or violations. He said, "You will go to the people of the Book. First call them to testify that *'there is no true deity except Allah, that I am the Messenger of Allah.'* If they obey you, tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers during the day and night; and if they obey you, inform them that Allah has made zakah (fixed obligatory charity) obligatory upon them; that it should be collected from their rich and distributed among their poor; and if they obey you refrain from picking up (as a share of zakah) the best of their wealth. Beware of the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and Allah."

At last, the beliefs and teachings of Islam clearly indicate its universal justice and greatness. Despite the hostile attacks of enemies, the true followers of Islam are able to remove the fogs and clear doubts through their articulate elucidation and deep perception of the Islamic higher objectives and ultimate ends backed by a true understanding of realities, availabilities and priorities. As such, they can do their duty towards this religion and deliver its message of peace and progress to all human beings for the achievement of welfare and happiness for the entire humanity.

The sacred text and the human thought

There is certainly some sort of confusion that must be cleared, and ambiguity that must be disambiguated, in the current state of conflict and disharmony between some scholars of religion and some knowledgeable elites. I cannot understand this confrontation, as I think that the scholar must be knowledgeable, and the knowledgeable must entertain a certain degree of communication with, and comprehension of, religious knowledge even at its basic level and its major issues

A lot of this confusion can be eliminated if we all clearly distinguished between the sacred, well-established and irrefutable text, that is, the Qur'anic and the Prophetic texts, which is directly delivered by the Prophet (PBUH) on the one hand, and human inheritance deduced from the Qur'anic and prophetic texts, on the other, and built upon the understanding, commenting, deduction, or explanation of them, which allows for controlled reconsideration due to change of time, place, or circumstances. What has been properly given by scholars as Fatwa in a certain time, may not be proper for our time and our realities, as matters change by the change of time, place, and circumstances of the Fatwa seeker himself. The scholars of Usul hold that Fatwa is restricted by four aspects: Time, place,

condition, and people. However, this human intellectual heritage can neither be presented nor applied to our current reality, as it was produced fourteen centuries ago, nor can we set up an intellectual life in the open space. The real problem of many fanatic groups is that they want to reproduce this heritage in general and establish a new sphere conforming to their terrorist adventures and extremist thought, on the basis that they are scholars similar to the past scholars. They forget or ignore the principles laid by the specialist scholars for giving Fatwa, or getting involved in Shari'a scholarship.

The enlightened scholars asserted that three tenets must be entertained by whomever wants to give Fatwa:

First: Acquiring the knowledge of Shari'a rulings from their acknowledged sources, as a devoted, specialist, thoughtful scholar.

Second: Knowing the state of affairs, so that the Fatwa-giver may not be in isolation from the realities, necessities, or the needs of his life, which are indispensable to the Fatwa-giver and the Fatwa-seeker.

Third, and most important: He must have a vision, in order that he can issue the proper Fatwa for the proper case, and avoid issuing irrelevant Fatwas for cases which he cannot comprehend.

For example, all scholars are unanimous that usury is prohibited, as Allah (Exalted be He) says: "Allah has allowed

trade and forbidden usury" (۲:۲۷۵). But the details of usury and relating it to a certain dealing of contemporary enterprises require from the Fatwa-giver to have deep knowledge of financial transactions, their rulings in Islamic sources of Shari'a, and to understand the minute differences between them, to be able to decide which of which is usury. He also must differentiate between the public dealings that benefit all the people, and the private that only benefit a closed group of people and creates casteism, which contribute to increasing the poverty of the poor, and richness of the rich. He also must entertain a good deal of discernment in order that he may attribute the right ruling to the right case. Therefore, the scholars of Usul and Fiqh were very accurate when they set the prerequisites for the Qualified scholar (Mujtahid), conditions for analogy and deduction, and other collective rules, on which the Mujtahid must base his opinion, whether they are agreed upon or differed about. This shows that the matter is in utter need to specialized scholars, and that Fatwa cannot be left without control to those who know and those who don't know.

If everyone devoted himself to that which he is proficient in, the mutual understanding would have been better, and the chances of meeting would have been bigger. In the past, our ancestors said: Whoever devotes himself to what doesn't concern him, wastes what should have concerned him.

Rights vs. Duties

It is no doubt that the right-for-duty principle is one of the most important principles of justice, which contribute to the reformation of societies. Rights and duties are reciprocated between parents and children, spouses, neighbors, friends, partners, citizens and their state, employees and employers, students and teachers. The Quranic and prophetic texts affirm this principle of reciprocity and call for due respect of rights and duties. For example, in respect of marital relations, Allah, the Almighty, says, “And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them” (the Quran, ٢: ٢٢٨). Likewise, Allah states in the Holy Hadith: “I will be against three persons on the Day of Resurrection:

- One who makes a covenant in My Name, but s/he proves treacherous.

- One who sells a free person (as a slave) and eats the price.
- One who employs a laborer and gets the full work done by him/her but does not pay him/her his wages” (Al-Bukhari).

Mu'adh Ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “I was a companion rider of the Prophet on the same mount. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, asked, "O Mu'adh! Do you know what Allah's right on His slaves is, and what the right of His slaves on Him is?" I replied, "Allah and His Messenger know better." He said, "Allah's right on His slaves is that they should worship Him alone and should not worship any besides Him. And slave's right on Allah is that He should not punish him who worships none besides Him” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Likewise, in his speech following the Battle of Siffeen, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Allah has imposed on you a

duty to obey me as I am in charge of your affairs and you have rights equal to the duties you owe to me. Indeed, the right is very easy to tell but is actually very hard to deliver in cases of dispute; each one has rights and duties equal to them. Shall any one have rights without duties, that will be Allah alone.”

Once some people asked an old farmer planting a reproductive shoot of a palm-tree whose fruits he is unlikely to see in his life: “Do you think that you would see its fruits?” In response, the farmer said, “Those before us planted and we reaped and now we plant for future generations to reap.” Do and finally you will get the equal reward of your actions.

The rule of work is "anyone who takes the wage will be called into account for the work due in return." The contract is binding for both contractors and the Lord commands us to fulfill our contracts and conventions “O you who have believed, fulfill the contracts” (the Quran, ۵: ۱).

Likewise, Allah warns us against dishonesty and betrayal of trusts, saying, “O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know [the consequence]” (the Quran, ٨: ٢٧). The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, encouraged us to perfect our works saying, “Indeed Allah likes that a worker perfects his/her work” (Abu Ya'la in his *musnad*).

The religion of Islam highly appreciates perfection, qualitative achievements and righteousness in openness and secrecy; a believer shall honor Allah—One Who never overlooks or sleeps, before other considerations related to human control and follow-up. The Quran speaks of Allah's encompassing and ever-present control as follows:

- “Allah—there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep” (the Quran, ٢: ٢٥٥)

- “Have you not considered that Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is on the earth? There is no private conversation three but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them – and no less than that and no more except that He is with them [in knowledge] wherever they are. Then He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah is, of all things, Knowing” (the Quran, ٥٨: ٧).
- “And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkness of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that is [written] in a clear record” (the Quran, ٦: ٥٩).
- Likewise, in his advice to his son, Luqman said, “O my son, indeed if it [i.e., a wrong] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth.

Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Acquainted” (the Quran, ٣١: ١٦).

To conclude, we have a pressing need to entrench the right-for-duty principle in all fields and relations of life, especially in work. True relationships cannot be unilateral taking the interests of one party only; there must be a balance between the two scales. A person shall fulfill duties to have their equal rights blessed with Allah.

The Key to happiness

Undoubtedly, happiness may have many keys. Some people perceive it to be in health, wealth, children, and/or authority. It is a fact that the forbidden is desirable. A person may be blessed with wealth, children, and even authority, yet s/he may suffer health problems which lead him to believe happiness lies in gaining back his health. Another may be blessed with health, wealth, and prestige, yet s/he cannot have children; such person perceives happiness to be exclusive to having a child who carries his name.

Another who is blessed with health and children but lacks wealth only perceives happiness in having wealth and a luxurious life. It is as if those people haven't realized that this life is an abode of toil. An intellectual once remarked, "Whoever seeks rest in this life has asked for something that hasn't been created yet, and has died without being blessed,

because Allah, Glorified is He, says, “We have created man for toil and trial” (the Quran, ٩٠: ٤).

Once, some litterateurs, writers, and intellectuals were asked to describe happiness in a manner corresponding with each respective profession. One of them concisely described happiness in a single sentence highlighting the key to true happiness. He wittingly said, “Happiness is contentment with what Allah decreed.” This sense is consistent with what our Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Be on guard against the unlawful and you shall be the most worshipping among the people, be satisfied with what Allah has decreed for you and you shall be the richest of the people, be kind to your neighbor and you shall be a [true] believer, love for the people what you love for yourself and you shall be a Muslim. And do not laugh too much, for indeed increased laughter kills the heart.” (Al-Tirmidhi). He also said, “He has succeeded who accepts Islam and is provided with what is sufficient and is

made content by Allah with what He bestowed upon him” (Muslim).

For example, Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, lost one of his dearest children during one of his journeys. During it, he was tried with a sickness in his leg that required amputating his leg from the knees down. His reaction was typical to what the Quran described as *gracious patience* featuring no discontentment. All he said was, “Oh, Allah! You have blessed me with seven children of which You took one and left six; and You gave me four limbs of which You took one and left three. Just as You have taken, You have kept for me as well; and just as You have afflicted me, You have saved me as well. All praise is due to You for what You have kept and saved.”

One more instance, a person passed by someone whose hands and legs were amputated, yet he was praising Allah, “Praise is due to Allah, Who saved me from what He afflicted many of the

creation.” He was asked, “From what Allah saved you?” He responded, “Allah saved me from many things and blessed me abundantly with more. All praise is due to Allah who blessed me with a tongue uttering Allah’s remembrance, a heart filled with humility, and a body with patience in the face of afflictions. “If you tried to count Allah’s favors you could never calculate them: man is truly unjust and ungrateful” (the Quran, ١٤: ٣٤). I would only refer to two kinds of contentment:

- ١- Contentment with Allah’s decree and predestination in situations of a family member loss or loss of money. Allah refers to the reward of patience in the face of these trials, “Do not say that those who are killed in Allah’s cause are dead; they are alive, though you do not realize it. We shall certainly test you with fear hunger, loss of property, lives, and crops. But [Prophet], give good news to those who are steadfast; those who say, when afflicted with a calamity, ‘We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return’” (the Quran, ٢: ١٥٤-١٥٦). Furthermore, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “When a

child of the servant (of Allah) died, Allah says to the angels: "Have you taken the fruits of his heart." They reply: "Yes." So He says: "What did My servant say?" They reply: "He praised you and mentioned that to You is the return." So Allah says: "Build a house in Paradise for My servant, and name it 'the house of praise'" (Al-Tirmdhi).

- ۞- Contentment with what Allah decreed from sustenance. A person who truly believes that what missed him couldn't have afflicted him nor that which he is afflicted with couldn't have missed him—and who believes that a soul shall never die until its time is due and its sustenance has been fulfilled— will lead a life of contentment and tranquility. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Whosoever begins the day feeling family security and good health while possessing provision for his day is as though he possessed the whole world" (Al-Tirmdhi). He also said, "Whoever is focused only on this world, Allah will confound his affairs and make him fear

poverty constantly, and he will not get anything of this world except that which has been decreed for him. Whoever is focused on the Hereafter, Allah will settle his affairs for him and make him feel content with his lost, and his provision and worldly gains will subserviently come to him” (Ibn Majah in his *sunan*).

Significantly, contentment with Allah decreed doesn't necessarily imply reluctance to seek the necessary means for earning sustenance and endeavoring to build the world. There is a huge difference between trust in Allah and reluctance, between sound and unsound understanding, and between a person who seeks the necessary means and another who surrenders to the status quo. Indeed, the former is praiseworthy while the latter is blameworthy. The ultimate happiness is to sleep peacefully and to have the pleasure of Allah when meeting Him, Glorified is He.

Marshy land and fruitful trees

The marshy land neither grows pasture nor holds plantation. Our Prophet (PBUH) says: "The example of guidance and knowledge Allah has sent me with is like a lot of rain fell on a land; therein was a fertile area which accepted the water, and grew a lot of pasture and grass. Another area was barren and held the water, so, some people benefited from it in drinking, irrigation, and growing plants. A third area was marshy, which neither holds water, nor grows pasture. This is the like of the person who acquired sound knowledge of Allah's religion, and benefited from what Allah has sent me with, so, he learned and taught, and the like of the person who neither raised his head (i.e., hasn't benefited from this knowledge), nor accepted Allah's guidance with which I was sent" (narrated by Al-Bukhari). So, whoever the people do not benefit from him, is like the marshy land which neither holds water, nor grows pasture. The best for the people is the more beneficial to them, and the worst of them,

is he whom the people abandoned for his indecency. Our Prophet (PBUH) says: "The worst of people is that who is abandoned for his indecency"(narrated by Al-Bukhari). He (PBUH) also said: "Truly, some people open gates of goodness and close gates of evil, and some people open gates of evil and close gates of goodness, so, blessed is he whom Allah has destined to open the gates of goodness, and woe unto him whom Allah has destined to open the gates of evil (Sunan ibn Majah). On the other hand, virtuous and clean-hearted people are those whose hearts Allah has opened in devotion to Islam, made them good loving, and chose them to help restrained people. Our Prophet (PBUH) says: "Allah has singled some people out with favors to help people. He settles (these favors) in them as long as they properly used them, and takes away His favors from them if they kept them for themselves, and grants them to other people". He (PBUH) also says: "Allah has created some people to serve others' needs, to whom the people resort, truly, they are the safe on the Day of Judgment". Those are the fruitful, and useful trees. However, they, as such, may be liable

to be envied, hated, or counterchecked by other people who are preoccupied with trifle matters, and with trying to demolish others rather than build themselves. It is axiomatic that "Fruitful trees only are targeted by young boys, but grown up people feel ashamed of doing this, and thieves only target wealthy houses. Stones thrown by young boys only add strength to their targets, since the stroke that does not break man's back strengthens it.

What a wonderful poet who said:

My enemies have conferred many favors on me

May the Merciful not deprive me ever from me

They showed me my pitfalls, so, I abandoned them

They were on a race with me, so, I won the glory

Abul-Aswad Ad-Du'ali says:

They envied the man as they didn't benefit from him

And became enemies and opponents to him

As fellow-wives said to the beautiful face

Out of envy and hatred, it is ugly

A wise man is preoccupied with building not destruction, and he never repays evil with evil, but forgives and tolerates, and repels

evil with what is better, as Allah (Exalted be He) says: "Good and evil cannot be equal, {Prophet} repel evil with what is better, and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend. But only those who are steadfast in patience, only those who are blessed with great righteousness, will attain to such goodness" (٤١:٣٤-٣٥). We pray to Allah to place us among them, adorn us with their manners, and resurrect us in their group.

The Great Virtue of Charity Works

A doer of charity expects great rewards from Allah. This reward equally goes for men and women. Allah, the Almighty, says:

- “Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so – for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward” (the Quran, ٣٣: ٣٥).
- “The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven

spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing. Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve” (the Quran, ٢: ٢٦١-٢٦٢).

- “Take from their wealth charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing” (the Quran, ٩: ١٠٣).
- The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “If one gives in charity what equals one date-fruit from the honestly earned money and Allah accepts only the honestly earned money, Allah takes it in His right (hand) and then enlarges its reward for that person (who

has given it), as anyone of you brings up his baby horse insomuch that it becomes as big as a mountain.” The Prophet also says, “Fortify your property with *zakah* (obligatory charity) and treat your sickness with charity and use supplications to remove afflictions.”

- A giver of charity, be it obligatory or voluntary, should give it to the proper recipients. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Charity expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler – an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise” (the Quran, 9: 60).

- Priorities shall be considered if one aims to achieve the most significant effects and benefits and receive the best and highest rewards. Essential priorities to keep human life (e.g. foodstuff, clothes, medical services and

housing) shall come first before luxurious matters and embellishments.

- Since you know the great rewards of charity, use it to fulfill the necessary social needs. If people need medical services more than anything else, use it in treating the patient and building hospitals. The same goes true for educational services, such as building and furnishing schools, providing for the poor students, researchers and scholarships or financing educational centers and foundations. Similar services such as drinking water systems, sewage projects and road paving processes are also possible priorities in some areas. Another area worthy of charitable spending is the establishment of small projects and providing labor opportunities for the youth.
- Building mosques and maintaining them form another area for charity, but a person shall choose areas in pressing needs to mosques, such as the new villages in

the desert hinterland and new reclaimed areas. A giver of charity may also maintain some built mosques or furnish them with necessary equipment and furniture. It is necessary to consult the concerned authorities to help you know the most beneficial priorities, since the great rewards are contingent on acceptance and benefits. A charity wins the best rewards when given to those mostly in need and the needier the recipient is, the greater rewards a charity gets. A giver of charity should be careful, lest s/he shall fall prey to imposters and swindlers who play the role of beggars at metro stops, train stations, public squares and large mosques, especially the mosque of the members of the Prophet's family.

- The ministers of religious endowments filed lawsuits against many begging imposters. Giving charities to undeserved persons lets those in real needs suffer and encourages more imposters to take beggary as career

and live lazily unemployed. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Seeking charity from people is only permissible for three persons: one who suffers abject poverty, one who suffers unbearable loss and one who must pay huge blood-money."

