

**Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Endowments**

**Cultural Dialogue
Between
The East and West**

Prepared by:

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In the Name of Allah, the Origin of Mercy, the Mercy Giver

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into races and tribes so that you should get to know one another. In Allah’s eyes, the most honored of you are the ones most mindful of Him: Allah is all-knowing, all aware.”

The Private Rooms (13)

Introduction

All praise belongs to Allah alone, Lord of the Worlds, prayers be upon the last of His Messengers and Prophets, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, his family, and those who followed his guidance till the Day of Compensation.

Our upright religion is based on sound belief in diversity and disparity, which are among Allah's signs in the universe.

Allah Almighty says: "And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and diversity of your languages and colors. There truly are signs in this for those who know". (30 – 22), and says: "O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into races and tribes so that you should get to know one another" (49-13).

Diversity is a force and wealth if we deal with it well and benefit from it, and the alternative to dialogue is clashing, and the alternative to believing in diversity and difference is fighting and conflict.

In fact, we realize, in view of the witnessed reality, that the most faithful nations in the right to diversity, difference, acceptance of the other and the different, and consolidating the foundations of peaceful coexistence are the most secure, stable, progressive, prosperous nations.

And that the nations that have indulged in sectarian, doctrinal, ethnic, or tribal infighting and clashes entered circles of chaos and destruction that ravaged their entity and their mere existence, or at the very least tore apart their roots and shook their entity. Had mankind spent on development one tenth of what they spend on wars, the condition of the world would have changed, and security and stability would have prevailed.

Dialogue should be based on strong foundations and grounds, including:

- 1- Constant pursuit of acquaintance and openness to other cultures, and abandoning tight closure that ends up in fear of the unknown other. So

deepening awareness of the other, his culture and way of life, makes him for us less strange, and makes dialogue with him easier and stress-free. The logicians say: "Judging something is a result of its perception", hence, we are obliged to learn about the other's values, ideals, and cultures and analyze this in a good, neutral and fair analysis before judging for or against him; we should not presume ready preconceived stereotypes in judging others.

This is what many of our prominent scholars were fully aware of. So, Sheikh Muhammad 'Arafa, may Allah have mercy on him, wrote in the periodical of Al-Azhar in 1946 AD: The West must understand Islam, and Islam understand the civilization of the West, because if they understood each other, they will have no misunderstanding between them and there will be a good chance to live together in harmony; each of them will perform his share of the service mankind. Muslim scholars must present the civilization of the West as it is, so that acquaintance would replace confrontation, and peace replaces disputes.

- 2- That all parties must resort to the language of reason, and must be willing to reject violence, hatred, extremism, and terrorism, believing that conflict has no absolute winner or absolute loser. They must realize that the consequences of conflict and violence are disastrous for all of humanity and that there is no alternative way for mankind other than searching for the common values and points of convergence, for what is good for mankind way from wars, conflicts, killing, sabotage and destruction.
- 3- That all parties have a real desire to uphold common values and avoid all manifestations of selfishness and arrogance, Averroes says, specifying his method of taking from the culture of Greece and others: We must look at what they said and what they recorded in their books, what was in accordance with the truth, we accepted it from them, pleased with it, and thanked them for it. On the other hand, whatever contradicts the truth, we referred to it, warned of it, and excused them for it.
- 4- Focusing on benefitting from the useful and advantageous, and ignoring the other's cultural specifics that are inconsistent with our values and

civilization; we should do so in the light of mutual respect between nations and peoples. The West ought not to impose his values and lifestyles on the East, likewise, the East ought not to compel the West to adapt to its culture, civilization and heritage. Instead, all parties must maintain the common values and the unanimous consensus of the heavenly laws and human values, so, everyone searches for the agreed upon and excuse each other in what is different.

- 5- Emphasizing the fact that human morals and values which form the basis for co-living between mankind do not differ in any of the laws. Our Prophet (PBUH) says: “Verily, among that which people have acquired from the early prophetic sayings: If you are not ashamed (of bad deeds), then do whatever you want”.

So, show me any of the laws that permitted killing the soul that Allah has forbidden for no reason, or allowed for the disobedience of parents, eating the unlawful or eating orphans’ properties, or denying the right of the worker.