- A person shall keenly seek to donate for trusted bodies and foundations in return for official receipts or to deposit in official bank accounts. Finally, be assured that you will get the rewards of your charity from Allah, who says, "Whatever good you spend is for yourselves and you do not spend except seeking the countenance of Allah. And whatever you spend of good, it will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged" (the Quran, ٢: ٢٧٢).
- He also says, "But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] – He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers" (the Quran, ٣٤: ٣٩). Likewise, the Prophet,

Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "One's wealth will never be decreased because of charity."

- The Prophet also said, "No morning comes but two angels come down from heavens and say, "O Allah, give the one who spends in charity in return for his/her charity and destroy one who withholds from doing good!""

The manners of private life

Islam is a religion of natural disposition. Allah (Exalted be He) says: "So, Prophet, as a man of pure faith, stand firm and true in your devotion to the religion. This is the natural disposition Allah instilled in mankind – there is no altering Allah's creation – and this is the righteous religion, though most people do not realize it" (۳۰:۳۰).

No doubt that Islam is built on whatever promotes one's sense, establishes the upright human values, contributes to bringing social and individual nobility into being, spreads civilizational values, and leads to consolidating and deep-rooting them in the souls of all mankind.

No doubt that a man's share of his life is what he got used to, so, if a man is used to be civilized and noble with himself, he will grow up civilized and noble with other people. But if maintained the appearance of being civilized and noble in front of people, although he doesn't stick to it in himself, he would enter in a state of social and psychological hypocrisy, known as

schizophrenia. He may betray himself and act contradictory to what he is used to maintain of noble and sensible behavior, and, thus, show his natural character when he mixes with people.

Therefore, Islam took all measures to teach the people the noble values, and get them used to it since early childhood, whether they were alone or with other people. So, when our Prophet (PBUH) saw a young boy tossing his hand in the food, he taught and directed him to reforming his disposition as he said to him: "O! boy, mention Allah's name, eat with your right hand, and eat of what is next to you" in order that he get used to doing it whether he was alone or with other people. He (PBUH) also says: "Shut the doors, cover water vessels, cover your utensils, and switch off your lamps, as the Satan neither opens what is shut, nor uncovers what is covered".

In his saying (PBUH) "Switch off your lamps" there is a clear reference to rationalizing power consumption, as he (PBUH) forbade extravagance in secret or in public, alone or with others, with the aim of consolidating the culture of

rationalization and being far from extravagance and squandering.

You may see some people smiling to others, and get admired by those who do not know their reality. Once they return home to their family, you see another person with another dress and another skin and a face completely different from that which the people know. Once he enters, those who are sitting stand up, and those who speak shut their mouth out of fear not of good manners.

We assure that if a man reformed his own matters and manners, and voluntarily kept them under control for the sake of conforming with Allah's instructions, and out of respecting himself, he would be more restrained, and would behave better when is with other people in public occasions, otherwise, his disposition will prevail, and being beautiful is different from being beautified, a matter that may expose him to critical situations which no one wishes to face.

Some people don't know how to demolish, others don't know how to build

How different the contradictory dichotomy; building and demolishing are. Our religion is a religion building and inhabiting the universe, so, anyone takes you to that way, the way of building, production, accuracy, and preserving the public and private buildings, he takes you to the way of Islam, that is, patriotism, civilization, advancement, and the benefit for community and mankind. On the other hand, who drags you to the opposite way, and entices you to demolish or destroy the buildings and infrastructures, surely he takes you to the way of perdition in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah (Exalted be He) says: "If you turn away now, could it be will that you will go on to spread corruption all over the land and break your ties of kinship? These are the ones Allah has cursed, making their ears deaf and their eyes blind, Will they not contemplate the Qur'an? Do they have locks on their hearts? (٤٧: ٢٢-٢٤), and says: "There is (a kind of) man whose views on the life of this world

may please you, he even calls on Allah to witness what is in his heart, yet, he is the bitterest of opponents. When he leaves, he sets out to spread corruption in the land destroying crops and livestock – Allah does not like corruption. When he is told 'Beware of Allah' , his arrogance leads him to sin, Hell is enough for him: a dreadful resting abode" (٢:٢٠٤-٢٠٦).

Those who are preoccupied with construction have no spare time for demolition or destruction, since they realize the nature of building and the time and effort it needs; the builder cannot be a demolisher, as his soul is abundant with goodness, inhabitation, civilization, and nobility.

On the other hand, demolishers have sick souls, and their ambitions are short of matching the people of vitality, struggle, endeavor, work, and production. They couldn't find a remedy to their deficiency, a cover to their blemish, or cure for their ill-feelings, but envying the praiseworthy, and criticizing the noble, as depicted by the Judge ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Jurjani in the introduction of his book 'Mediation between Al-Mutanabbi and his opponents' : "People of deficit are of two kinds; a man who

was himself the cause of his deficiency, and was deprived from perfection by his choice, so, he mixes with virtuous people, and feels good towards virtuous deeds. And a man of deficient nature, and inferior disposition, and feels hopeless of ridding himself of his deficiency, so, he resort to envying the praiseworthy, and criticizing the noble. He thinks that the only way to remedy to their deficiency, and cover to their blemish, is to make the noble people share him his heinous deeds, and attribute to them the defects he has.

Those demolishers are an utter threat to the society, and to its social and economic security. A poet says:

It's enough to have a demolisher behind every
builder

How would it be if there were a thousand
demolishers behind him.

Another says:

When will come a day for the building be compete
If you are engaged in building, while another
Demolishes.

Our religion condemns all sorts of demolition, and calls to building and inhabiting the universe, and doing whatever good for humanity. Allah (Exalted be He) says: "Do not corrupt the earth after it has been set right, call on Him fearing and hoping, surely, the mercy of Allah is close to those who do good" (٧:٥), and says: "Remember Allah's blessings, and do not spread corruption in the land" (٧:٧٤). This requires us all to spread the culture of building, establish the belief in Allah, and know for sure that you will not miss what is written for you, and will not gain what you are destined to miss, and that if the whole community tries to beat someone to something Allah has written to him, they will not succeed, and they all will fail if they tried to push someone to attain something which is not written to him. Our Prophet (PBUH) says: "Know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, it would benefit you only with something that Allah had already prescribed for you, and that if they gather together to harm you with anything, they would harm you only with something Allah had already prescribed for you. The pens have been lifted and

the pages have dried" (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). How badly we need to cleanse our hearts of hatred, envy, and endeavoring to prevent others from scoring any progress. Nothing of this belongs to faith, good manners, or noble human values. To the contrary, it is hatred that eats up those who are inflicted with it, as depicted by the poet Abu-Tammam:

Bear steadfastly the harm of the envious
Your steadfastness would really kill him
The fire eats itself
If it misses what to eat.

Let's be truthful in our intentions, and work for the sake of Allah, then for the sake of our country and society, our children, grandchildren, and ourselves. The religious and national duties require us to be united, and to serve our religion, country, and our just cases. None of us should cripple the walk of another, but we should help each other. Work is the safety valve, and demolition is the speedy way to destruction in this life and in the Hereafter.

Free Time and Wasted Time

Time is a precious value unappreciated by many people. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said "There are two blessings in which many people incur loss, health and free time (for doing good)". Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) also said "Man's feet will not move on the Day of Resurrection before he is asked about his life; how he consumed it, about his youth; how he lived it, his wealth; how he earned it and how he disposed it, and his knowledge; what he did with it". And every new day calls upon people and says: oh son of Adam, I am a new day witnessing to your deeds; so make good use of me until my sunset after which we will not meet again to the Day of Judgment.

Such importance of time in Islam has been emphasized by Almighty Allah in His glorious Quran in which Allah Almighty swears by the dawn (Al-Fajr) and makes it the title of a whole chapter (Surat) which reads: "By the Daybreak, by the Ten Nights, by the even and the odd" (١-٣). Allah also swears by the morning brightness and makes it the title of

another chapter (Surat) which reads "By the morning brightness, and by the night when it grows still, your Lord has not forsaken you, nor does He hate you, and the future will be better for you than the past" (۹۳:۱-۴). Stressing more and more the importance Allah almighty attaches to time, He says "By the fading day, man is (deep) in loss, except for those who believe, do good deeds, urge one another to the truth, and urge one another to steadfastness" (۱۰۳: ۱-۳), in the chapter (Surat) titled with the same word "the Fading Day". In some other chapter, Allah Almighty also swears by the shining dawn in Al-Mudather chapter (Surat) where He says: "By the shining dawn, It is one of the mightiest things, a warning to all mortals, to those of you who choose to go ahead and those who lag behind" (۷۴:۳۴-۳۷). Allah also swears by night and day in "the Night" chapter "By the covering night, by the radiant day, by the male and female He created, the ways you take differ greatly, There is the one who gives, who is mindful of Allah, who testifies to goodness, We shall smooth his way to ease" (۹۲:۱-۷). Hence, the importance of time is emphasized and

stressed as four chapters are titled with different parts of the day and night (The Daybreak, the Fading Day, the Shining Dawn , the Night).

Different references are made in the Glorious Quran connecting deeds or actions to time. Allah Almighty says: "So perform the regular prayers in the period from the time the sun is past its zenith till the darkness of the night, and (recite) the Qur'an at dawn; dawn recitation is always witnessed" (١٧:٧٨). He says narrating the story of the Companions of the Cave: "(Some say): The sleepers stayed in their cave for three hundred years, some added nine more" (١٨:٢٥). He says: "It was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur'an was revealed as guidance for mankind, clear messages giving guidance and distinguishing between right and wrong. So, any of you who witnesses that month should fast" (٢:١٨٥). He says: "Mothers suckle their own children for two whole years if they wish to complete the term" (٢:٢٣٣). "If any of you die and leave widows, the widows should wait for four months before remarrying" (٢:٢٣٤). "He also says: "If any of die and leave

widows, make a bequest for them: a year's maintenance (البقرة ٢٤٠) and no expulsion from their homes" (٢:٢٤٠). He also says: "For those who swear that they will not approach their wives, there shall be a period of four months" (٢:٢٢٦).

However, people deal with time in two ways; for the first team time flies in uselessness. And if they have plenty of time, they try to kill it and spend it in fruitless actions for their life or religion. Ibn Masoud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I hate to see a man with no duties; a man should indulge all time either in life or the afterlife affairs.

The other team has no free or lost time; they are well-organized. They make good use of their time and know how to benefit from it. They not only value the one second, they also value and exploit the femtosecond. They believe that freshness generates freshness and laziness generate laziness, that adding the little to the little makes it bigger, and that a man's life consists of a block of time units that all together represent his life as the poet said even before dividing seconds into smaller units:

Heart beats tell man

Life is minutes and seconds

A man's life is what he/she produces or leaves of applicable, theoretical, scientific or intellectual heritage along with all other ways in which he serves humanity regardless of his age; as the poet said:

A man's age is how he's remembered not how long he lived
A blessed life is not necessarily a long one. Rather, it's a productive life which man devotes to serving his religion, life or the lives of other people. The good folks are those of long lives and good deeds and the vilest folks are those of long lives and bad deeds; the best person is the one who benefits all human beings.

Withholding Rights

Islam has undoubtedly given every human his rights and granted the rights of heirs. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said in his farewell sermon: "Allah has given everyone his dues; no heir may be included in a will". The Scholar, the old ones, the young, the women, the worker and the orphan; the dues and rights of all of them are clearly stated. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "He is not one of us "Muslims" that who does not have mercy on your youngster and honours those who are old in age". And in some other narration it reads: "He is not of our nation of Islam that who does not honour those who are old, does not have mercy on our youngster and does not respect our scholars". He also said: "I will contend on the Day of Resurrection against three (types of) people: One who makes a covenant in My Name and then breaks it; one who sells a free man as a slave and devours his price; and one who hires a workman and having taken full work from him, does not pay him his wage". It was said" give the worker his wage before his sweat dries". Islam has forbidden

taking the money of orphans without justification and Allah Almighty says in his Glorious Quran: “Give the orphans their wealth. Do not exchange the evil for the good, nor consume their wealth with your wealth. Surely, that is a great sin” (٤:٢) and says: “Those who consume the wealth of orphans wrongfully, only consume fire in their bellies, and they shall roast in the Blaze” (٤: ١٠), and “Believers, do not consume your wealth among yourselves in falsehood, except there be trading by your mutual agreement. And do not kill yourselves. Allah is the Most Merciful to you”.

Allah has prescribed certain limits, particularly inheritance rules, and has prescribed that any aggression against the rights of people is an aggression against the limits of Allah. Allah Almighty says concluding the rules of inheritance: “Such are the Bounds of Allah. He who obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him to Gardens underneath which rivers flow. That is a great wining* And he who disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His Bounds, He will admit him to

a Fire and shall live in it for ever. For him, there is a humiliating punishment” (٤:١٣ – ١٤).

However, we have been afflicted by some people who don't observe Allah's limits and the rights of others; especially the weak. They withhold these rights on the pretext of preserving and developing them. One example of those people is those who withhold the inheritance rights of women or orphans on the same pretext of preserving them. Those are described by the poet:

Like camels that die out of thirst in the desert

Although they are bearing water on their backs

We hear about very awkward stories of guardians of orphans or some brothers or family who seize the whole inheritance claiming that they don't want to preserve it from loss after distribution. They withhold the rights of women despite their bad need to the inherited money which is their legal and lawful due. Allah Almighty says in the Quran “ Men shall have a share in what their parents and kinsmen leave, and women shall have a share in what their parents and kinsmen

leave, whether it is little or abundant, it is an ordained share”
(٤:٧).

More surprising is what some orphanages do; they collect money for them and instead of meeting their persisting need for food, clothes and the like or spending the money on their education or health, these collected amounts are used for investment along with its proceeds. The minimum amount only is spent on the orphans while the bank account of the orphanage and its officer increase. They claim that orphans will benefit from this money one day; but the fact is that the orphan suffers and pains a lot before that so-called day comes when he enjoys that money that is collected in his name. The Holy Quran has reproached the people of ignorance for not being generous to orphans and not urging feeding of the needy “Have you seen he who belied the Recompense?* It is he who turns away the orphan* and does not urge others to feed the needy” (١٠٧:١-٣) and “No! But you show no good to the orphan,* nor do you urge one another to feed the needy.* and you devour the inheritance with greed* and you ardently love wealth. No! But

when the earth quakes and is pounded* and your Lord comes with the angels, rank upon rank. And Hell-fire is brought near on that Day the human will remember, and how shall the Reminder be for him?. He will say: 'Would that I had forwarded (good works) for my life!. But on that Day none will punish as He (Allah) will punish, nor will any bind as He binds" (٨٩:١٦-٢٧).

So what do you think of someone who withholds the rights of women or orphans or the wage or workmen with no right although he is entrusted with such rights or wage. The trustee must rush to fulfil what he is entrusted with. Allah Almighty says about the orphans " If you perceive in them "orphans" right judgment, hand over to them their wealth, and do not consume it wastefully, nor hastily before they are grown. And whosoever is rich let him abstain, if poor, let him consume with kindness. When you hand over to them their wealth, take witness over them; it is sufficient that Allah is the Reckoner" (٤:٦).

Positive and Negative Behaviors

It is no doubt that human practices and behaviors reflect persons' culture, ethics, education and degrees of civilization on the level of individuals and communities as well. A person's behavior also reflects his/her national and religious faith. One who watches for Allah sets his/her behavior right. A wise thinker once said, "It is difficult and even impossible to impose individual control upon every person appointing a guard or a policeman to observe him/her. Even if we do it, the guard would be in need of another one to observe him/her. However, it is easy to grow a living conscience in each human being, which advocates and defends the truth, whether we put him/her under surveillance or not. Simply, s/he is under the watch and control of the Lord; neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. Allah, the Almighty, says:

- "Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the

heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Chair extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great” (the Quran, ٢: ٢٥٥).

- “And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkness of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that is [written] in a clear record” (the Quran, ٦: ٥٩).
- Likewise, in his advice to his son Luqman said, “O my son, indeed if it [i.e., a wrong] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere]

in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Acquainted” (the Quran, ٣١: ١٦).

- “Have you not considered that Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is on the earth? There is no private conversation of three but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them – and no less than that and no more except that He is with them [in knowledge] wherever they are. Then He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah is, of all things, Knowing” (the Quran, ٥٨: ٧).
- The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said, “Three acts are expiatory; and three have elevating degrees; and three are relieving; and three are destructive. The three expiatory acts are perfecting ablution in severe cold, waiting for prayers one after the other and walking to Friday prayers. The elevating

degrees are giving food to people, greeting them with the greeting of peace and doing night prayers while people are sleeping. The relieving acts are justice in content and anger, economic behavior in riches and poverty and fearing Allah openly and secretly. The destructive acts are the avarice when blindly obeyed, the desires when mindlessly followed, and a person amazed with his/her own view” (Al-Bazzar in his *Musnad*).

- It is most important to differentiate between the positive behavior and the negative one regarding the public rights, affairs and properties. Islam encourages positive behaviors and directs us to do it. For example, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, encourages us to remove harmful matters from the roads. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Iman (faith) has over seventy branches, or over sixty branches, the uppermost of which is the declaration: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah'; and the

least of which is the removal of harmful objects from the road, and modesty is a branch of *iman*” (Muslim in his authentic collection).

- “Removing what is harmful from the road is an act of charity” (Al-Bazzar in his *musnad*).

- A man once asked the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, saying, “O Messenger of Allah, show me an action by which I will enter Paradise!” He said, 'Remove harmful things from people's roads” (Al-Bukhari in *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*). Removing the harmful things from roads, even desirably required and should not be slightly taken, is not the only right we owe to roads. Indeed, many other rights are there; the road should not be violated or neglected. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Beware! Avoid sitting on the roads/ways.” The people said, "It is necessary for us; they are our sitting places where we have talks." The

Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "If you must sit there, then observe the rights of the way." They asked, "What are the rights of the way?" He said, "They are the lowering of one's sight (so as not to see illegal things), refraining from harming people, returning the greetings of peace, advocating good and forbidding evil" (Al-Bukhari in his authentic collection).