Show me a religion that permits lying, treachery, betrayal, breaking promises, or rewarding good deeds by bad ones. Rather, on the contrary, all divine laws have agreed on these noble human values. So, whoever contradicts them, he does not act only against religion, but also against humanity, and dissociates himself from being a human being, and from the natural disposition Allah Has instilled in mankind.

Our upright religion has taught us to say the good word to all people without any distinction; Allah Almighty says: “Speak good words to all people” (2:83). So, we are asked to say what is best as Allah Almighty says: “(Prophet) tell my servants to say what is best” (17:53), and 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” (41:34). Likewise, in the teachings of Jesus (PBUH) we read: If someone slams you on your right cheek, turn the left to him”.

It is a great call for tolerance in all divine laws so that mankind may live in peace and amity; no discord, no conflict, no violence, and no terrorism, which we seek through adopting the civilized approach between the East and West, in a way that achieves the happiness and peace for mankind without discrimination.

It is Allah Whom we seek to please, it is Whom we ask for help.

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Defining terms

The concept of dialogue:

Dialogue is defined by some as a method that takes place between two parties, each of which speaks what they see and are convinced of and reviews the logic and thought of the other party, with the intention of making the facts clear from his own viewpoint.

It is also defined as a form of interaction between social forces, and a method of communication for avoiding conflicts and mitigating confrontations.

Dialogue is also defined as: a principled dialogue that restores human relations to their human qualities, restores civilizations to their goals, and be an indication and guide for any political and economic dialogue.

So, it can be said that dialogue may be of two types:

The first seeks to penetrate the other and reforms it into a self-like state.

The second tries to explore the other with the aim of establishing coexistence between civilizations and cultures.

The first is a dialogue in form only not in reality, as dialogue is presumed to mutually acknowledge and accept the other as he is, and as he presents himself, and admits him as an equal partner.

Terms related to dialogue:

Among the approximate terms of the concept of dialogue in significance:

Discussion: in which each of the discussants holds fixed standpoints, and they discuss with the aim of consolidating their own views, and persuading others to change.

Argumentation: Is a form of expressing opposition between parties who are trying to prove each other's fault.

Negotiation: each of the parties involved will want to fulfill their own interests by all available means.

Conversation: Some call the conversation that takes the form of dialogue without its content a "false dialogue", if consideration is given to the formal image more than the content or substance, or call it "difficult dialogue", if it is seen that it does not achieve the desired result.

The concept of Culture:

"Thaqāfah" is the Arabic term that corresponds to the term "Culture" in European languages, and it means a set of customs, values and traditions in which a group or society lives, regardless of the extent of the scientific development of it, or the level of its civilization and architecture. and it was said: There are two directions in translating the word "Culture" into Arabic, the first direction: defines it as the knowledge, science, literature, and arts that people learn and educate about, and books may contain them, and yet they are specific to the mind, while the second direction: defines civilization as a counterpart to the word "Thaqāfah".

One of the overarching definitions of culture was put forward by Taylor; "Culture is that complex that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, ethics, law, customs, or any other capabilities, or habits that a person acquires as a member of society.

The concept of Cultural dialogue:

Cultural dialogue means that each party to the dialogue deals with the other's lifestyle in its various dimensions, in order to perceive, criticize, and benefit from it, and this dialogue process includes correcting false images and bad perceptions that each party holds on the other, which inhabit different angles of culture.

Definition of the East:

East: *Lexically means* the direction of sunrise. But as a *term*, it means the culture originated by the Arabs and Muslims, regardless of its geographical location. Some scholars defined the East as: The Arabic Islamic area which accommodates a combination of a specific civilization and culture, including the Arabized elements which are gradually integrated into it since the seventeenth century.

Definition of the West:

West: *lexically means* the direction of sunset. But as a *term*, it means a combination of civilizational and cultural structure developed by external and internal factors started in the sixteenth century. It stemmed from Western Europe.

A scholar said that the West means the culture emanated and practiced by the Europeans with their dominant beliefs, regardless of the geographical area.

The importance of dialogue

It is evident that whoever contemplates the life of whole mankind since Adam (PBUH) until now, will surely be aware of the great importance of dialogue as it contributes to sound communication between individuals and societies, exchange of experiences, drawing opposite points of view to the point of convergence. Rather, it is the noblest way to control objectionable conflict, and activate the values of cooperation, harmony and helping one another. Dialogue is a necessity to acquire science and receive knowledge, and works to highlight the common assets between the participants in the dialogue in belief, morals, and culture. It also deepens the common interests to the point that makes the participants in the dialogue move from individual to collective interests. As a result, dialogue leads to attaining solidarity between the participants in the dialogue.

The foundations of dialogue

The opinions of the thinkers and writers differed on the foundations and origins of dialogue, especially if the dialogue was between two groups, each of which has its own culture and identity. Some see that dialogue must be based on that which pertains to the parties of the dialogue, such as the topic, manner, and the two sides of the dialogue themselves. Others base it on the scholarly, ethical, and psychological characteristics that must be followed by interlocutors. Others see that the topics of the dialogue are its bases. On the other hand, the bases of dialogue in general are three: knowledge, eligibility, and ethics. Some writers see that one of the most important foundations of dialogue is the language that clarifies the concepts

and terms that are circulated between the parties to the dialogue, and this calls for the necessity of agreeing to define terms and concepts.

Professor Muhammad Mukhtar Jum'a Minister of Endowments mentioned the most important foundations on which the cultural and civilizational dialogue between East and West should be built, and they are:

- 1- Arbitration of the language of reason. Both parties should be willing to reject violence, hatred, extremism, and terrorism believing that the issue of conflict has no absolute winner or absolute loser, and that the consequences of conflict and violence are atrocious to humanity.
- 2- The pursuit of acquaintance; as deepening awareness of the other and his culture makes the dialogue with him more accessible, easier and stress-free.
- 3- That all parties have true desire to uphold shared values and avoid all manifestations of selfishness and arrogance.
- 4- Focusing on benefitting from what is useful and advantageous, and turning a blind eye to the other's cultural peculiarities. Instead, all parties must look for and stick to the agreed upon and excuse each other in what is different.

Ethics of dialogue

Dialogue certainly has many ethics that must be observed and maintained during the dialogue, as they are absolutely necessary for any successful dialogue. They become more compelling if dialogue takes place between two parties of different orientations and different cultures. So, we must take such ethics into consideration especially in cases of international dialogues.

However, they are so difficult to put in a comprehensive list, but we can gather them under the umbrella of the Ever-Glorious Qur'an which addresses all the people, especially at the time of dialogue, including for example the words of Allah Almighty: "Speak good words to all people" (2:83), and: "(Prophet) tell my servants to say what is best" (17:53), and: "Out of mercy from Allah, you (Prophet) were gentle in your dealings with them – had you been harsh or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed and left you" (3:159) and saying: "Speak to him gently so that he may take heed or show respect" (20:44), and many other verses.

The various scenes of dialogue throughout history made scholars and thinkers infer those ethics; they are not a set of tricks by which a dialogue partner can overcome the other, but rather noble ethics, and skills governing the language of high-level interaction governing the language of high-level interaction between people, such as saying good words, careful listening, respecting the other partner, talking quietly and deliberately, observing the specified time, impartiality in seeking the truth, not to be self-imposing, to be cautious of fake argumentation, quietness, and not accusing intentions.

Cultural Dialogue between the East and West

A historical view

The interaction between cultures is a process of influencing or being influenced by other cultures on different levels, which results in disparate social and cultural phenomena. This process and its results are a natural product of dialogue between cultures and this interaction takes two lines:

Vertical line: This means the effects of ancient civilizations on modern or the ones that follow them in historical order. Modern civilizations count on what they acquire from older civilizations, and often add to them new achievements while preserving its civilized identity.

Horizontal line: means the process of influencing and being influenced that takes place between historical and contemporary civilizations.

Such interaction helps the progress of the affected communities, and also contributes to changing their social and economic life unevenly, with

varying degrees comparable to the degrees of their response to interactions.