- The negative behaviors lead a person to violate the rights of the road by seizing the areas left for roads and using them in private buildings or other occupations. Noise and impropriety are other forms of violating the rights of roads. The same goes true for railways, metro, drinking water lines, gas pipes, electricity towers among other public facilities and services.

- The behavior towards to the public properties, which is actually Allah's property and national property owned by all citizens, shall be in the best manner. Allah, the

Almighty, says, “O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, but lawful business by mutual consent is permissible. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful. And whoever does that in aggression and injustice – then We will drive him into a Fire. And that, for Allah, is [always] easy” (the Quran, ٤: ٢٩-٣٠). Likewise, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Some men misappropriate Allah's property i.e. public properties or others' properties. These people will be cast in Hell on the Day of Resurrection” (Al-Bukhari). He also said, “There is no flesh built from unlawful gains but the Fire will be more appropriate for it” (Al-Bayhaqi in his *Shu'ab al-Iman*)

- Indeed, the inviolability of public property is greater than that of the private property. If the owner of the private property would defend it and demand for it in this world and in the Hereafter, the public property is owned by the

entire community. Its violation may lead to the loss of the rights of the infirm groups; the orphan may suffer hunger, the poor patient may die and the public and national interests may be lost, which affects the whole community. As such, all members of the community become foes and adversaries of those who violate the public rights and properties in this world and also in the afterlife “The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children (^^) But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart” (the Quran, ٢٦: ٨٨-٨٩).

Deep Perception and Understanding

Depending on the diacritical mark associated with the word “*fiqh*” in Arabic language, the word has three meanings respectively: to understand, to outsmart as well as an innate faculty. Our Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion. I am just a distributor, but the bestowing is from Allah. A group of this nation will indeed keep on following Allah's teachings strictly until the last Day is established” (*Al-Bukhari*).

It refers to those upon whom Allah bestows knowledge, insight and understanding. It is once said, “A person who acts in consistency with his knowledge will be rewarded the knowledge of what is unknown to him by Allah, Glorified is He.” Allah says about al-Khidr, peace be upon him, “And to whom We imparted knowledge from Ourselves” (the Quran, ١٨: ٦٥)

Allah also says, “And, 'We bestowed the same favor upon David and Solomon. Recall, when they gave judgement regarding a tillage into which the sheep of some people had strayed at night, and We were witnesses to their judgement. And made Solomon understand the case [better], though We gave sound judgement and knowledge to both. We made the mountains and the birds celebrate Our praises with David- We did all these things” “the Quran, ٢١: ٧٨-٧٩).

Note the use of ‘understand’ instead of ‘teach’ because both are two different things. Allah, Glorified is He, says, “In this way We devised a plan for Yusuf (Joseph)-if God had not willed it so, he could not have detained his brother as a penalty under the king’s law; We raise the rank of whoever We will. Above everyone who has knowledge there is the One who is all knowing” (the Quran, ١٢: ٧٦). He also relates what Yusuf said, “I will give you its interpretation before the food you are served arrives. This knowledge is one of the things my Lord has taught me. I have given up the religion of those who do not believe in God and deny the life to come” (the Quran, ١٢: ٣٦)

A man asked Shurayh, the judge, “Teach me to be a judge!” He replied, “Being a judge requires having acute understanding. It cannot be taught.” Memorizing some random parts of a discipline does not make one an authority whose opinion is followed. It is beyond this superficial understanding. Had knowledge been limited to covering some minor and partial issues in seclusion to their governing principles and context, it would have been a lot easier; yet it is far beyond it. When *imam* Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, entered the mosque and found a man heading a session of knowledge, he asked him about abrogation; to which the man offered no answer. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, responded, “This man is not a scholar. He only seeks fame.”

Much there is to learn besides the main principles. The following set of disciplines are a must-learn for the Mufti, let alone the *mujtahid*; learning the inclusive principles of *fiqh*, the discipline of Hadith—both its narration and comprehension—the sciences of the Quran—and the related Quranic studies—knowledge of the modern reality, etc. Unfortunately,

we have been afflicted in our modern time with people who desire to forcefully lead knowledge circles and preach. Some seek nothing but oddity. They have no concern but to argue with scholars, compete with the fool, polarize the public towards them, even at the expense of their own religion and dignity. They stand in complete opposition to the morals of the acute scholars who prefer seclusion with their knowledge. This picture is depicted by the outstanding litterateur Ali ibn Abdul Aziz al-Jurjani:

*If it is said: this is a fountain; I would ask for time to consider;
The soul of the free can persevere through thirst
Never would have I paid knowledge its due right
If I used it as a mean to gain self-interest whenever it arises
Humiliation is what I would suffer after toiling to acquire
Only then would ignorance have been a better choice
Protection is what people of knowledge shall gain if they
protect it
Honor is what people of knowledge shall gain if they honor it*

It is noteworthy that the person only wins that which is destined for him/her. The prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Whoever is focused only on this world, Allah will confound his affairs and make him/her fear poverty constantly, and s/he will not get anything of this world except that which has been decreed for him/her. Whoever is focused on the Hereafter, Allah will settle his/her affairs and make him/her feel content with his lost, and his provision and worldly gains will undoubtedly come to him" (ibn Majah in his *sunan*).

Allah, the Almighty, says, "Whoever looks forward to meet his Lord, let him do righteous works, and let him associate none with the worship of his Lord" (the Quran, ١٨: ١١٠).

Goodness and Reformation

Undoubtedly, Islam is a religion of goodness and reformation alike. A person must not be only good himself/herself in relations with Allah and people, but must also defend and promote reformation and endeavor to bring about it. The Quran draws ties between faith and reformation in many contexts. For example, Allah, the Almighty, says:

- “We send not the messengers except as bringers of good tidings and warners. So whoever believes and reforms – there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve” (the Quran, ٦: ٤٨).
- “whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord – let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone” (the Quran, ١٨: ١١٠)
- “He who does of righteous deeds while he is a believer— he will neither fear injustice nor deprivation” (the Quran, ٢٠: ١١٢).

- “Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do” (the Quran, ١٦: ٩٧).

Other Quranic verses connect God-fearing with reformation, such as Allah's statement:

- “Whoever fears Allah and reforms, there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve” (the Quran, ٧: ٣٥).
- Likewise, other verses connect sincere repentance with goodness and reformation. Allah, the Almighty, says: “But if they repent and correct themselves, leave them alone. Indeed, Allah is ever Accepting of repentance and Merciful” (the Quran, ٤: ١٦).
- “Except for those who repent thereafter and reform, for indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful” (the Quran, ٢٤: ٥).

- “Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful. (٧٠) And he who repents and does righteousness does indeed turn to Allah with [accepted] repentance” (the Quran, ٢٥: ٧٠-٧١).

All religions aim to help man have good conduct and achieve reformation. The jurists even said, “The laws of Sharia follow the real benefits wherever they are materialized.” Indeed, the Sharia laws pay due care for the benefits of human beings and their life. The Glorious Quran mentions ten recommendations at the end of Surat al-An‘am (Chapter ٦) about which ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said, “They are conclusively decisive verses that no nation or law ever dispute.” Evidently, they bring about the reformation of individuals and community as well. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Say, "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. [He commands]

that you not associate anything with Him, and to parents, good treatment, and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them. And do not approach immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed] except by [legal] right. This has He instructed you that you may use reason." (١٥١) And do not approach the orphan's property except in a way that is best [i.e., intending improvement] until he reaches maturity. And give full measure and weight in justice. We do not charge any soul except [with that within] its capacity. And when you speak [i.e., testify], be just, even if [it concerns] a near relative. And the covenant of Allah fulfill. This has He instructed you that you may remember. (١٥٢) And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous" (the Quran, ٧: ١٥١-١٥٣). Any form of

deviation from these recommendations goes against all heavenly revealed laws, which are all based on truth, justice, integrity and reformation.

Reformation is also the prophet's repeatedly uttered advice. For example, Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, advised his brother Aaron, peace be upon him, saying, ““Take my place among my people, do right [by them], and do not follow the way of the corrupters” (the Quran, ٧: ١٤٢). Prophet Shu'ayb, peace be upon him, advised his people saying, “Give full measure and do not be of those who cause loss. (١٨١) And weigh with an even [i.e., honest] balance. (١٨٢) And do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption” (the Quran, ٢٦: ١٨١-١٨٣). In affirmation of his sincere intention, he also says, ““I only intend reform as much as I am able. And my success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return” (the Quran, ١١: ٨٨).” Prophet Saleh, peace be upon him, addressed his people saying, “He has produced you from

the earth and settled you in it so ask forgiveness of Him and then repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is near and responsive” (the Quran, ١١: ٦١). He also said, “So fear Allah and obey me. (١٥٠) And do not obey the order of the transgressors, (١٥١) Who cause corruption in the land and do not amend” (the Quran, ٢٦: ١٥٠-١٥٢).

Islam forbids all forms of corruption and mischievous practices even during wars in which Muslims are forbidden to cut trees, set fire to plants or crops or demolish buildings. Since this is a form of mischief, “Allah does not like it” and “Allah does not like corrupters” (the Quran, ٢٩: ٧٧). He, the Almighty, says, “cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. That is better for you, if you should be believers” (the Quran, ٧: ٨٥). The best of people are those who are most beneficial to them; those who open ways for good and block all means to evil. Those who open ways to good are to win eternal happiness whereas those who open gates

wide for evil and corruption only expect distress and suffering.

It is wonder that those traitors, who betray their religion and nations and lead to corruption and mischief, build their philosophies on destruction and devastation as seen in the writings of the extremist writers of the terrorist group of *Ikhwan* (Muslim Brotherhood). For example, in his memoirs, Sayyed Qutb called for the establishment of a believing group according to his own vision to bring people back from the claimed ignorance to Islam. He affirms that this group must clash with the society and must prepare for that clash by building self-powers, which could overcome the society. This led to what we all currently witness. He called to exhaust the state and destroy its infrastructure, such as electricity towers, bridges and even crimes of beheading some specific leaders to implement their project. This is the same strategy that ISIS currently uses along with its terrorist allies in the group of *Ikhwan*. It is necessary to uncover

the falsities of their theories and the spurious foundations of their group, which pay no attention to the high national interests. For them, homeland is but a valueless pile of dust, which goes against the concept of the national state as uttered by their guide in slang expressions that one's tongue even fails to repeat or mention.

Livelihood and security

The Glorious Quran has established a direct relation between security and livelihood on several occasions. In “Surat” An-Nahl Chapter (The Bees) Allah Almighty says: “Allah strikes a parable of the village which was safe and peaceful. Its provisions came in abundance from everywhere; but it was thankless for the favours of Allah. Therefore, for what they were doing, Allah let it taste the garment of hunger and fear” (١٦:١١٢). So when the village was safe and its people worked together to maintain its safety, its provisions came in abundance from everywhere but when they became thankless for the favours of Allah Almighty, Allah let them taste the garment of hunger and fear. In the same chapter “Surat” Allah Almighty says: “We did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves” (١٦:١١٨). In “Surat” Koraysh Chapter Allah says: “For the custom of the Koraysh,* Their custom of the winter and

summer journey* Therefore let them worship the Lord of this House * Who fed them from hunger and secured them from fear”. In “Surat” Al-Qasas Chapter (The Story), the Holy Quran commented on the people of Mecca who were granted security and livelihood for preserving the sacred mosque and its security: “ But have We not given them a secure sanctuary from which fruits of every kind are collected as a provision from Us? Indeed, most of them do not know” (٥٧). In “Surat” Al-Anfal (Battle Gains), Allah says: “And remember how He gave you shelter when you were few in number and considered weak in the land, ever fearing that the people would snatch you away; but He gave you refuge and supported you with His victory and provided you with goodness, so that you might give thanks” (٨:٢٦). And when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) prayed to God to provide his family and offspring with a homeland and fruits “And when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this country safe and provide its inhabitants whosoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day with fruits”. (٢:١٢٦). The Holy Quran narrates the words of Abraham (peace be upon

him): “And when Abraham said: 'My Lord, make this a land secure. Turn me and my children away from worshipping idols. My Lord they have led many people astray. Whosoever follows me belongs to me. Whosoever rebels against me, You are surely Forgiving, the Most Merciful. Our Lord, I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley near Your Holy House; our Lord, in order that they establish the prayer. Make the hearts of people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits, in order that they are thankful” (Ibrahim ٣٥-٣٧). Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said reminding us of the blessings of Allah: “The one among you who wakes up secure in his property, healthy in his body and has his food for the day, it is as if the whole world were brought to him”. As we can see, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who does not speak out of desire advances the blessing of security to health and livelihood to emphasize the importance of these blessings and the need to preserve them. He referred to security with the phrase “secure in his property” to stress the need for protecting your home regardless of its size or nature.

There is a positive correlation between security and livelihood and investment climate. Whenever security and safety are fulfilled, growth, they are directly followed by investments, work, production and different means of earning. On the contrary, wherever there is war, extremism, terrorism, destruction and vandalism, and corruption, life becomes harder and everybody is plagued by poverty.

Hence, Islam prohibited threatening the lives of people that Prophet Muhammad denied the merit of faith – regardless of the different interpretations of this denial as denial of the merit in full or of its perfection- to those who threaten the safety and security of people: “The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, and the believer is the one people trust with their lives and wealth”. Prophet Muhammad also said: “He shall not be a true believer that who breaks his oath”, “By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer.” It was asked, "Who is that, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "One whose neighbour does not

feel safe from his evil" and "That you keep yourself from harming people is a charity".

Islam has forbidden all forms of corruption and mischief. Allah Almighty says in his Glorious Quran: "Do not make mischief in the earth after it has been put right" (Al-A'raf "The Ramparts" ٥٦), and "do not corrupt the land with mischief". (Hood "The Prophet Hood" ٨٥). Allah Almighty also says: "There is he whose sayings pleases you in this worldly life and uses Allah as a witness for what is in his heart, but he is most stubborn in adversary* No sooner does he leave than he hastens about the earth to corrupt there and destroy crops and cattle. Allah does not love corruption* When it is said to him: 'Fear Allah, ' egotism takes him in his sin. Hell-fire shall be enough for him. How evil a cradling!" (٢: ٢٠٤-٢٠٦) and "Could it be, that if you turn away, you might make corruption in the land and break the ties of kinship?* Such are those whom Allah has cursed, making them deaf and blinding their eyes* Will they not then contemplate on the Koran? Or are there locks upon their hearts!" (٤٧:٢٢-٢٤).

The Graces of Security and Stability

The grace of security is most significant. As such, Prophet Muhammad, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Whosoever begins the day with his family safe and good health while possessing provision enough for his day is as though he possesses the whole world” (al-Tirmidhi).

Security is a great divine grace that Allah bestows on people. He, the Almighty, reminded the Quraysh—the citizens of Mecca, of the grace of security saying, “For the accustomed security of the Quraysh; their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer—Let them worship the Lord of this House, Who has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made them safe, [saving them] from fear” (the Quran, ١٠٦).

In the same issue, He says, “They [the Quraysh] say, "If we were to follow the guidance with you, we would be swept from our land." Have we not established for them a safe sanctuary to which are brought the fruits of all things as provision from Us? But most of them do not know” (the Quran, ٢٨: ٥٧). He also says, “Have they not seen that We made [Mecca] a safe sanctuary, while people are being taken away all around them? Then in falsehood do they believe, and in the favor of Allah they disbelieve?” (the Quran, ٢٩: ٦٧).

Likewise, in His reminder of the believers, Allah says, “And remember when you were few and oppressed in the land, fearing that people might abduct you, but He sheltered you, supported you with His victory, and provided you with good things – that you might be grateful” (the Quran, ٨: ٢٦).

The Quran is very clear in associating faith with security; maintaining them together is essential for a faithful society;

the loss of faith leads to the loss of security. Allah, the Almighty, says, “They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice—those will have security and they are the rightly guided” (the Quran, ٦: ٨٢).

In respect of the nation of Sheba, Allah also says, “There was for Sheba in their dwelling place a sign: two gardens—one to the right and another to the left. They were told, "Eat from the provisions of your Lord and be grateful to Him. A good land [have you], and a Forgiving Lord." Yet, they turned away [refusing], so We sent upon them the flood of the dam, and We replaced their two [fields of] gardens with gardens of bitter fruit, tamarisks and something of sparse lote trees. [By] that We repaid them because they disbelieved. Do We [thus] repay except the ungrateful? And We placed between them and the cities which We had blessed [many] visible cities and We determined between them the distances of journey, [saying], "Travel between them by night or by day in safety” (the Quran, ٣٤: ١٥-١٨).

Likewise, Allah, the Almighty, says, “Allah presents an example: a city [i.e., Mecca] which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it denied the favors of Allah. So Allah made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear for what they had been doing” (the Quran, ١٦: ١١٢).

We have many lessons to learn from the present situation; many countries have fallen prey to chaos and disintegration; their citizens have been displaced and become refugees. Many suffered countless risks, detainment, siege, injuries, disabilities, deformation and even death. We see how the terrorists make use of the chaos and go against all human respected laws and norms killing the innocent and setting fire to human beings, let alone the crimes of pillage, rape, exclusion, suppression and even forcing people to dig up their graves before shooting them. It is a reminder for us to maintain the divine graces of

security and safety. Maintaining this grace requires two things:

- Thanking Allah for them to receive more graces
“Your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe” (the Quran, ١٤: ٧).
Thanksgiving is not only for money but for all other graces.
- Standing united in awareness of the challenges that face us along with placing strict measures to deter the callers of killing, assassination, bloodshed and chaos, who dishonor the armed forces, policemen and other governmental institutions.
- We affirm that the evildoers of these crimes must be judged for high treason; they betray their nation and destabilize the national security. They speak on the tongue of national enemies and endeavor to spread corruption and destruction; they eat our food, wear

our clothes and then spy on us and stab in the back. It is not possible for terrorism to penetrate any country or society unless there are sponsors who receive and provide opportune environs for it to create chaos.