It is axiomatic that when thought take its natural straight path, it takes the form of “No” and “Yes” dialogue and the shadows and spectra between them. So, neither absolute blind rejection nor blind absolute acceptance is considered as thought. The nature of free thought is to lead an equal-sided dialogue in which no one has the right to command the other, nor is he compelled to obey the other, the dead must not be given preponderance over the living, and no preference is given to one group of the living over another.

Dialogue, as a form of interaction and communication between human beings, is as old as human thought, and it is not coincidence that Socrates used to go to markets to practice dialoguing with people, nor is it coincidence that Plato gave us his thought in a dialogue, but it was in both cases a deliberate and intentional matter, so that people may know how free thinking should be practiced. These were the first recorded dialogues in history. Other forms that took place before that were just beliefs rested in hearts, or practices prospered by words and deeds. The method of dialogue with Socrates and Plato took the form of a question and answer and give-take interaction. Hence, the main thought comes as a result of argumentation and free deliberation aiming at probing the problem for which a resolution is being sought. A process that ought to continue until the problem is deeply examined, a resolution is reached, and the causes behind it are known and judged as reasonable or trivial. So, when the whole issue is well-sieved, and the insignificant reasons are filtered from the considerable ones, we can combine the good elements together in

order that the image of the “good” would be clear in our minds and would lead us to the path of guidance.

Then came the middle ages in which religion prevailed – as belief in the hearts or analysis by minds -, and with-it culture came back, as it was a part of the practical life before the era of the Roman, and lost its superiority that made it a commodity which is exclusively owned by some people rather than others; they took it, gave it, and sent it with the army leaders to the countries they invaded. Then culture has returned to be a way of life, point of view, a basis for thoughts, and the basis for work and behavior; it appears in the construction of mosques, churches, houses, in the manufacture of utensils and lamps, in the decoration of walls, book covers and pages, on rugs, benches, pillows, window glass, and clothing fabrics. The people in the middle ages led the same life led at the days of ancient Greece, and as they were before that during the ancient Egyptian civilization and other civilizations of the East, carrying their culture as if they were carrying transparent air inhaling it while they did not feel its existence. Middle ages had gone, and the age of the European Renaissance came with the beginnings of the new use of the word "culture" which is the common use among the group of knowledgeable people to this day. With the advent of the industrial revolution at the beginning of last century (the nineteenth century) culture became increasingly alienated from practical life, since the worker, after the invention of machine in industry, no longer used his mind and hands in one operation.

Historical phases of dialogue between the East and the West

The phases of dialogue between the East and West passed through uninterrupted episodes over the years. The only steady difference between these episodes was the role played by either the influencing or influenced dialogue partner. We will have a quick look at those episodes throughout the different historical eras.

From West to the East for seeking knowledge:

Close cultural relations had been developed between the kingdoms of Western Europe in general and the Islamic Arab state in the medieval era in the eleventh century AD. The Western countries were interested in sending educational missions to Andalusia and other metropolises of the Islamic world, such as Sicily, to study science, arts, and industry. The West very well benefited from these missions which returned to Europe vehemently affected by language, science, and behavior. There was no evidence that the Islamic culture was affected by those missions, to the contrary, the European students were profoundly and clearly affected.

An example of this fact is the letters exchanged between the Umayyad Khalif Hisham the Third in Andalusia (418-422 AH / 1029-1031 CE) and King George the Second of Brittan. They reveal how profoundly the West's need for scientific advancement and learning from Muslims.

George, the king of England, Sweden and Norway, wrote:

To his Majesty the Khalif who enjoys an august standing, the King of Muslims in the Kingdom of Andalusia, Hisham the Third, from George the second, the King of England, Sweden, and Norway.

After glorification and reverence, we have heard of the great advancement that prevails in the institutions of education and industry in your wealthy country. So, we wanted for our sons to acquire samples of these virtues to be a good start in tracing your footprint, to spread the lights of knowledge in our country, whose four corners are surrounded by ignorance. We have put our niece Princess "Dobant" at the head of a British noble mission, to be honored with touching your throne, and seeking your kindness, and to be, with her colleagues, under the care of your Majesty, and under the protection of your decent entourage, as well as the care of their teachers. I have sent a humble present with the little princess to your Majesty, I hope that you will accept it. With all glorification and sincere love from your obedient servant George, M. A.

The Umayyad Khalif answered him:

All praise belongs to Allah alone, Lord of the Worlds, prayers be upon the Master of His Messengers. To the reverent King of England, Nicosia, and Scandinavia. I have seen your petition and agreed to your request after consulting those in charge among our consultants. We inform you that this delegation will be funded by the Muslim treasury-house, as a sign of our friendliness towards your royal character. I have received your present with great pleasure and sent you the most precious Andalusian rugs manufactured by the hands of our meticulous workers as a present to your

excellency carrying all signs of our amity and love. Peace be upon you. The Calif of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) of Andalusia: Hisham the Third.

The above-mentioned letters show that cultural dialogue between the East and the West was based on friendly and scholarly relations, through seeking knowledge and exchanging scientific delegations.

From the West to the East with a greed for political domination and economic control

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the West came to the East but in a different manner, as it was greed for domination and control. In this context, we are looking for an answer to a specific question related to the relationship of the East with the West and its roots in the depth of the history of the dialectical relation between them, which is: Was the arrival of the West to the Arab region at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century a beginning of renaissance or an abortion of an Arab renaissance that was in its embryonic stage? The answer to this question requires having a look at the factors of civilizational stagnation and inactivity that the region lived through to the end of the eighteenth century, when the West came hammering its gates violently at its end.

The beginning of stagnation started when the sources of international trade came under competition by forces outside the Arab world, especially after the Cape of good Hope route was discovered. At the time the Portuguese dominated the sources of eastern trade, and tightly closed the gateways of the Arab seas in the face of eastern trade.

When the Islamic states failed to find a way for paying the salaries of the army along with intense economic crisis that was accompanied by long wars for nearly two and half centuries against the Crusaders, and then against the Mongols, as well as the exhaustion of economic resources which paralyzed the movement of civilizational development, the state had to resort to the military feudalism system. This led to two extremely serious consequences, the first of which is: A decline in the monetary economic system that accompanied prosperity of trade and focus on self-sustaining agricultural production; a main feature of feudal communities. The second: the rampant phenomenon of political disintegration which left a negative impact on civilization development.

With the advent of the Ottomans and their control over the Arab countries, as well as implanting the reasons of civilizational backwardness, they imposed complete isolation between the Arab World and the outside world, and thus, the Arabs could not maintain their dialectical relationship with the West, and studying its ongoing civilizational progress, which coincided with the deterioration of the Islamic civilization, and the market of rational thinking, which was the fuel of the Islamic flourishing civilization, deteriorated. Therefore, some scholars became convinced that the heritage of our ancestors is the climax that no one can reach, or add to it, and all that they can do is reformulate it or explain its obsolete words. So, they became obsessed with imitation and resisted any attempt to innovation, believing that novelty is an axe that demolishes what was built by the predecessors. Whoever tried to innovate was accused with heresy and atheism.

The phase of Orientalism and the Orientalist efforts:

Through their close contact with the Muslims and their civilization in Spain, Southern Italy, and Syria during the Crusades, the Europeans became realized the necessity of liberating the European mind from its restrictions, whether religious or political,, and studying the Muslim Arabs' science in order that they may enter the stage of Renaissance, which led to civilized interest or Knowledge of our heritage for the manufacture of their civilization. With such interest, they began to collect eastern manuscripts from various countries of the Arab Islamic East, whether by legitimate or unlawful ways.

The emergence of interest in collecting and possessing Oriental manuscripts:

There is no specific date for the beginning of Western interest in the manuscripts of the Arabic Islamic heritage. But there are strong evidences that this interest is closely related to the establishment of the General Assembly of Eastern and Roman Catholic Churches in Florence in 1527 AD, under the auspices of Duke Cosimo Medici. The Egyptian Church delegation, headed by Father Andreas, head of the monastery of St. Antony and St. Paul, was one of the delegations attended this council, who gifted the Pope a collection of Coptic and Arabic manuscripts, and it is now preserved in the Laurenziana library in Florence. The Arabic collection is one of the oldest manuscripts in whole Europe except Spain. Although this collection did not settle in the library of the Vatican, it aroused the Pope's interest in Arabic and Islamic manuscripts.