We shall also monitor the foreign finance and the signs of sudden, yet unlawful, enrichment that many, of those who betray their religion, nation, people and humanity, achieve. They falsely think that they could deceive the community and escape punishment “[they think to] deceive Allah, but He is deceiving them” (the Quran, ٤: ١٤٢).

Some of them deceived some people for a while but it is impossible to deceive them all the time. Let no one forget that once s/he shall stand before the One Who never overlooks or sleeps. Allah, the Almighty, says:

- “Stop them; indeed, they are to be questioned” (the Quran, ٣٧: ٢٤).

- “Do not think that Allah is unaware of what the wicked do; He is merely delaying them to a day when all eyes are watching. They will approach with their heads bowed, their eyes will not blink, and their hearts will be void” (the Quran, ١٤: ٤٢-٤٣).
- “This Day every soul will be recompensed for what it earned. No injustice today! Indeed, Allah is swift in account” (the Quran, ٤٠: ١٧).

A pause with oneself

Can anyone of us pause for seconds with himself to ask: What has he done for his country? What has he prepared for meeting his Lord? What is the end he wishes to reach? What about feeling content with what he has done and is doing? A man asked the Prophet (PBUH) When is the Hour? The Prophet said: "What have you prepared for it?" The man aid: I haven't prepared a lot of prayers, fasting, or charity, but I love Allah and His Prophet. The Prophet said: "You are with whom you love". Shall a man say – fully content-: "If the time has gone backward, would I take exactly the same way that I have already taken", or he will wish if he had taken another way. Wise people assert that returning to the right is much better than going too far with the wrong. Everyone can go back to the right

path without hesitation or fear as long as he is certain that it the right path. Today is a time for working, tomorrow is a time for reckoning, when it shall be said: "And halt them for questioning" (۳۷:۲۴). All the people will be of one of two groups "Some He has guided, and some are doomed to stray" (۷:۳۰). Some shall be in the Garden, and some shall be in the blazing Flame "The wretched ones will be in the Fire, sighing and groaning, there to remain as long as the heavens and earth endure, unless you Lord wills otherwise: your Lord carries out whatever He wills. As for those who have been blessed, they will be in Paradise, there to remain as long as the heavens and earth endure, unless your Lord wills otherwise, an unceasing gift" (۱۱:۱۰۶-۱۰۸). The Ever-Glorious Qur'an reminds us of the state of these two groups as Allah (exalted be He) says: "As for those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah', and take the straight path towards Him, the angels come down to them and say, 'Have on fear or grief, but rejoice in the good news of Paradise, which

you have been promised. We are you allies in this world, and in the world to come, where you will have everything you desire and ask for, as a welcoming gift from the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful One" (٤١:٣٠-٣٢).

Angels do not come down only on the prophets and messengers, but also on the righteous servants of Allah, who said. 'Our Lord is Allah' and took the straight path to Him. But, when will they come down? And how? No one knows how except for Allah (Exalted be He), the Lord of the earth and heavens and the Great Throne. As to when they will come down, the majority of scholars hold that they come down to the faithful person at the time of death, to give him glad tidings saying: "Have no fear or grief, O servant of Allah, but rejoice in the good news of Paradise, which you have been promised. " We are you allies in this world, and in the world to come, where you will have everything you desire and ask for" (٤١:٣١). The Ever-Glorious Qur'an talked about the Day of Resurrection in the end of Chapter (٢١:١٠٣) saying: "The angels will receive them with

the words, "This the day you were promised". In the Paradise, the angels will go in to them from every gate " Peace be with you, because you have remained steadfast. What an excellent reward is this home of yours" (۱۳:۲۴). "Eat and drink to your heart's content as a reward for what you have done in days gone by" (۶۹:۲۴). " Where you will have everything you desire and ask for" (۴۱:۳۱)."Whenever they have been given sustenance from the fruits of these Gardens, they will say, 'We have been given this before', because they were provided with something like it, they will have pure spouses and there they will stay" (۲:۲۵). "Everlasting youths will attend them – if you could see them, you would think they were scattered pearls. If you looked around you will see bliss and great opulence" (۷۶:۱۹-۲۰). Allah has prepared for them "What no eye has ever seen, what no ear has ever heard, what has never occurred to anyone's mind". Allah has removed bitterness and envy from them "And We

shall remove any bitterness from their hearts; they will be like, brothers sitting on couches face to face' ٩١٥:٤٧).

On the other side, God forbidden, there are some who have been distracted away from Allah (Exalted be He) by his superiority, power, trade, folk, or tribe, and forgot "The Day man will flee from his own brother, his mother, his father, his wife, his children, each of them will be absorbed in concern of their own on that Day" (٨٠: ٣٤-٣٧). "The Day when neither wealth nor children can help, when the only one who will be saved is the one who comes before Allah with a heart devoted to Him" (٣٦:٨٨-٨٩). "A day when no parent will take the place of their child, nor a child will take the place of their parent, in any way, Allah's promise is true, so, do not let the present life delude you, nor let the Deceiver delude you about Allah" (٣١:٣٣). On that day, losers will deeply regret, when regret will serve them nothing. Those who will take their Record with their left hand will say: "But anyone who will be given his Record in his left hand will say. 'If only I had never been given any Record, and knew nothing of my Reckoning. How I wish death

had been the end of me. My wealth has been no use to me, and my power has vanished. Take him, put a collar on him, lead him to burn in the blazing Fire, and (bind him) in a chain seventy arm's-length long, he would not believe in Almighty Allah" (٦٩: ٢٥-٣٢). He will be told as the last farewell-giver leaves: O Adam's son, they came and buried you, in the dust put you, and returned and left you. Even if they stayed with you, they would do nothing for you, nobody is left with you except Me, I am the Ever-Living who never dies.

We are in between two paths delineated by Allah (Exalted be He) in many verses in His Book, among them: "If anyone desires only the fleeting life, We speed up whatever We will in it, for whoever We wish; in the end We have prepared Hell for him in which to burn, disgraced and rejected. But anyone desires the life to come and strives towards it as he should, as a true believer, his striving will be thanked" (١٧: ١٨-١٩). The life to come needs striving that is aiming at Allah's satisfaction, a striving of the one who believes in, and prepares for, it, surely, this is the thanked striving. The other group will be casted in

Hellfire, disgraced and rejected. Allah (Exalted be He) says:
"There is the one who gives, who is the mindful of Allah, he testifies to goodness, We shall smooth his way towards ease. There is the one who is miserly, who is self-satisfied, who denies goodness, We shall smooth his way towards hardship" (٩٢:٥-١٠). The wise person is the one who works for his present life, as if he will live forever, and works for his life to come as if he will die tomorrow, taking into consideration Allah's saying: "And do not neglect your rightful share in this world, and do good to others as Allah has done good to you" (٢٨:٧٧).

The Art of Article Writing

Article writing is one of the important literary arts which flourished with the spread of paper and electronic media in the modern age. It's the art of concentrated ideas, passing by glimpse, and selected words. Nevertheless, such rapid spread of newspapers and online websites has tempted many unqualified people to break into the world of literary writing and particularly article writing. This has been stimulated by the fact that other genres of literary arts such as poetry, novels and short stories are more difficult and demanding. They thought that

articles were easier and more approachable and were misled into believing that any group of lined up sentences would make a good article and raise their names as writers even if they lacked coherence, consistency, plot or artistic features. We ended up with so-called academic writers or speakers inaugurating their articles as if they were speeches or books; they rarely differentiate articles, stories and news. Therefore, qualified professionals have to have critical positions and officials of popular newspapers, particularly big ones, should be more meticulous about the quality and nature of articles to be published. Training courses should be conducted to prepare young writers. Columns should remain as schools of thought reserved for big names and maven writers while amateurs' production could be included in readers mail or so; a system that is largely being observed by major newspapers.

I am nearly certain that opinion columns, articles of famous writers and newspaper's ability to attract them, and credibility of the news published by the newspaper all together are distinguishing factors of successful newspapers. All these

factors, or even the name of one or two trustworthy writers, may be the reason for educated intellectual readers to read and prefer one certain newspaper to others or to give it some priority. In some other cases, a fixed regular section may cause higher popularity of one newspaper or higher circulation on a certain day. I hope that each publishing house whether in paper or online would have a quality unit to verify the creative, artistic and intellectual quality and monitor the linguistic, stylistic and typing mistakes which degrade the value and magnificence of the works published or cause them to even lose respect and appreciation in some times. Perfection of work; one of our religion's tenets, has become an exception, exception, I.e., violating the well-established norms, is about to be a norm. Article writers fall in two categories; specialised writers and general writers. A specialised writer confines himself to certain type of political, religious, economic, artistic, sports, or scientific genre that he becomes a remarkable reference or distinguished figure among specialised readers in this field. However, such writer needs badly to have a huge amount of

self-control to restrain that wild human desire to express opinions or thought on different issues; a talent that not all people or writers have, however, writing once or twice in subjects which he is not competent with, doesn't mean that he is not a specialist writer. A general writer is such writer who uses the community and its varied issues and arts as fertile source for his writings. He is like a poet, narrator or depicor who records all that attracts his attention in selectivity. He is a creative educated intellect, preoccupied with the concerns of the public, and can accommodate all their concerns, hopes, and novelties. He closely follows the current events, and employs his pen to record them. However, he, in most cases, he see only their surface. If he went deep or contemplated their inner significance, he cannot reach the depth reached by a specialist. Even if luck was with him in an article or two, he is still an amateur. Specialization remains a specialization, a specialist remains specialist, a creative remains a creative, knowledgeable remains knowledgeable, thinker remains thinker, and an amateur remains an amateur.

Legitimate and Illegitimate Questions

Undoubtedly, everyone has certain questions he deems legitimate and others he deems illegitimate. The reasons for withholding from the latter may be the result of either external factors like pressure and/or fear of judgment or internal factors like overwhelming sense of responsibility or cultural, societal, or political considerations.

Given the fact that a statement may be misunderstood or misrepresented, disclosing every detail is unpreferable, whether

to the media or the public. Imam Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, remarked, "Address people in a manner suitable with their level of understanding. Would you like a denial of Allah's speech as well as that of His Messenger?" In order to sidestep confusion, adequate and audience-friendly manner of speaking is strongly advisable, particularly in situations where there is a possibility of intentional fact-twisting by some people, targeting false propagation of the truth. Such reasons have forced some to withhold from speaking out and prefer silence.

With all these factors in mind, we assert that people should have the best intentions when it comes to their religions and homeland. Moreover, they should have confidence in what is with Allah, the Almighty and realize that Allah has power over all affairs and that what has befallen man could not miss him and that what has missed him could not befall him. Everything is destined by Allah. Our Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, says, "Know that if the entire nation agree to benefit you with something, they will not benefit you except with what Allah has willed for you. Likewise, if they agree to

harm you with something, they will not harm you except with what Allah has willed for you. The Pen has been lifted, and the Tablet has dried."

Whoever has confidence in Allah, the Almighty, and knows for sure that the interest of his religion is inseparable from the interest of his homeland and that the interest of his homeland is inseparable from the interest of his religion shall do whatever in their interests regardless of any other considerations.

We shall answer some of the questions raised by us, and let the insightful reader answer the rest: Do members of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) contemplate the idea of returning to the political arena? Do they along with others think of hijacking the religious message once more? Are they trying to sneak back through the different religious, educational, cultural, intellectual, economical, and managerial establishments? Is there an enough protection in those establishments to stand this penetration? Have we properly understood the repercussions of the bitter experience when the MB took office? Have we considered the bad experience of their year to prevent the

members of this group from penetrating our establishment, particularly the religious, cultural, and intellectual establishments once again? Have we forgotten their unconstitutional declaration that would have granted their toppled president unrestricted powers?

Are we aware of the existence of major intelligence forces endeavoring to disunite our region? Do we realize that the challenges before us are still enormous and that the danger is still imminent? Is there any doubt now that this group cares for no religion or home country?

The summary of the answers, in my point of view, is that the danger still exists and increases. They still try hard to return to the political scene by dividing role among them through different means and methods. They also try hard to penetrate the establishments and control them through their sleeper cells and agents and whoever they manage to attract from among the naïve and fools, the matter which calls us to take precaution and beware of the conspiracies of this group and its sleeper cells and agents. We should never allow them to deceive us. 'Umar Ibn

Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once said, "I am not a deceiver nor I will allow someone to deceive me!" Our Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "A believer is not stung twice (by something) out of one and the same hole." And we will never be stung by the will of Allah who will protect us from their plotting.

Peer/Unequal Rivalry

Rivalry may be praised or dispraised; the praised rivalry drives a person to hasten to good deeds; Allah, the Almighty, says, "Compete toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who believed in Allah and His messengers. That is the bounty of Allah which He gives to whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty" (the Quran, ٥٧: ٢١). The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be

upon him, said, "There is no envy except in two: a person whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e. religious knowledge) and he gives his decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others." It is these two graces which deserve human competition; earning wealth to thank Allah therewith and spend it in the cause of Allah and learning knowledge to teach people and make peace amongst them.

The Prophet's Companions used to compete in good deeds; Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi narrated from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said, "We were ordered by the Messenger of Allah to give in charity, which occurred in a time when I had some wealth. So I said, "Today I will beat Abu Bakr, if ever I beat him." I came with half of my wealth and the Messenger of Allah said: "What did you leave for your family?" I said: "The like of it." Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, then came with everything he had, so he said: "O Abu Bakr! What did you leave for your family?" He said: "I left Allah and His Messenger for them." I said: "[By Allah] I

will never be able to beat him to something” Likewise, Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Who amongst you is fasting today? Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: I am. He again said: Who amongst you followed a funeral procession today? Abu Bakr said: I did. The Prophet again said: Who amongst you served food to the needy? Abu Bakr said: I did. He again said: Who amongst you has today visited the sick? Abu Bakr said: I did. Thereupon Allah's Messenger said: Anyone in whom (these good deeds) are combined will certainly enter paradise.”

As for the dispraised rivalry, it is that rivalry that leads to envy, grudge, difference and dispute. That sense of rivalry goes beyond the permissible wishes to have the like good or achievement when one falls into envy and maliciously hopes that others lose their success and achievements. An envious person may try to demolish or impede others in negligence of building his/her own personality. In his introduction to his book “*Al-Wasata Bayn al-Mutanabi' wa Khusumihi*,” Judge Ali Ibn Abdel Aziz al-Jurjani said, “People of imperfection are of two

kinds; a man crippled by his own actions, who neglects perfection by his own choice. As such, he shares perfection by nature and feels inclined to do perfect deeds as possible as s/he can. The other person sees imperfection in his/her very creation and nature, so s/he feels hopeless to remove it and has no will to leave it. As such, s/he feels envious at the noble persons and likes to belittle the notables. For him/her, the best s/he can is to tolerate imperfection and defame others just to share his/her inner sense of imperfection and defects.” Sometimes, the competition may lead to conflict. One may think that posts, positions or gains are restricted to two persons; either you or I. This sense of thinking ignores or forgets all about the accidental incidents and vicissitudes of days, conditions and persons. Finally, the matter wholly lies with Allah and He does what He wills. Your achievement and successes, be they material or moral, are not contingent on intelligence, plots or plans. Or else, the animals would perish as the Abbasid poet Abu Tammam said.

A wise person realizes that what has come to you could not miss you and that what has missed you could not come to you; “Know that if all the people gather to benefit you, they will not be able to benefit you except that which Allah had foreordained (for you); and if all of them gather to do harm to you, they will not be able to afflict you with anything other than that which Allah had pre-destined against you. The pens had been lifted and the ink had dried up.” Allah, the Almighty, commands His Prophet Muhammad to “Say, “Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector.” And upon Allah let the believers rely” (the Quran, ٩: ٥١). Allah also says, “Say, “Then have you considered what you invoke besides Allah? If Allah intends me harm, are they removers of His harm; or if He intends me mercy, are they withholders of His mercy?” Say, “Sufficient for me is Allah; upon Him [alone] do the firm believers rely” (the Quran, ٣٨: ٣٩).

Peers usually compete with one another, but envy and hate may also arise between those who are not equal in negligence of religious, moral and human values, which call for loving all

human beings. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "One does not believe unless s/he does love for others the same s/he loves for himself/herself." The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Whoever loves for the sake of Allah, gives for the sake of Allah and abstains for the sake of Allah has already perfected the [conditions of] faith." He also says, "Whoever possesses the following three qualities will have the sweetness of faith: The one to whom Allah and His Messenger are dearer than anything else; one who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake; and who hates to revert to disbelief as s/he hates to be thrown into the fire." We are badly in need of this honorable ethics arising from pure souls whereby life becomes stable and safe and free of worries and envy.

The mosque of tolerance

In the company of dear colleagues; Ministers of Culture, Health, Tourism, Aviation, and Immigration, Mr. Major Khalid Foudah, governor of South Sinai, the elite of men of Islamic and Christian religions, men of letters, artists, creative thinkers, heads of the South Sinai tribes, and its Bedouins and urban inhabitants alike, we spent important hours in the historical city of St., Catherine. We prayed Jum'a prayer in its blessed Mosque which is located inside the monastery of St., Catherine, as one of the most important symbols of tolerance in the land of

tolerance: Sinai, the country of tolerance: Egypt, the birthplace of civilizations, and the meeting point of religions, where the tolerance of the past meets the tolerance of the present. A seven thousand years old civilization has never witnessed an act of aggression or inequity against the other; to the contrary, it has been built on diversity and co-living with the other, and entertaining its guests. Even in the era of the Faros, the King of Egypt received the people of Levant and shared his bread with them, when their caravans used to come to Egypt to go back full of providence. The Qur'an told us about Joseph's brothers when they came to Egypt seeking food and providence, as it says: "Then, when they presented themselves before Joseph , they said: 'Mighty governor, misfortune has afflicted us and our family. We have brought only a little merchandise, but give us full measure. Be charitable to us; Allah rewards the charitable" (١٢:٨٨). Some time later, Joseph said to his parents, brothers, and those who came with them from Levant: "Welcome to Egypt: you will all be safe here, Allah willing" (١٢: ٩٩).

Marginal to this journey, we can record some important thoughts; among them what I have been told by Bedouins of the area with their clean-hearted disposition, about their zeal and respect to the sacredness of their land, a matter that made us sympathize with them, and feel what they feel towards it; "Take off your shoes: you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa" (٢٠:١٢). Also, our meeting with the Archbishop of St. Catherine who warmly welcomed us. In a few minutes in the VIP reception in the monastery, the talk ran about the human common values in Heavenly religions, and the consensus of all religions on the respect of human beings without any discrimination on the bases of religion, race, colour, or blood, and the right for every human being to lead an honorable life. But the time for Jum'a prayer forced us to end our talk. The Archbishop asserted that we need a lot of this human, spiritual, significant dialogue, which brings people together; not disperses them. We invited him to visit our office in Cairo, and left in a true state of happiness, hoping to expand our dialogue, and to spread more and more the values and culture of tolerance on each single spot of the earth, in

order that people may enjoy a safe, and stable life, far from the evils of mankind, and the endeavor of some of them to use the religions in purposes they have never been revealed for.

Spreading the greeting of peace, a value, not a slogan

Spreading the greeting of peace is not just a slogan, but is a human sublime value which was highly established by our upright religion. It's related to Abdullah ibn Salam the he said: "When the Prophet (PBUH) arrived at Madinah, I came and looked at him, I realized that his face cannot be a lie's face, and the first thing I heard from him was: "Spread the greeting of peace, offer food, maintain close relation with blood-relatives,

and pray while people are asleep, you will peacefully enter the Paradise" (Jami' At-Tirmidhi)

Don't you see the talk of whom Allah has described him as the one who doesn't speak from his own desire, as he makes the way to enter the Paradise confined to four things, three of which relates to noble manners in dealing with other people, that is, : offering food, spreading the greeting of peace, and maintain good relations with relatives, whereas only one relates to his relationship with his Lord, i.e., praying while people are asleep. He mentioned these three prior to this one. This is due to the fact the our religion gives priority to sound human relationships, moreover, it urges us to spread the greeting of peace to those whom we know or don't know. It makes the slogan of spreading the greeting of peace a sign of good faith; Allah (Exalted be He) said: "Do not say to someone who offers you a greeting of peace, 'You are not a believer'" (٤: ٩٤). It also urged us to respond the greeting with a better one, or at least return it. Allah (Exalted be He) says: "When you are offered a

greeting respond with a better one or at least return it, Allah keeps account of everything" (٤"٨٦).

Islam has assigned bases for peace, all of which undergo the umbrella of human nobility, among them: The young must offer the greeting of peace to the old, the rider to the walker, the walking to the sitting, the one to the group. They said: A person is obliged to offer his brother the greeting of peace when he meets him, to give him a place in a meeting. Yet, Islam has strongly warned against ignoring responding to the greeting of peace or returning it. Our Prophet (PBUH) said: "None of you is permitted to abandon his brother for more than three days, they meet, and turn their back to each other, the best of them is that who starts offering the greeting of peace" (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

One of Allah ninety nine names is Source of Peace. Allah (Exalted be He) says: "He is Allah, there is no god other than Him, the Controller, the Holy one, Source of Peace, Granter of security, Guardian over all, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Truly Great. Allah is far above anything they consider to be His partner" (٥٩:٢٣). The Paradise is the abode of peace, Allah

(Exalted be He) says: "They shall have the Abode of Peace with their Lord, and He will take care of them as a reward for their deeds" (٦:١٢٧). The greeting of the believers in Paradise is 'Peace', Allah (Exalted be He) says: "And their greeting, 'Peace', and the last part of their prayer, 'Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds" (١٠:١٠), and their greeting on the Day they meet Him, 'Peace' "When they meet Him, they will be greeted with 'Peace', and He has prepared a generous reward for them" (٣٣:٤٤). "And he angels will go in to them from every gate. Peace be with you, because remained steadfast. What an excellent reward is His home of yours" (١٣:٢٤).

Spreading the greeting of 'Peace', then, is a value, a way of life, and a way of salvation. But, it has to be a real peace, not a fake one. The one who offers the greeting must ponder the value of peace. Man himself must be peaceful even with the animals, inanimate beings, and with the whole universe, so as to evade cutting a tree, burning cultivation, ruining an inhabited area, demolishing a building, or harming a bird, animal, or a human being. He must be peaceful with himself, and the whole

universe. Allah (Exalted be He) says: "You who believe, enter wholeheartedly into submission to Allah, and do not follow in Satan's footsteps, for he is your sworn enemy" (٢:٢٠٨).

The Absence of Mind

Mind is the greatest divine grace bestowed on man; it is the grace that differentiates man from other creations and it is the basis for human accountability and obligations. It is no wonder that the Quran repeats several motivating expressions to encourage human thinking and reasoning, such as "will they not use reason" and "will you not use reason?" Allah, the Almighty, says, "Indeed in that are signs for those endowed with sound

minds” (the Quran, ٢٠: ٥٤). When the following verse was revealed, “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding; (١٩٠) Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the fire” (the Quran, ٣: ١٩٠-١٩١), the Prophet said, “Woe to him who utters it without deep reflection on it.”

- Many Quranic contexts encourage contemplation and reflection; Allah, the Almighty, says, “Do you not see that Allah drives clouds? Then He brings them together, then He makes them into a mass, and you see the rain emerge from within it. And He sends down from the sky, mountains [of clouds] within which is hail, and He strikes with it whom He wills and averts it from whom He wills. The flash of its lightening almost takes away the eyesight. (٤٣) Allah alternates the night and the day. Indeed in that

is a lesson for those who have vision” (the Quran, ٢٤: ٤٣-٤٤).

- “Have you not considered your Lord—how He extends the shadow, and if He willed, He could have made it stationary? Then We made the sun for it an indication” (the Quran, ٢٥: ٤٥).
- “Have they not traveled through the earth and observed how the end of those before them was? They were greater than them in power, and they plowed [or excavated] the earth and built it up more than they [i.e., the Meccans] have built it up, and their messengers came to them with clear evidences. And Allah would not ever have wronged them, but they were wronging themselves“ (the Quran, ٣٠: ٩).
- “Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby fruits of varying colors? And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and [some] extremely black. (٢٧) And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors

similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving” (the Quran, ٣٠: ٢٧-٢٨).

- The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also encouraged reflection and contemplation in several statements and occasions, of which the following are exemplary:
- “Once the Prophet said, "Amongst the trees, there is a tree which resembles a Muslim." I wanted to say that it was the date-palm tree but as I was the youngest of all (of them) I kept quiet. And then we asked, what is that tree? The Prophet said, "It is the date-palm tree.”
- “Allah's Messenger, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Do you know who is poor? The Companions of the Prophet said: A poor man amongst us is one who has neither dirham with him nor dinar. He said: The real poor would be one who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers and fasts and obligatory charities, but s/he would find himself/herself bankrupt on

that day as s/he would have exhausted his/her funds of virtues; s/he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others, and his/her virtues would be credited to the account of one who suffered at his/her hand. If his/her good deeds fall short to clear the account, then his/her sins would be entered in (his/her account) and s/he would be thrown in the Hell-Fire” (Muslim).

- “If there is a river at the door of anyone of you and he takes a bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt on him?" They said, "Not a trace of dirt would be left." The Prophet added, "That is the example of the five prayers with which Allah blots out (annuls) evil deeds” (Al-Bukhari).
- All these indications prove the Islamic respect and care for human mind and its value. As such, it is an Islamic duty to maintain and educate people and avoid idleness and hypnotism among other things that thwart the work

of minds and leave them inattentive to practical life, work and leadership. Let's here reflect only on one conception of relevance to mind; it is the true reliance that honors mind apart from idle dependence that leads to inactivity. The true trust placed in Allah necessitates the taking of all necessary means in obedience to Allah's direction "prepare against them whatever you are able of power" (the Quran, ٦٠: ٨). Here, preparation is made necessary and power is indefinite to imply all means and sources of power, be they military, economic, cultural, intellectual, material or anything else. All means leading to this power is included and intended. After taking all necessary means, we place trust in Allah and leave results to Him. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon hi, said, "If you all depend on Allah with due reliance, He would certainly give you provision as He gives it to birds who go forth hungry in the morning and return with full belly in the evening." Scholars say that birds leave their nests hungry in the morning in pursuit of food and come back

eventually satisfied. They do not stay in nests and ask Allah to send them provision without taking the necessary means. Similarly, 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "No one shall forsake the pursuit of sustenance and say 'O Allah, give me provision! Heavens will not rain gold or silver.'"

The making of leaders

The presidential youth program is not only a qualifying, training, educating, or political program, but a comprehensive program for rebuilding the Egyptian identity, to be distinct in knowledge, thought, and culture, and to prepare them for positive contribution to the building of the country. It has been very carefully prepared for the making of leaders.

There are prerequisites necessary for preparing the future leaders. From them, strength, honesty, patriotism, culture,

bearing responsibility and decision-making in the proper time and proper way, doing whatever necessary in due time without delay, lagging, rashness, or recklessness come first. The Omani poet Abu-Muslim Ar-Rawahi says:

Neither rush anything before its appropriate time
Nor let laziness make you miss it when it comes.

The Qur'an has attracted our views to the two most important factors in preparing and choosing the leaders, i.e., strength and honesty, or, prudence and knowledge. Allah (Exalted be He) says narrating what Shu'aib said about Moses: "One of the women said: 'Father, hire him: a strong and trustworthy man is the best to hire" (٢٦:٢٨). And says narrating what Joseph said to Mighty governor of Egypt: "Put me in charge of the nation's storehouses: I shall manage them prudently and carefully" (١٢:٥٥). Honesty alone does not do, and competence alone without honesty has no avail.

Through these two attributes, there must be some other detailed attributes that conform to the nature of the tasks assigned to a leader or a person in charge, and the level of responsibility. The

most important of them are: sincerity and abandoning oneself to work, absorbing work pressures, ability to deal with impasses, political vision, observing the requirements for national security, readiness to work in a team spirit, coordination with corresponding organizations, being distinct in cultural and genera; knowledge level. It's axiomatic in administration that the leader or person in charge must be fully aware of the minutes, details, problems, and challenges of his job, and his interrelations with other institutions. He also must be of the highest possible level of awareness of the task assigned to him. He must always remember our Prophet's saying: " Everyone of you is a guardian, and is responsible for what I in his custody. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects and is responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; a lady is a guardian in her husband's house and responsible for it; and a servant is a guardian in his master's property, and is responsible for it" (Narrated by Al—Bukhari). He also said: "Anyone who is in charge of ten people or more, will come to his Lord on the Day of Judgment with his hands

tied to his neck, he will either be set free for his good deeds, or will be destroyed for his evil deeds; its beginning (i.e., guardianship) incurs blame, its middle incurs regret, and its end incurs disgrace on the Day of Judgment" (Musnad Ahmad). He also said: "Allah will give shade to seven on the Day when there will be no shade but His, (These seven persons are): a just ruler, a youth who has been brought up in the worship of Allah, (i.e., worships Allah sincerely from childhood), a man whose heart is attached to the mosques, two persons who love each other only for Allah's sake and they meet and part in Allah's cause only, a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth to illicit intercourse with her and says: I'm afraid of Allah, a man who give charitable gifts so secretly that his left hand does not what his right hand has given, and a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes are then flooded with tears"(Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

The real beauty and the real dowry

The real beauty is the beauty of essence, spirit, soul, manners, and mind. How beautiful would a person be, if the external beauty was added to these. Yet, the beauty of soul is the one which is highly valued, and on which preferability is based. Our Prophet (PBUH) says: "Allah neither looks at your outer shape nor your money, but He looks at both your hearts and your deeds". Mustafa Sadiq Ar-Rafi'i, the great Arabic writer said in an article entitled "On the philosophy of dowry":

"The best woman is she who, added to her beauty of face, entertains beauty of manners, and her mind adds to her a third beauty. Such a woman, if met the right man, made everything easy and easy and east for him. She looks at herself as a human being who is seeking a human being, not a commodity seeking a buyer. Yet, the low amount of her dowry, doesn't reflect but a sign of her high value in mind and religion.

Our Prophet (PBUH) says: "If a man of good manners and religion proposed to you, accept him, if you don't, it would be a great mischief in land, and a vast corruption". The Prophet (PBUH) laid a condition for marriage, i.e., satisfactory manners and religion, not just any manners or any religion. Our Prophet (PBUH) also says: "The woman is sought for marriage for four reasons: Her money, Her noble descent, her beauty, and her religion; Gain the woman of religion, (otherwise) you'll be destined to poverty"

The question raised here is: Why only manners and religion come first, not external beauty? The answer is: Essence comes before appearance, and beauty is a relative thing, and

liable to change or disappear, whereas manners and religion are the original metal which never rusts.

What if the choice was based on beauty alone, and the beauty is a relative thing, and what you see beautiful today, you may see otherwise tomorrow? What if the man saw later a more beautiful woman, and the woman saw a more handsome man? What may happen if that beauty has gone for a reason or another? How would life be then, and it is built only on the outer beauty?

Religion and manners are the precious metal that renews by time; in case money or beauty have gone, there remains the religion and manners. If a religious and well-mannered man loved his wife would honor her, and if he disliked her, he wouldn't harm or belittle her. The real dowry a woman receives is not the money, gold, or otherwise, it's the good care and treatment she receives. Ar-Rafi'i again says: "The real dowry is not that money given to the woman in her father's house before she moves to her husband's house, her real dowry is the way she is treated in her husband's house; the good treatment that makes

her and her husband feel every day that they are newly married as long as they live together.

The golden or silver dowry, is the dowry that is given to the body not to the soul; they are similar in that they both diminish and decay. Don't you see that such a dear woman – if she didn't gain the soul of her husband – would be a bride today and a divorced woman tomorrow? The dowry in reality, be it big or small, is nothing but a sign of manliness, but man comes before the dowry.

Every person can hold a sword; it symbolizes strength, but sword holders are not alike. The coward can hold a sword, and keep on thousand swords in his house, it symbolizes only a signal, but the courageous comes before the signal.

The outer appearance is not everything, the essence is everything, and the real beauty is not the external beauty, it is the beauty of the essence, the real dowry is not the money and gold, it is the religion, manners, and good treatment.

Neighbor Rights

Neighbors have due rights even in grammar and language. Grammarians and etymologists, for instance, declare that Arabic has four categories of the genitive cases including the neighbor-relation, which in turn affects the inflection of the neighboring words. When it comes to the social categories of neighbors, it is evident that neighbors are so many; there are house neighbors, work neighbors [colleagues], neighboring states and travel

neighbors. Allah, may He be Glorified, says, “Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful” (the Quran, ٤: ٣٦). In this regard, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “S/He who believes in Allah and the Last Day shall not harm his/her neighbor” (Al-Bukhari in his authentic collection of Hadith). Similarly, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, asserted, “By Allah, s/he is not a believer! By Allah, s/he is not a believer! By Allah, s/he is not a believer.” It was said, "Who is that, O Messenger of Allah?" In response, he said, "One whose neighbors do not feel safe from his/her evil.”

Once a group of people came to the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah! A certain woman prays in the night, fasts in the day, acts righteously and gives in charity, but she hurts her neighbors

with her tongue.’ In reply, the Messenger of Allah, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, ‘There is no good in her. She is one of the people of the Fire.’ The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said, “The best of companions in the sight of Allah is the one who is best to his/her companions and the best of neighbors in the sight of Allah is the one who is the best of them to his neighbor.” The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, also said, “Gabriel kept recommending kind treatment to neighbors until I thought he would assign them a share of inheritance.” It is even a sign of the Islamic good morals in neighbor treatment that when you “buy fruits, give neighbors thereof. Or else, you shall enter your house therewith secretly.” It is disliked to expose such fruits arrogantly taking vain pride of your financial means before neighbors. Furthermore, contemplate how lofty are the morals of Islam when Islam even forbids a neighbor's child to come out with fruits, which may trouble the children of the poor neighbors: “Let not your children come out therewith, lest they may bother the children of your neighbors.” A child of a poor

neighbor may see your child, but his/her parents have no means to buy him/her fruits and then s/he is left disappointed. Actually, this simple misbehavior may result in latent hate and dislike among the neighbors out of envy and jealousy. This pattern of kindness goes on to forbid a neighbor from even letting the smell of his cooked foods come out—sometimes the smell is too much for a hungry person to bear, lest it may hurt the neighbors: “Do not hurt them [neighbors] by the strong smell of your cooking unless you give them therefrom.” As such, only if you are determined to give the neighbors some of your cooked food, you can let the smell reach them.