The end of the eighteenth century did not come until the Napoleonic campaign against Egypt in 1798 AD, which led to the unveiling of many

secrets that were unknown about Egypt and the Arab countries, which made a European historian describe this invasion as “application of orientalism”.

The impact of this campaign on Egypt and the Arab countries was twofold: The first is the establishment of the Egyptian Scientific Academy or the Institut d'Égypte by Napoleon, in which eight scholars of mathematics, political economy, literature, and arts were appointed, he assigned its presidency to the well-known mathematician Joseph Fourier, and installed himself vice-president of the Institut, and was very proud of this title to the point that he used to sign many of his declarations and decisions by this title instead of his title as the commander in chief of the French campaign. Second: The campaign also resulted in the restoration of direct contact between Arabs and the West after several centuries of stagnation.

Scholarships to Europe:

Educational missions to Europe represented another phase of cultural dialogue, marking the beginning of the fall of the wall of Ottoman and Mameluke backwardness, and opened secure doors that linked the life, present, and future of this nation to modern European civilization, and to the Arab Islamic civilization of its era.

In 1826 AD, the Egyptian government decided to dispatch its largest and most important educational mission to France and this mission, accompanied by Refaat Al-Tahtawi (1216 - 1290 AH / 1801-1873 AD) was -

rightly - the important, real and major view of the Egyptian and Arab people of modern European civilization in its habitats and homes, where Rifa'a discovered the secrets of renaissance, excellence, progress, and civilization, and tried to spread his newly acquired knowledge in his surroundings and call to building advanced societies in his country and other countries of the Muslim world.

Tahtawy's call widely spread in various circles, especially after assuming the presidency of Al-Asun school, and published his two distinguished books: "Clearance of al-Abriz in Baris's summary", and "Methods of the Egyptian minds in the joys of modern literature".

Perhaps what discloses his purpose in writing the two books, according to Gomar, one of his teachers, is what Jumar said in his remarks for the first book:

This book deserves a lot of praise; it was made in a way that would be of great benefit for the author's people. He has endowed them with correct excerpts from the French arts, tradition, people's morals, and its politics. When he saw that his country is lower than the European countries in human science and useful arts, he expressed his sorrow for that, and he wanted to awaken the Muslim peoples with his two books, to commend them to acquire the new knowledges, and to ignite the sparkle of learning the European civilization and promoting their means of life. He meant to remind his people of the necessity of imitating such progress by talking about the French Royal buildings and orders.

Thus, the educational missions formed an important phase of cultural dialogue, based on exchange of knowledges and grasping the Western sciences in an attempt to rise up and restore their civilized role.

The goals of cultural dialogue between the East and West

Setting prior goals agreed upon the parties involved for dialogue would make it successful, but if the dialogue has no specific or prior goals, it normally turns into barren dialogue with insignificant results. Dialogue must set out from the human being, and focus on his affairs and issues, lest the dialogue lose its value, importance, and rich content.

If the human being is the first axis of the goals of dialogue, then this necessarily requires the dialogue to be manifold as seen from the issues and spheres that focus on the human being. So, we can say that dialogue has main (practical) and secondary (theoretical) goals, which can be summarized as follows:

Practical goals aim to achieve justice and cooperation between peoples, and exchange experiences in the fields of fine arts, culture, science, economics, politics, and arts.

On the other hand, **theoretical goals** are to exchange different viewpoints, clarify the concepts adhered to by each party, and correct the false, incorrect or unclear concepts to the parties to the dialogue.

Among the important goals of cultural dialogue between East and West Are the following:

First: Correcting misunderstood concepts by both parties:

Relations between East and West have witnessed many negative experiences throughout history, making each party see the other in a negative way. I think that such preconceived ideas by both parties of the dialogue may make it end up in complete failure. So, such preconceived ideas and the history behind them with all its repercussions and negative effects on the present must be left behind, and that this transcendence of the past must stem from a common cultural dialogue.

Bypassing the past makes it incumbent on the two parties to open new axes for dialogue, and if this is the case, it becomes inevitable to carefully select the topics for dialogue. For example, when it comes to Islam-Christian dialogue, we should not enter into a discussion of belief issues at the expense of seeking practical issues that are useful to address, not to evade them, but because such a discussion has no benefit, and it is closer to be a sterile argument and sick importunity.

Therefore, one of the issues that must be given priority in such dialogues is cooperation for the sake of sanctioning the common religious principles and teachings that urge respect for human life, observance of the sanctity of man, the pursuit in the land for good, security, and peace, fighting against atheism, vice, corruption, injustice, and tyranny, and calling people to appreciate the values of love, tolerance, and human fraternity.

There are vast areas for joint work for the sake of man, in the service of mankind, and for saving the world from evils and destructive deeds, in which Islam has a strong presence and a strong impact throughout all ages. Sheikh Muhammad Abdou has done very well when he described

the principles, teachings, and morals of Islam that revolve in this scope as "Sharia of Peace".

In this and other models, and others, the Arabs offer the West new goals for dialogue. This does not mean that the differences between East and West may cease to exist, but rather it means that each party would try to start building bridges of communication based on correct understanding of the ideas and beliefs of each party.

Second: Promoting the value of cultural diversity:

Allah Almighty says: "Another of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors. There truly are signs in this for those who know" (30:22), and says: "And if Allah had so willed, He would have made you one community, but he wanted to test you thorough that which He has given you" (:48). These verses mean the He ordained different laws to test His servants by them, and to reward or punish them for obeying or disobeying Him, and for what they did or intended to do.

In other words, diversity and differences are universal signs and practices of Allah Almighty in his creation. There is no doubt that cultural diversity is a reality that no sane person can deny or ignore if he wants to establish a fruitful and balanced cultural dialogue.

Dialogue in the era of globalization and cultural diversity:

No one disagrees that globalization is an existing and globally empowered phenomenon, and there is still debate over its advantages and disadvantages, and on the consequences, it may have on mankind.

Therefore, the idea of dialogue can be presented as an alternative to the idea of globalization, as there is no doubt that in light of globalization that is fueled by the hegemony of Western systems by means of modern technology, belief in the decline of cultural diversity and the imposition of certain cultural hegemony on the world may prevail. Therefore, before discussing cultural diversity as a goal for Arab-West dialogue, we should first discuss this issue: Does globalization threaten such diversity by eliminating it?

The answer, based on logic and cultural nature of mankind, does not support this hypothesis. Linking globalization to autism and cultural homogeneity is often given more than its it deserves, i.e., commercial and cultural exchange always involves adaptational processes in an increasingly complicated environment, and the interaction between its parties is not normally unidirectional. Moreover, the cultural roots are deep-rooted, and in many cases, they fall to depths that are not reached by external influences.

The importance of cultural diversity:

Emphasis is placed on cultural diversity as a goal of cultural dialogue between the East and West due to its importance to both sides. Among the most important points are:

- Cultural diversity is seen as the key drivers of societies, considered the main engine of societies, as well as the basis for its continuous development.

- It affects the educational continuum, contributes to its diversity, magnifies experiences and cultures, and helps exchanging them among different nations.
- It provides for more choices to individuals and increases the diversity of life.
- It gives individuals the freedom to express their thoughts, spread their cultures, and exchange their opinions with others.
- It enriches viewpoints and forms a common factor for exchanging all that is beneficial.
- It magnifies the cooperation of scholars, politicians, statesmen, and decision makers all over the world.
- It increases creativity in all spheres of life.

However, cultural diversity carries with it - if ignored - negative aspects, among them:

- It legitimizes some strange cultures that may have abnormal thoughts.
- It may lead to the disintegration of society causing conflicts and disputes because one group may accept a certain culture which is not accepted by another.
- It eradicates cultural and civilizational specifics of countries, which may lead to lose the identity of some societies.
- There is no doubt that international organizations were aware of the need to preserve global cultural diversity, by adopting the concept of cultural diversity rooted in a number of international and regional

declarations, the most important of which is the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2001 and the Islamic Cultural Declaration known as the Algiers Declaration in 2004.