Abu al-Darda, may Allah be pleased with him, used to tell his wife, when cooking, to prepare much soup to send some of it to the neighbors. Likewise, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Omar Ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, used to send his Jewish neighbor a share of meat whenever he slaughtered a she-goat. This behavior came in obedience to the Prophet's directives to act kindly towards all neighbors and fulfill the rights of neighbors as should be. It is the neighbor's right to visit

them when they are sick, to congratulate them on good occasions, to console them at times of affliction, to help them at times of need and to relieve them at times of distress. More to this point, it is your duty not to hurt, verbally or physically, your neighbors in any manner and to behave in the finest degree of kindness to them.

‘Omar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, regarded that the neighbor's testimony to his/her neighbor as the highest point of credit or criticism. Simply, a person may deceive others for a while but s/he cannot deceive his/her neighbors all the time. Once a person came to the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Tell me of a good deed that will admit me to Paradise. In response, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, ‘Be kind and generous!’ the person again asked, ‘How can I know that I am kind and generous?’ In reply, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, ‘Ask your neighbors; if they say that you are kind and generous, then you are kind and generous, but if they say that you are bad, then you are bad!’”

The pre-Islamic Arabs used to honor the neighbor duties and their proverbs celebrated the names of good neighbors, like their saying, “A good neighbor like Abu Dawud.” Abu Dawud was well known for his good morals and kindness to his neighbors insomuch that whenever any of his neighbors dies or loses something, he used to recompense him/her for their losses. In this context, the Arab literature tells of a man who had a good neighbor, but he underwent some difficulties that compelled him to sell his house. Passing by his neighbor's house, the man heard the cries of children in sorrows for departing their house. The neighbor immediately repurchased the house from the buyer and gave it to his needy neighbor for free. Such is the morals of neighbors in Islam. If people adhere to these principles and ethics, no dispute or hate will ever occur in the community. It is against Islam to hurt neighbors intentionally or unintentionally, verbally or physically. The same goes true for the rights of neighboring states, which have rights greater than those applicable to individuals. Evidently, bad relations between neighboring states inevitably result in

serious evils in the same manner that good relations between them result in great benefits.

Good-end

Deeds are judged by their end, and the best among people is he who lives long and does good, and is destined to good-end. Our Prophet (PBUH) says: " I swear to whom my soul is in His hand, verily one of you behaves like the people of Hell-fire until there is but an arm's length between him and it, and that which has been written overtakes him, and so he behaves like the people of Paradise, and thus he enters it; and one of you behaves like the people of Hell-fire until there is but an arm's

length between him and it, and that which has been written overtakes him, and so he behaves like the people of Paradise and thus he enters it". The Prophet (PBUH) used to say: "O! My Lord, who turns the hearts up and down, keep m heart settled on your religion and your obedience". He once was asked: O! Messenger of Allah, why do you so much repeat "O! My Lord, who turns the hearts up and down, keep m heart settled on your religion and your obedience"? He replied: " What guarantees that I will remain so, the hearts are between two of Allah's fingers, if He wills to turn a heart over He does". The Qur'an gives an example of dreadful end; it says: "Would any of you wish to have a garden with date-palms and vines, with rivers flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruits for him therein, while he is stricken with old age, and his children are weak, then it is struck with a fiery whirlwind, so that it is burnt? Thus doe Allah make clear His messages to you that you may reflect on them" (۲:۲۶۶).

We always remind people at the beginning of Ramadan that when Ramadan comes Allah (Exalted be He) send a caller

saying: "O! you who intends to do good, come along, and you who intends to do bad hold", we assert that observing doing good is worthier at the end of that vitreous month.

If we want to give some signs that a man's deeds have been accepted or rejected, we may mention loving doing good, performing worships, and strongly devoting oneself to doing them as perfectly as possible. Therefore, our Prophet (PBUH) used to spend the nights of Ramadan in worship, awakes his family, and was more diligent in worship at the last ten days of Ramadan. He was very much keen on gaining the utmost rewards of these blessed nights and days.

Our Prophet (PBUH) said: "A man is resurrected doing the thing he used to do when he died, so, the martyr comes on the Day of Judgment while his wound emitting blood, the color is the color of blood, but the smell is the smell of musk, and he who dies while performing Hajj, comes on the Day of Judgment chanting Talbiyah". The same applies to all good deeds. So, each of us must decide the status he wishes to resurrect at. If everyone of us reflected on the status he wishes to be at when

he meets his Lord, he wouldn't think of doing evil, but would do his best to be in the status in which he wishes to meet Allah (Exalted be He).

Good-end is not only obtainable by performing worships, i.e., prayers, fasting, Hajj, invocation, supplication, or reading Qur'an only, but it goes beyond that to any deed a man does. He who provides for an orphan, shouldn't unjustifiably abandon him before he grows up and can take care of himself. Likewise, he who sponsors a poor student, should keep up with him until he finishes his study, as long as he is able to do it. Also, those who initiate building a mosque, hospital, infirmary for elderly people or unattended children, houses for the inhabitants of slums, should not abandon their pledge before they finish it. They shouldn't feel wearied out, but must keep on doing what they started. The same applies to those who teach knowledge, Fiqh, or Ever-Glorious Qur'an.

Each of us must realize that the nearer he draws to death, the more he needs to exert efforts in doing good. We supplicate to Allah to guide us to doing a good deed, then take our souls

while doing it, neither misguided nor misguiding others, neither altering nor changing (the Scripture), neither alluded nor alluding others, accept our prayers, fasting, kneeling, prostration, make us, at the end of this virtuous month, among those whom He saved from Hellfire, help us to keep up obeying Him, as the best of deeds is that which a man keeps doing, however little it might be.

Prophet Muhammad in the Quran

The Quran gives a full account of Prophet Muhammad's character, ethics and life. In the Quran, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, is depicted as the Prophet of Mercy: “We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds” (the Quran, ٢١: ١٠٧); “It was a mercy from Allah that you were soft towards them; had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from you; so

pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them in the matter; but when you are convinced, then put your trust in Allah; for Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him]” (the Quran, ٣: ١٥٩); “There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer, [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful” (the Quran, ٩: ١٢٧). The Quran describes his speech as purely infallible “Nor does he speak from personal desire” (the Quran, ٥٣: ٣); and his heart as truthful “The heart did not invent what it saw” (the Quran, ٥٣: ١١).

Moreover, the Prophet's teacher is “the One mighty in power” (the Quran, ٥٣: ٥). The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, is “blessed with a great moral character” (the Quran, ٦٨: ٤). Allah, may He be exalted and Glorified, comforted his heart and raised him high in dignity (the Quran, ٩٤: ١, ٤). He also forgave all of his

present and future sins (the Quran, ٤٨: ٢). If Moses, Allah's Peace be upon him, asked Allah to comfort his heart (the Quran, ٢٠: ٢٥), then it was Allah who comforted Muhammad's heart. Again, Moses hastened to the Lord in pursuit of His pleasure (the Quran, ٢٠: ٨٤) while the Lord promised to give Prophet Muhammad until he is pleased (the Quran, ٩٣: ٥). Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, came in response to the supplication of Prophet Abraham, Allah's peace be upon him, (the Quran, ٢: ١٢٩). He is also the good news foretold by Prophet Jesus, Allah's peace be upon him, (the Quran, ٦١: ٦).

Allah, may He be exalted and Glorified, requested people to obey Him and His Prophet Muhammad alike “Whoever obeys the messenger has obeyed Allah” (the Quran, ٤: ٨٠); and He made the Prophet's love a means to win His Own Love “If you should love Allah then follow me, so Allah

will love you and forgive you your sins. Verily, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful” (the Quran, ٣: ٣١). Likewise, “Those who pledge allegiance to you, they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah” (the Quran, ٤٨: ١٠). Allah even warned against opposing the Prophet “let those beware, who dissent from his [i.e., the Prophet’s] order, lest affliction or painful punishment strikes them” (the Quran, ٢٤: ٦٣). Having faith in Allah is only perfected by willing submission to the Prophet’s judgment “No, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you judge in what they dispute with each other, then they will not find in their souls any animosity for what you have decided, and they will comply completely” (the Quran, ٤: ٦٥). Another aspect of Allah’s honor and kindness to Prophet Muhammad, Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him, is that He always addressed him by the epithet of prophecy or mission, saying, “O Prophet” (the Quran, ٣٣: ٤٥) or “O Messenger” (the Quran, ٥: ٦٧), whereas the Lord addressed other

prophets by their names, e.g., “O Adam” (the Quran, ٧: ١٩); “O Noah” (the Quran, ١١: ٤٦,٤٨); “O Abraham” (the Quran, ٣٧: ١٠٥); “O Zachariah” (the Quran, ١٩: ٧); “O John” (the Quran, ١٩: ١٢).

Sometimes Allah kindly addressed Prophet Muhammad, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, using his current contextual appearance like saying, “O you cloaked one” (the Quran, ٧٣: ١) or “O you who are clothed.” Even when Allah, the Almighty, used his name “Muhammad,” He always mentions his position as a Messenger of Allah “Muhammad is but a messenger, like many messengers that have passed before him” (the Quran, ٣: ١٤٤). It is out of the Divine Honoring of Prophet Muhammad that his message is made universal to all humankind whereas all past prophets were sent to their nations only “We have sent you to all humankind to be a bearer of good news, as well as a warner.” (the Quran, ٢٤: ٢٨).

Muhammad, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, is declared the last of all prophets “Muhammad was not the father of any man among you, but he was the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets” (the Quran, ٣٣: ٤٠). The Lord blessed him with peace and mercy while the angels and the believers send their peace and blessings upon him “Allah and His angels bless the prophet. O you who believe bless him and give yourself up to him in complete submission” (the Quran, ٣٣: ٥٦). The Prophet also prayed for the comfort and peace of the believers “pray for them, for your prayer will be a source of comfort to them” (the Quran, ٩: ١٠٣).

Let us all supplicate Allah, may He be exalted and Glorified, to bless the Beloved Prophet, for each time we do it Allah will bless us ten times in return. He, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “When you hear the call to prayer, rehearse the words of Muezzin. Then, ask Allah to

bless me, because everyone who does so will receive in return ten rewards from Allah. Then, beseech Allah to grant me *al-Wasilah*, which is a high rank in Paradise, fitting for only one of Allah's servants; and I hope that I will be that servant. Anyone asks *al-Wasilah* for me, it becomes incumbent upon me to intercede for him”

The dispute between Fiqh and politics

We talked about the relationship between religion and politics, and repeatedly asserted the importance of establishing the concept of the civil nation, and the strong national structure that accommodates everyone on the basis of mutual national rights and duties, far from utilizing religion for securing any political or party interests.

It is assumed and expected that scholars should work on that which constructs not which demolishes, what gathers not

what disperses, and should distinguish between what is religious, irrefutable, and unquestionable on the one hand, and what is open to different opinions on the other, which is deemed a mercy to the nation. Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz (RA) said: "It shouldn't please me that Muhammad's companions didn't have different opinions" i.e., different opinions on understanding the texts, because if they didn't differ in opinions, it would be hardship to the people, since the majority of cases relating to financial and social dealings, and relating to the organization of the people's daily life is highly open to different opinions. Moreover, the Fatwa concerning these matters may also differ due time, place, and circumstances. So, what was fitting to a time, may not fit another time, likewise, what fits a place, may not fit another place, and prompts a new Fatwa.

Scholars, and wise men of Fiqh and thought in every time and place are expected to be men of thought and mind, sincerely and truthfully promoters of peace and security, applying the principles of Islam for establishing the bases of peaceful co-living between mankind as a whole, and giving the human noble

interests preference over their narrow personal interests. We have the best example in the methodology the Prophet (PBUH) has laid for establishing a peaceful co-living between the inhabitants of Madinah despite the differences between their religions, races, and tribes. The Prophet (PBUH) announced the Muslims, and Jews of Madinah, whom he named by tribe, as one nation. The equal dealing between them was marked by the Prophet's(PBUH) saying: "The Jews have their religion, and the Muslims have their own". Prophet (PBUH) also fraternized all his companions with each others, despite the enmities and hostility that existed between Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj. This was referred to in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an: "And brought their hearts together, even if you have given away everything in the earth you could not have done this; Allah brought them together, Allah is Mighty and Wise" (٨:٦٣).

The normal situation for scholars is to lead harmony, not dispute or increasing the gap of dispute. But exceeding the limits on the part of some scholars and thinkers, and maybe their inclination to be in spotlights, complimenting the

authorities, competing with some other semi-scholars in supporting the expansive ambitions of some countries in the area, and coating them with religious duties, only contribute to augmenting the dispute on the expense of the dire need to abridging the gap for the sake of establishing harmony and peace in the nation, area, and the whole world; if we really are serious in searching for peace, working for stability, separating religious from political concerns, and party from religious coinage for the interest of the party.

The voice of scholars, instead of being the voice of wisdom, rationality, unity, and rejecting dissention, the fanatic scholars' voice became the voice of disunity, and discord in some matters. Maybe, their inclination to seek the satisfaction of some rulers, folk, supporters, followers, or partisans is behind adhering to some deviant Fatwas or opinions, without considering their destructive consequences, and depriving themselves of the benefits of rationality, mind, and logic.

We all ought to realize that eliminating the other, and erasing him from the human memory is impossible and

contradictory to Allah's norms in the universe, He created the human beings as equal individuals, He says: "If your Lord had pleased, He would have made all people a single community, but they continue to have their differences, except those on whom your Lord has mercy, for He created them to be this way" (١١:١١٨), Likewise, any attempt to eradicate or stunt the other will be met with similar attempts, a matter that may lead the whole world into religious and factional conflicts that neither spares nothing nor leaves nothing, and results only in destruction, ruin, demolishing, and corruption.

The natural situation for scholars is to be signs of illumination, figures of peace, dialogue, and convergence, not otherwise. They should strive to gather not disunite, and build not demolish; that is what we all should strive for, and work on getting it materialized.

Is this the Religion of Islam?

I am fully aware of the Muslim Brotherhood and their strategies and twisting of the texts. They teach their young members to keep everything secret and blindly obey their leaders, promising them the lasting delight in this world and the hereafter. I remembered the tradition of Allah's Messenger where he, Allah's peace and blessing be upon him, says, "The signs of a hypocrite are three: whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays (proves to be dishonest)." The Prophet,

Allah's peace and blessing be upon him, also said, "Whoever has the following four (characteristics) will be a pure hypocrite and whoever has one of them will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up.

- Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie.
- Whenever he gives a promise, he breaks it.
- Whenever he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous.
- Whenever he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner. Whoever has one of these characteristics has one characteristic of a hypocrite, unless he gives it up."

I remarked that they apply the contrary of these traditions. If the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessing be upon him, has mentioned the first sign of hypocrisy that whenever the hypocrite speaks, he tells a lie, we find that they not just tell lies, but they keep telling lies under false pretexts such as permissible lies or the places where lying is permissible or using two-way expressions. They ignore the statement of the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessing be upon him, "Indeed truthfulness leads to righteousness. Indeed righteousness leads to Paradise. A man

continues telling the truth and trying hard to tell the truth until he is recorded with Allah as a truthful person. Indeed falsehood leads to wickedness and wickedness leads to the Fire. A man continues lying and trying hard to lie, until he is recorded with Allah as a liar.”

One of the inseparable characteristics of hypocrites is breaking their promises. I think that those who dealt with the Muslim Brotherhood, especially in the political field know that they do not respect their word. Another characteristic of hypocrites is proving treacherous when they make a covenant. We have seen that when they shouldered the responsibility of government, they betrayed the trust and excluded all powers of the society. Allah says, "O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know [the consequence]" (the Quran, [^]: ٢٧)

We read among the characteristics of hypocrites that whenever they quarrel, they behave in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner. I think that our modern history has never witnessed a group of people who are more vehement or fierce in dispute and

ready to shed blood, destroy life and cause corruption in the land than they are. Allah, the Almighty, says, "And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of opponents. And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption" (the Quran, ٢: ٢٠٤-٢٠٥).

Has the religion of Islam that is based on mercy turned in their eyes into a religion of violence and blood? Has the religion of Islam that is based on building the world turned into a religion of destruction and corruption? Has the religion of Islam that is based on the sanctity of human life and property turned in their eyes into a religion that legalizes aggression against lives and property in ignorance of the statement of Allah, "Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land, it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely" (the Quran, ٥: ٣٢) When

Allah's Messenger when he looked at the Ka'bah, he said, "How good you are and how good your fragrance; how great you are and how great your sanctity. By the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, the sanctity of the believer is greater before Allah than your sanctity, his blood and his wealth, and to think anything but good of him" (Ibn Majah).

There is a huge gap between the greatness of Islam and the criminality of the MB, between the system of morals and values espoused and preached by Islam and the bitter reality that endeavored to destabilize, disfigure, and destroy these values. Only love of authority drove imposters of religion to trade it and play with the innocent sentiments of the public to exploit their need and poverty and mislead them into working against the interests of their religion and country. It is abundantly clear with evidence that MB have no loyalty but to their interest and international organization.

We warn any rational person against trusting them or giving them money which they will use to further their interests. Groups of this kind have always been a misfortune for this

country. They have been manipulated by the enemies of this nation to execute their devious plans that target the disunity of this region in return for false promises of authority. Since the alliance between the US and the MB is based on leadership in return for the security of Israel, and blind obedience to the US in return for the latter's international support to the former, this proves the double standards of the MB, who used to describe the US as the devil in public, while trying hard to earn their support in secret. Loss of trust came as the natural outcome, as expressed in the public outrage (in millions) declaring their refusal to their approach that serves neither the religion nor the country. It only serves to destroy both the religion and the country. "And Allah is predominant over His affair, but most of the people do not know" (the Quran, ١٢: ٢١).

God-Fearing

God-fearing, once deeply rooted in human hearts, helps people avoid many evils, corruption and sins. If we do fear Allah in the right manner, we should feel ashamed to disobey Him. As such, we change our practices and acts and set them right. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Feel truly shy to disobey Allah." A person who fears Allah never lies, cheats, steals, embezzles or acts hypocritically. Likewise, s/he never becomes ungrateful, addict, killer, adulterer or drunkard. S/he never accepts ill-gotten gains or impedes public benefits and national welfare.

Simply, s/he is not corrupt, wicked, demolishing, profane, lewd or indecent. S/he keeps their duties to Allah and knows that Allah knows all about their words and deeds, since Allah watches for and is well-aware of everything (the Quran, ٥٧: ٧). He, the Almighty, may give allowance in time but He never neglects to set the scales of justice “Do not think that Allah is unaware of what the wicked do; He is merely delaying them to a day when all eyes are watching. They will approach with their heads bowed, their eyes will not blink, and their hearts will be void. Warn the people of the day when the retribution will come to them, and those who were wicked will say, "Our Lord, delay this for us until a short time, and we will respond to Your call and follow the messengers!" Did you not swear before this that you would last forever? You even resided in the homes of those who had wronged themselves, and it was made clear to you what We did to them. We had cited the examples to you...So do not think that Allah will fail to keep His promise to His messengers. Allah is Noble, able to seek revenge” (the Quran, ١٤: ٤٢-٤٥, ٤٧).

A God-fearing person knows that consuming ill-gotten gains only leads to painful punishment and unending regrets in this world and in the hereafter. Like a person who regrets the destruction of his/her fruitful garden after a destroying storm, regret will be of no avail at that moment “Does anyone of you desire that he has a garden with palm trees and grapevines, and rivers flowing beneath it, and in it for him are all kinds of fruits, then he is afflicted with old age and his progeny is weak, and a whirlwind with fire strikes it and it all burns? It is thus that Allah makes clear for you the signs that you may reflect” (the Quran, ۲: ۲۶۶).

A righteous person pays due attention to the gravity of words—knowing that Allah watches for every single word (the Quran, ۵۰: ۱۶-۱۸), which may lead to everlasting bliss or painful torment “A person may utter a word which pleases Allah without giving it much importance, and because of that Allah will raise him/her to degrees of reward. Likewise, a person may carelessly utter a word, which displeases Allah without thinking of its gravity, and because of that s/he will be thrown into the

Hell-Fire.” When Mu'adh, Allah be pleased with him, asked Prophet Muhammad, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, “O Prophet of Allah, are we held accountable for what we utter?” In response, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Is there anything that throws people into the Hellfire upon their faces like the harvests of their tongues do?”

A truly pious person keeps the future life in mind and knows that their end is either eternal happiness in paradise or eternal punishment in hellfire “Now as for those who [by their deeds] have brought wretchedness upon themselves, they shall live in the fire, where they will have nothing but moans and sobs, therein to abide as long as the heavens and the earth endure unless Your Lord wills it otherwise. Verily, Your Lord is a sovereign doer of whatever He wills. But as for those who [by virtue of their past deeds] have been blessed with happiness, they shall live in paradise, therein to abide as long as the heavens and the earth endure unless Your Lord wills it otherwise as a gift unceasing” (the Quran, ١١: ١٠٦-١٠٨).

Only integrity and righteousness can bring a person to the benefits of this life and the life to come “Indeed, for godly people, there is no fear over them nor will they grieve; those who have believed and are aware. For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. There is no changing the words of Allah. Such is the great triumph” (the Quran, ١٠: ٦٢-٦٤).

Allah also says, “Surely, those who have said, "Our Lord is Allah," then they did right, the angels will come down upon them: "You shall not fear, nor shall you grieve. Rejoice in the good news of Paradise that you have been promised; we are your allies in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. In it, you will have anything your soul may desire, and in it you will have anything you ask for as a ready welcome from Him who is Forgiving, Merciful” (the Quran, ٤١: ٣٠-٣٢).

A wise person shall carefully heed that although Allah's Mercy is all encompassing (the Quran, ٧: ١٥٦) and He forgives all sins (the Quran, ٣٩: ٥٣), He is also painful in punishment “Inform My servants that I am the Forgiver, the Merciful and that My

punishment is a painful retribution” (the Quran, ١٥: ٤٩-٥٠). He also says, “Such is the taking of your Lord when He takes the towns while they are wicked. His taking is painful, severe” (the Quran, ١١: ١٠٢). Describing the moment of the Final Hour, Allah says, “The moment you see it, every nursing mother will leave her suckling child, and every pregnant one will miscarry, and you will see the people drunk while they are not drunk, but the retribution of Allah is most severe” (the Quran, ٢٢: ٢).

Nations' Rise and Fall

Nothing is more dangerous to the states in the history of human nations than transitional eras. Several researchers wrote about the rise of states and the fall of others with focus on the relevant theories and practices. The real dangers against any state always come from the inside. For example, some citizens may prove traitors and agents and may then be employed to undermine their nations. Others may deviate from the right way and indulge in arrogantly rebellious and aggressive activities. Allah, may He be Exalted and Glorified, says, “When We intend to destroy a city, We command its affluent but they defiantly

disobey therein; so the word [i.e., deserved decree] comes into effect upon it, and We destroy it completely” (the Quran, ١٧: ١٦). Allah, the Almighty, also says, “As for the People of ‘Ad, they acted arrogantly and oppressively throughout the land against all right, and said: "Who can be superior to us in power?" Did they not see that Allah, Who created them, is superior to them in power? And they persisted in rejecting Our manifest signs and Revelations” (the Quran, ٤١: ١٥). In respect of the People of Prophet Saleh, Allah's peace be upon him, Allah, may He be exalted and glorified, says, “And as for Thamud [the People of Prophet Saleh], We guided them, but they preferred blindness over guidance, so the thunderbolt of humiliating punishment seized them for what they used to earn” (the Quran, ٤١: ١٧). In respect of the People of Prophet Lot, Allah's peace be upon him, Allah, may He be Exalted and Glorified, says, “And Lot said to his people, "Do you commit such immorality that no one in the worlds has (openly) done before you? (٨٠) Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people." (٨١) But the

answer of his people was only that they said, "Evict them from your city! Indeed, they are men who keep themselves pure." (٨٢) So We saved him and his family, except for his wife; she was of those who remained [with the evildoers]. (٨٣) And We rained upon them a rain [of stones]. Then see how was the end of the criminals" (the Quran, ٧: ٨٠-٨٤).

The good governance shall be built on justice; Allah gives support to the just country even if it is not a Muslim country and He disgraces the oppressing country even if it is a Muslim country. The rightly guided governance shall also be built on values and ethics. Indeed, non-ethical civilizations and nations inherently bear the seeds of their very destruction and fall. Allah, the Almighty, says, "Such is the established way of Allah which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allah any change" (the Quran, ٤٨: ٢٣). Some writers studied the elements of nations' stability and the factors of nations' decline and fall. They summarized the factors that undermine nations and cause their decline as follows:

First: The spread of all forms of corruption, such as favoritism, bribery, nepotism and giving precedence to loyal followers over qualified people. People never abhor anything as they abhor corruption and injustices. As such, any good government shall give priority to the combat of all forms of corruption. I think we are unprecedentedly working very hard on this file and intensifying efforts for this end, so Egypt's rank in the record of corruption combat and transparency is getting better.

Second: The spread of individual injustices in the absence of security and just judiciary as well as the lack of equal opportunities of all kinds. There is also the social classic injustices, which lead to enslaving the poor and laborers and marginalizing them, let alone belittling and despising them. It is necessary for all official, social and civil foundations to collaborate for the protection of the poor/needy classes through the provision of integral social care inspired by religious and national values that call for solidarity and mutual help. We all share the same ship and no one can escape dangers alone. The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, “The

example of the person abiding by Allah's order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the others), so they said, 'Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) saving those who are above us from troubling them. So, if the people in the upper part left the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe.'

Third: The absence of security and the weakness of the state, which result in the rise of gangs, bands of outlaws and militias that dominate the community wholly or partially. As such, the oppressed people lose their sense of patriotism. In this context, it is very essential to support the military and security forces and institutions in order to protect the nation from the surrounding dangers inside and outside. Actually, this support is a religious and national duty, but the security of a citizen and

preserving his/her dignity shall be the priority for any political regime that aspires for stability and works on reviving the national sense of loyalty and affiliation.

Fourth: The deterioration of values; the civilizations may suffer weakness, loss of powers and troubles. Then, only the scholars, thinkers, philosophers and protectors and defenders of values can offer efficacious remedies. It is necessary to select and prepare the makers of public opinions and culture of the society. Some said that prophets rightly guide the visible and the invisible, whereas rulers exercise powers over the visible world only. Furthermore, the scholars guide the invisible elements of the notables whereas the public preachers and speakers direct the common people. Certainly, wars grow and break out inside minds before taking place outside. Consequently, security measures are very important to treat the effects but it is the duty of scholars, thinkers, educators and preachers to treat the inherent seeds of intellectual diseases and infections. So it is very important to select them and furnish them with necessary training, skills and preparations along with the appropriate care

to undertake their heavy duties. Indeed, we currently work hard in pursuit of this goal and aim to achieve it—God willing.

Fifth: The deterioration of individuals' living standards, which drive them to suffer the absence of their necessary needs. Truly, the individuals shall rightly evaluate the circumstances and challenges that face their nation. Let us remember that the Prophet's Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured difficulties and economic boycott until they even had to eat the leaves of trees out of their relentless hunger. However, we shall work collectively to break all forms of siege and boycott by virtue of hard work and production backed by social solidarity and care for the weak and the marginalized classes. Strict measures shall also be taken against those who abuse the citizens by unjustified high prices and monopolizing activities. In addition, good plans, hard unfailing work and economic expenditure are also indispensable. Socially speaking, all the members of the society shall cooperate for solidarity and help each other to escape dangers and achieve safety. Undoubtedly, businessmen and non-governmental organizations have a big

role in bringing about balance and meeting the basic needs of the needy.

The Legitimacy of the Nation-State

If this discussion is conducted within healthy intellectual contexts and spheres, the self-evident facts will have no need to prove them. However, the process of abusing the religious discourse by the extremist groups, who attempt to dominate religious statements and monopolize religious interpretations, forces us to prove and vindicate the well-known facts and premises as if they need evidence. Indeed, the legitimacy of the nation-state is indisputable and undeniable. It is an indispensable fact and exigency for the contemporary reality. Some scholars and thinkers even affirmed that defending

nations shall be prior to defending religions. Simply, the religion must have a nation to defend and protect it. As such, the Muslim jurists assert that if an enemy happens to aggressively attack a Muslim territory, taking part in defense against enemies becomes mandatory upon each Muslim individual, old or young, man or woman, strong or weak, armed or armless, within the means available to each one, even if it would result in the total death of all people. If the defense of nations was not a legal objective of Sharia, it would allow them to escape and save their lives and religion.

The nation-state designates the state that honors and respects the contract of citizenship between the citizen and the state. In other words, it means the full abidance by the equal set of rights and obligations fairly guaranteed for all citizens without any discrimination based on religion, color, race, sex or language. However, the rebelliously deviant groups trade in religion and, in truth, they have no faith in nations or nation-states. Most of these groups do not even recognize the legitimacy of the nation-state, whereas others give precedence

to their ideological organizations over all national and other considerations. In this regard, it is evident that the organizational space is much wider than the limits of the nation-state and the national space.

Those groups are marketing themselves as the patrons of religions and the workers for the actualization of Allah's laws and Sharia. How far is the difference between Allah's laws and the offenses they commit of killing, explosion, destruction, dishonoring human beings and capturing free women, let alone plundering the inviolable properties and terrifying the civilians? Indeed, the activities of the extremist groups are in essence real offenses against Islam. Their crimes are defamatory and expressive of the absurdity of their ideas. The unprecedented deformation and affliction, which the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS and its Arabic acronym is Daesh), al-Qaeda, al-Nusra front, Boko Haram and others like them, do to Islam are worse than the offenses and massacres that Tartar enemies of Islam had done in the past history. In this context, we can assert the following facts:

First: Islam has not imposed any specific solid system for government. It only enacts principles and criteria for good government, which if rightly applied the governance is Islamically approved. The most important of these principles are justice, equality and achievement of national welfare and individual benefits. Names and labels are then meaningless. Only the meaningful value lies in justice, equality and welfare regardless of letters and names.

Second: Whenever the real benefit of building nations and civilizing countries are evident, the Divine Sharia and true Islam materialize. Conversely, all destructive and devastating activities are parts of the devilish works of Satan and other misguided groups who provoke sedition, destruction and dooms.

Third: Strengthening the powers of the nation-state is a religious and national duty. Anyone who works on undermining or stymying the nation-state's course, destroying its infrastructure or terrifying the citizens is a criminal who wrongs his religion and nation.

Fourth: We are in a pressing need to reread and contemplate our intellectual heritage in a precise manner differentiating between the variable and the invariable and between the traditional views that suited their times and locations and the need to new creative juristic views suitable for our ages and new incidents through a new reading of texts undertaken by qualified scholars and experts.

The aim must be to work out the proper solutions for the current problematic issues, especially those related to citizenship and peaceful coexistence to prove that the security of citizens and nations is impartially indivisible and is not open for any biased classification. Imam Ibn Hazm stated that if anyone intends to hurt the non-Muslim citizens living with us, we [Muslims] have to take up arms and defend them and die for them. It is forbidden for us to violate their blood, properties or human dignity.

National Awareness

Undeniably, the national awareness is one of the basic elements of the upright character; it guarantees national affiliation and loyalty, which in turn preserve the national resources, land and interests. Actually, awareness is different from knowledge. Although they are both necessary, but they differ from one another. Many are seen as scholars and academicians while they have no deep culture or actual awareness of the concept of the nation, national issues and challenges.

They are unaware of the plots made against their home and blindly follow the ideas of extremist groups, even if they leaders are less than they are in education and culture. The homeland is neither a mere land in which we live, nor it a handful of dust as

the guide of the terrorist group said. The meaning of homeland is much deeper; it is life, entity, identity, affiliation and trust. How wonderful is the verse of Shawqi,

Nations have much past graces and due debts

In the blood of each free person

Wise people said, “a poor man in a rich country is better than a rich man in a poor or weak country. Contrary to the insecure weak country, the powerful country protects its citizens’ lives and properties providing them with security and safety. The national awareness inspires patriots with hard work to build their nation and helps national progress in all economic, intellectual, cultural, social and human areas through all possible means. There are many reflections of this awareness, such as the following values:

- Hard work
- Production
- Qualitative and perfect achievements
- Social solidarity
- Reciprocal kindness

- National loyalty
- Devotion in work
- Knowledge and thinking
- Culture and creativeness
- It is also necessary to promote the positive values, such as truthfulness, honesty, fulfillment of one's promises, mercy, tolerance, ease, manhood, cleanliness, organization, respecting the elders, kindness to the minors, justice, relief, good relations with relatives and neighbors, removing dirty matters from roads, preserving public facilities and properties, avoiding mean issues and practices.
- It is also necessary to avoid the negative values, such as telling lies, dishonesty, treachery, harm, unemployment, laziness, corruption, and mischievous and destructive crimes.
- National awareness makes it necessary to know the plots made to exhaust the state and the gravity of terrorists,

agents and traitors to get the state rid of their evils and offenses.

The national awareness necessitates the full awareness of the conception of the national unity to escape the plots of those who attempt to flirt with the national fabric and spoil it. As such, we declared without the least hesitation that attacks on churches are equal to attacks on mosques and that the Egyptian security is indivisible and impartial. Any harm against any Egyptian afflicts all the Egyptians alike. Like any doer of suicide, a suicide bomber, who kills people or destroys buildings, only hastens to hellfire. Allah, the Almighty, says, “Do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful. (٢٩) And whoever does that in aggression and injustice – then We will drive him into a Fire. And that, for Allah, is [always] easy” , (the Quran, ٤: ٢٩-٣٠).

Allah, the Almighty, also says, “Do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed] except by [legal] right. This has He instructed you that you may use reason” (the Quran, ٦: ١٥١).

Allah, the Almighty, also says, “And those who do not invoke with Allah another deity or kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed], except by right, and do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. And whoever should do that will meet a penalty (٦٨) Multiplied for him is the punishment on the Day of Resurrection, and he abide therein humiliated— (٦٩)” (the Quran, ٢٥: ٦٨-٦٩).

Allah, the Almighty, also says, “We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely” (the Quran, ٥: ٣٢).

Bribery Destroys Nations!

It is a truism that *fatwa* (legal decisions of a *mufti*) changes following the change of times, locations and conditions. The same goes true for some of the *fatawa* issued on bribery. Given the wide scale corruption that the past governments tolerated and overlooked insomuch that they did not strictly combat bribery and bribe takers, some *muftis* issued *fatwa* to the effect that “only the bribe taker is blamed for it. As to the bribe giver, they deemed him/her exempted from sin, as s/he had to pay the bribe to attain their rights or have their due services. Such *fatawa* are built on a temporary benefit, which was the care for the weak faith of people. However, they actually opened wide

loopholes for weak souls to fake excuses for this crime until all doors were only opened through bribery and nepotism.

However, everything is currently changing. Now, we live in a great country under a wise political system that strongly faces all forms of corruption, bribe, favoritism and exploitation of powers. As such, it is the legal duty of all citizens to aid the government bodies in terminating all lethal diseases and preventing corruption before its occurrence by means of advice, refusal and declaration of dissatisfaction with it. It is necessary not to keep silent regarding any form of corruption.

In this context, I call for a legislative amendment that criminalizes all forms of participating in bribery and penalizing all those involved in it, including bribe takers, bribe givers and intermediaries. The punishment is necessarily vital when the watchful administrative monitoring bodies discover the crime. The true nobility and sincere sense of patriotism come true when a person reports the participants in this offense to the concerned bodies before being arrested. After arrest, they are all criminals and guilty.

The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The curse of Allah is upon the one who offers a bribe, the one who takes it and the intermediary [between them]." Actually, the intermediary is the most dangerous of all.

Likewise, the Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The one who gives bribe and the one who takes it are both in hellfire." He, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, cursed all parties involved in the crime of bribe as a terrifying threat to deter them. They are denied the Divine Mercy and expose themselves to the wrath and anger of Allah. To sum up, the offense of bribe is not only forbidden and dispraised, but it actually leads a person to lose all hopes in winning the Mercy of Allah.

Bribe, in essence, is a form of ill-gotten gains and consumption of people's money unjustly. As such, Allah (may he be Exalted and Glorified) says, "You will see many of them actively engaged in sin and aggression, and consuming ill-gotten gains. Vile indeed is that which they have been doing. Why is it that their scholars and jurists do not forbid them from sinful

utterances and consuming ill-gotten gains? Wrong indeed are their deeds” (the Quran, ٥: ٦٢-٦٣).

Allah (may he be Exalted and Glorified) says, “It is not for any prophet to embezzle. Whoso embezzles will bring what he embezzled with him on the Day of Resurrection. Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned and they will not be wronged” (the Quran, ٣: ١٦١). Allah (may he be Exalted and Glorified) says, “Do not consume your property among yourselves in illegal ways and then deliberately bribe the rulers with your property so that you may wrongly acquire the property of others” (the Quran, ٢: ١٨٨).

Allah (may he be Exalted and Glorified) says, “Do not consume your property among yourselves in illegal ways unless it be a trade through your mutual consent and do not kill yourselves. Surely, Allah is Ever-Merciful to you” (the Quran, ٤: ٢٩).

Ka‘b ibn ‘Ujrah al-Ansari, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “The Prophet, Allah's peace and blessings upon him, said, ‘No flesh grown on illicit gains will ever enter paradise; each

flesh grown on illicit gains is most appropriately consigned to hellfire.”

The Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings upon him, also said, ‘Many people misappropriate Allah's properties (properties owned by other people) unjustly, theirs will be hellfire on the Day of Resurrection.’”

To conclude, Islam forbids all forms of bribe regardless of names, be it dubbed as a gift or any other euphemistic label. Names cannot change facts. Evidently, the legal decision depends on the essential meanings and intentions apart from names and titles. Woe to the bribe takers, givers and intermediaries! They only await the wrath of Allah to befall them in this life and in the hereafter.

Fake Practice of Religion for the sake of Political Interests

Undoubtedly, the superficial practice of religion and the merchandise of religion for political interests are most dangerous challenges facing the Arab and Muslim communities. Some focus on form and appearance at the expense of content and essence giving form and appearance the absolute priority even if they fail to meet the human and moral standards that make them models and examples to follow. Actually, those persons, who are keenly interested in their external appearance at the expense of their behavior against the teachings of Islam, are among fatal elements conducive to destruction and repulsion. Assuming the appearance of devout people while

exercising mistreatment, telling lies, cheating, deceiving, or devouring the wealth of people with falsehood is very dangerous. Indeed, those who do that are among the hypocrites. Our Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays” (Recorded by al-Bukhari in his Sahih).

Likewise, those who confine devoutness and practice of religion to acts of worship and diligent performance of rites while they misunderstand religion and exceed the proper bounds in excommunication (*takfir*), carry arms and revolt against the community are similar to the *Khawarij* who were the most practicing Muslims in their prayer, fasting and night prayer. However, they did not acquire the sufficient religious knowledge that would prevent them from shedding the blood of innocent people and thus they violently revolted against the community with their swords. If they sought knowledge first, as stated by Imam al-Shafi‘i (may Allah shower him with mercy),

it would prevent them from that because Islam is a religion of mercy before anything else and hence everything that keeps you away from mercy drives you away from Islam. What matters most is the acceptable behavior and not the empty words as said: “Actions speak louder than words.”

Nonetheless, the acts of worship only bear fruit when they refine the human behavior and manners. He whose prayer does not prevent him from indecency and wrongdoing, his prayer is not acceptable. Allah, the Exalted, says: “Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do” (al-‘Ankabut: ٤٥). He whose fasting does not prevent him from perjury, Allah will not accept his fasting. Our Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “Whoever does not give up perjury and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his abstention from food and drink” (Recorded by al-Bukhari in his Sahih). When it comes to Zakah and charity, Allah accepts only what is good and wholesome. Our Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “Allah the Almighty is Good

and accepts only that which is good” (Recorded by Muslim in his Sahih).

Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “Allah does not accept a prayer without ablution, nor does he accept a charity from defrauded spoils” (Recorded by Muslim in his Sahih). The acceptance of pilgrimage is contingent upon licit provision and good conduct. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: “Whoever performs Hajj and does not have sexual relations with his wife, and does not do evil or sins then he will return (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born anew.” He also mentioned a person who travels widely with his hair disheveled and his body covered with dust lifting his hand towards the sky (to make supplication): O Lord, O Lord, whereas his diet is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, and his clothes are unlawful and his nourishment is unlawful. How can then his supplication be accepted?” (Recorded by Muslim in his Sahih).

More dangerous than the superficial practice of religion is the merchandise of religion for political interests whereby reference is made to those who take religion as a means to seize power abusing the religious sentiments and exploiting people's love of their religion, especially the laymen. They give false impression that the goal for which they seek power is to serve the religion of Allah and support and empower it. We do not judge the intentions of people; only Allah can judge them. However, the experience we had with the terrorist group and other Islamist political groups and allies confirmed two things:

First, their cause was not religion at all; it was a bitter conflict over power and marginalization of others with arrogance and insolence in a way that made people averse to them and their behavior, which became a heavy burden to religion. We are now in need of strenuous efforts to remove this negative stereotype from minds of many people who linked between the behavior of those people and religion.

Second, they wronged their religion, distorted its purity and tolerant civilization and proved that they are not a people of

religion or competence. Does religion call a man to betray his homeland, reveal its secrets, sell its documents and act as a spy against it? Does religion call a man to incite violence, killing and corruption and form what is called the qualitative committees that sow corruption on earth in an unprecedented treason against the homeland in service of the interests of its enemies? I have asserted and is still asserting that this terrorist group, which employed religion to deceive people and serve its interests to rise to power, is ready to collaborate with Satan to achieve its goals and ambitions for powers at the expense of religion, homeland or nation.

Political Pluralism and Parallel Authorities

This title purposefully gathers almost two contraries in terms of acceptance and denial. One is essential for the democratic process whereas the other seriously endangers the entity of states and could ruin them or lead them to weakness or disintegration. Political pluralism is a necessary just democratic demand; the unipolar world and the single-party nations mostly turn out to form some kinds of dictatorships, weakness or sluggishness.

The dictatorships lack the actual motivating competition to do the utmost in exploiting all possible abilities for the

fulfillment of duties and missions entrusted. The existence of parallel authorities or special-interest pressure groups of any form inside any state can endanger the structure of states and their national coherence, especially the powers masquerading as religious groups drawing their strength and influence from trading in religion.

The only scale with which states or communities can measure the existence of parallel authorities is their ability to enforce the law equally to all without discriminations or exceptions and without vacillation or apprehension. No group or person should use followers to manipulate with or thwart the law by force as was the case during the black year of nepotism and favoritism.

All citizens shall adopt the legal ways in expression of their demands. They shall abide by the established laws and regulations in each field in assertion of the impressibility of abusing the law. Indeed, “the end justifies the means” as a tenet adopted by the political Islam groups was about to lead society to deviation and dangerous slips but it for the Grace and Bounty

of Allah as well as the heedfulness and conscience of President Abdel Fattah El Sisi and the armed forces backed by all honorable nationals. The ghost of restoring the terroristic thinking of the Brotherhood and establishing parallel entities to the state's entities forms a source of great distress that should be resisted by all possible force to safeguard the prestige of the nation state.

In assertion of our belief that no compulsion whatever is permissible in religion and that scholars' role is only restricted to the clear conveyance of the message, as they are callers and guides, not rulers and judges, it is necessary to explain the relationship between Da‘wah and authority. However, the parallel authorities, which some entities attempt to create – may be religious, intellectual, cultural or economic and social through the activities of charitable associations or under other labels.

In conclusion, any entity that considers itself above law and accountability, especially when calling it into accountability is feared or restricted, is a dangerous parallel authority or a

pressure group that may affect laws and their enforcement. The comprehensive justice must be applicable for all without exceptions. This is the optimal solution to activate the state of law. Giving the ideal example, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, “The people before you were ruined because when a noble person amongst them committed theft, they would leave him/her, but if a weak person amongst them committed theft, they would execute the legal punishment on him/her. By Allah, were Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, to commit the theft, I would have cut off her hand.”

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “I have been given the authority over you, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me; and if I do wrong, set me right. Sincere regard for truth is loyalty and disregard for truth is treachery. The weak amongst you shall be strong with me until I secure his rights, if Allah wills; and the strong amongst you shall be weak with me until I take from him the rights of others, if Allah wills.

Obey me so long as I obey Allah and His Messenger. But if I disobey Allah and His Messenger, you owe me no obedience.”

‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭab (may Allah be pleased with him) sent a historical message to Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari in which he asserted duties of the judiciary saying, “The law is an impermeable duty and a practiced tradition. Deeply understand any case brought to you as the truth is useless unless it is effective put into effect. Give people equal attention, session and justice; so that the weak do not lose hope in your justice and the noble do not look for unfair favoritism.”

‘Umar asked Abu Musa, his governor over Kufa, to grant people equal session and attention in the judicial court; he should not receive some generously and gently while receiving others differently. Likewise, a judge should not call some persons by their names and others by their honorary nicknames or surnames. As such, the powerful people will have no unfair aspirations for favoritism or compliment and the weak people will not lose hopes of getting their rights and justice.

The comprehensive impartial and effective justice that dominates and judges all in full respect of the law is the guaranty of psychological security and societal stability. Scholars used to say, Allah (may He be Exalted) would support the just state, be it a Muslim or non-Muslim state, but would not support the unjust state even if it is a Muslim state.

As far as the parallel authorities are concerned, the denominational, racial or sectarian groups and factions are most dangerous. They attempt to empower themselves and gather elements of influence by taking support from other states as seen in the Shiite groups backed by the Persian powers. Their full loyalty is for the Persian authorities; they work in their favors and draw their strength from them. It is surprising that when the Kingdom of Saudi Arab enforced the law on a Saudi citizen, the Iran-affiliated groups became aflame everywhere with objections. They allowed themselves interference with the domestic affairs of the kingdom. The Safavid Persian absurdities reached unprecedented degree violating all

international norms and laws that guarantee protection for diplomatic missions. What would be the case if the citizen sentenced to capital punishment was an Iranian? Had any one interfered with the Iranian violations and absurdities committed against the Sunni Arabs of Ahwaz and other places? It is nothing but a parade of power that Iran exercises in complementation of the Iranian suspicious plans to conflagrate the region for the benefit of only two entities: the Zionist enemy and the presumed Persian Empire.

Capitals, Borders and States' Building

The relationship of countries' capitals with national borders is that of integration, and not conflict, and it should not be of conflict. Simply, any country cannot do without a capital as heart and center, or borders which represent the wings by means of which the country proceed. However, the center of any country in many of the world countries captures full attention. Precedents and realities confirm that the centers of countries capture the highest levels of attention throughout history. However, the level of this attention differs from developed countries to underdeveloped ones. In fact, the developed countries can in no way neglect a part of its borders; be it land or people, disregard it, leave it liable to loss and

attack, or even think of creating chaos or separatism. A poet once entered upon ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (may Allah be pleased with him) and said:

In case you safeguard the capital of the state where you live,

be noted that your governors in the different towns are like wolves.

They will not react to what you call for, unless you hit their necks with swords.

Yet, the development of border areas of a country is not the responsibility of the government or political leadership alone. The development of these areas is the joint responsibility of all national institutions including the governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, businessmen, Ministries of Investment, Education, Health, Housing, Culture, Awqaf, Monuments, and all other ministries and authorities as well as the social service associations and patriotic businessmen.

They all should devote special attention to all peripheral areas in general, and the border areas in particular as their first priority and a national security issue and developmental issue. In this regard, we should turn all national borders' areas into population-attracting areas, and population-losing areas. This is because in case a country did not pay attention to its border areas, the citizens of these areas would be obliged to move to the center and settle therein, the matter which puts tremendous pressure on the center and its suburbs and creates in many cases slums around it. It also contributes to creating a class system that produces by the passage of time social diseases and problems that need unconventional solutions.

On the contrary, the country's keen interest in making investments in its border areas, providing their citizens with the necessary services, including housing, health, education, culture, and all services required for having a stable life in their homeland, as well as providing opportunities for work and production, all of these things would give the people of these areas a sense of belonging to their land and, therefore, they

would do their best to protect it motivated by their absolute national loyalty and belonging.

If the elements of attraction, work incentives and significant investment are afforded in these areas, as the case of the state's current interest in the areas of Sinai, Matrouh, New Ismailia, Halayeb and Shalatin, New Valley and desert areas in general, these areas will turn into attractive areas creating an appropriate balance in the geographical and demographical distribution, providing a decent life for the citizens of these areas and alleviating the pressure placed on the center and the services provided to its citizens. In addition, the nature of capitals and political and economic centers in the whole world requires a level of progress which makes them tourist attractions and symbols of the peoples' civilization, greatness and progress.

The Story of Statues and the Destruction of Civilizations

To begin with, there is no single Muslim on earth who worships a statue, believes in it, preaches it or thinks about it. Rather, no single person from among the followers of heavenly religions believes in these statues at all.

It is true that Islam prohibited the making of statues in the early days of Islam. However, this prohibition was based on two grounds. First, people were recent converts to Islam who were recently worshipping idols thinking that they bring them nearer to Allah, the Almighty. The Holy Quran expressed this belief of theirs in the statement of Allah, the Exalted, "We only worship

them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position." (The Quran, ٣٩: ٣). Second, these statues were made to be worshipped or they were made in order to match the creation of Allah, the Almighty. This is confirmed by the fact that apart from the purification of the Ka'bah from idols that were worshipped, the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) have not demolished a temple, a statue or a monument in anyone of the provinces they opened.

This is because they were the best generation who correctly understood the objectives and purposes and were not satisfied with the apparent meanings of texts. On the contrary, they deeply and consciously reflected on their purposes and objectives. This profound understanding of texts is confirmed by the decision of the Second Caliph, Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), when he denied the new converts whose hearts were to be inclined to Islam their stated share of Zakah even though it was established by an explicit text as Allah, the Exalted, says, "Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed for it and

for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler." (The Quran, 9: 60). When he was asked, "How do you stop a share that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) used to give?" He replied, "We used to give them when Islam was weak to incline their hearts to faith. Now that Allah has strengthened Islam with His bounty, there is no need to give out this share."

Furthermore, Umar suspended the penalty of theft during the year of famine. He wrote to one of his governors and asked him about what he would do if people brought him a thief. The governor replied that he would cut his hand. Umar said to him, "But, if a hungry person came to me, I would cut your hand."

Unfortunately, our nation has been plagued by some narrow-minded people who began to issue edicts that this is lawful and that is unlawful without knowledge, understanding or study. They have taken themselves, students, followers and elements into the affairs of *fatwa* for which they are unqualified and thus they went astray and misled other people. Moreover, they

opened a wide door before international colonial and imperial powers that work hard to suppress our cultural monuments including the Arab, Islamic, Christian, Pharaohic, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, Roman or otherwise in order to blot out the Arab memory and the monuments of the Arab, Islamic and Christian civilizations. This is because they are foolish people who have no morals, religion, values or principles. For them, the end justifies the means regardless of the enormity and seriousness of this means even it led to the destruction of human beings, statues, offspring and the monuments of human civilizations.

The worst thing in this regard is that this destruction is perpetrated in the name of Islam and from people who falsely attribute themselves to it. In fact, Islam and its tenets have nothing to do at all with their acts even if they lied to themselves and deceived their victims from among the youth who joined them that they are on the truth. They have been rightfully described by Allah, the Exalted, in His statement, "And a group deserved [to be in] error. Indeed, they had taken

the devils as allies instead of Allah while they thought that they were guided." (The Quran, ٧: ٣٠). Allah, the Almighty, says, "Say, [O Muhammad], Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work." (The Quran, ١٨: ١٠٣-١٠٤) and He also says, "And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of opponents. And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption." (The Quran, ٢: ٢٠٤-٢٠٥).

The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Al-Tayyib, the Ministry of Awqaf and the Egyptian Dar al-Iftaa stressed that it is unconscionable to assail these cultural monuments in any way, either by demolishing, distorting, selling, looting or destroying and that assailing them is tantamount to an act of aggression against civilization and human heritage.

The reaction of the western world and international institutions to these crimes and their complete silence concerning them are remarkable and surprising and raise many questions. Had these crimes been committed anywhere else other than our Arab region, the whole world would strongly and differently react.

This is a natural reaction from our enemies who are waging unjust wars against us. However, the thing that adds more fuel to the fire is these *fatwas* that support and nourish this crooked thinking, the matter which stresses what we have repeatedly called for that there is an urgent need to issue a law to regulate the affairs of *fatwa* and restrict it to qualified scholars alone.

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