- **Establishing the right of variation and tolerance:**

The proposition of the idea of cultural diversity in the Arab West dialogue must be based on the premise that the Arabic culture is a genuine culture in the human heritage; we have no fear that it may vanish, nor can it be dominated by the West, and that the language, culture, religion, and history of the Arabs are in a state of almost daily clash with the West with its various linguistic and cultural dimensions through the media and in points of direct contact. This clash often tends to use methods other than dialogue that contradict the values of tolerance and co-living between the two parties. Therefore, conducting dialogue between them is a must to settle their differences, in order that they may achieve high levels of understanding, and emphasize that cultural diversity is a reality and that each party has the right to preserve its culture. This may be a step forward towards establishing the right of difference and tolerance.

By this, the world may witness a greater degree of tolerance between cultures, which is based on knowledge and understanding of these cultures and justification for their existence, the significance of their symbols, the behavior associated to them, and the values they adhere to, despite the differences between them in perception, idea, behavior and belief.

Third: Developing relations based on cooperation between civilizations:

Human progress in different stages and spheres is nothing but the outcome of intellectual creativity, cooperation, and contact between societies, and the evidence for this is that there is no civilization that resulted from scratch, neither there was a civilization that can be taken as the first and the mother of the civilizations that came followed to emerge, as alleged by some historians who claimed that the Greek philosophy is the starting point of human thought, then these historians and those who joined them were forced to acknowledge the primacy and preference of ancient Egyptian civilizations over the ensuing civilizations, the first of which was Greek civilization.

In the interaction between cultures, there was always a common human ingredient that civilizations took from each other, and each civilization contributed to this process which reinforces their cultural contribution. Besides, there are specificities in each culture which do not allow for transferability to other cultures due to its specific nature, and at the same time due to rejection by other cultures to preserve their specificity and their unique characteristics.

Perhaps, one of the most important fruits of developmental interaction, as a goal of dialogue, is to achieve cooperation between nations. We, the Arabs, have a cultural heritage that can be presented as evidence of our firm concern to implement the principle of international cooperation. This can be seen in the conduct of our Prophet (PBUH) when he implemented the principle of international cooperation on his arrival to Madinah by

signing a treaty with the Jews based on cooperation on righteousness, protecting virtue, and preventing harm.

Through agreeing on the principle of international cooperation, issues worthy of dialogue emerge, like: preserving the environment, combatting unemployment, poverty, ignorance, sectarian strife, wars of extermination and ethnic cleansing, that newcomer in the name of globalization, and many other common concerns. Indeed, it is obligatory for those who think about the destiny of humanity to agree on the minimum requirements for human harmony that take the form of a civilizational pact.

Therefore, some of the objectives of the cultural dialogue are derived from the declaration of the principles of international cultural cooperation, including:

- 1- Spreading knowledge, stimulating talent and enriching cultures.
- 2- Developing peaceful relations and friendship among nations and striving for creating better understanding of other nations' way of life.
- 3- Enabling every person to acquire knowledge, participate in the scientific progress made throughout the world, benefitting from its fruits, and contributing to enriching cultural life.
- 4- Improving the conditions of spiritual life, and the material existence of man throughout the world.
- 5- Another goal can be added to cultural dialogue, which is, exploring the history of civilizations with the aim of building multifarious horizons for cooperation in the present and future so that freedom and justice may prevail throughout the world.

Fourth: Coexistence as an alternative to conflict:

The Ever-Glorious Qur'an has made the call to cooperation and coexistence among societies a basis of communication and acquaintance between nations regardless of the differences between them, which is Allah's wisdom in the existence of creation, as stated in the Qur'an: "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" (11:118-119) and: "People, We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should get to know one another" (49:13). The Arabic equivalent to "to get to know one another" is, "t'arafu" ; a verb formed in the reciprocal form to signify that more than one participant are involved in the process which is the great moral purpose in which familiarity, affection, harmony, openness to the other, and establishing a civilizational dialogue are attained in a manner that achieves complementarity, strength, and all that is rooted in the religious and worldly benefit of all peoples and achieves common goals among civilizations.

Some forms of coexistence based on these common goals include the following:

1- Caring for global solidarity:

The Prophet (PBUH) had portrayed the image of human society with all its groups in saying: "The example of those who observe Allah's commands and those who violate them is like the example of some people sharing a ship; some live on board, others live in the lower part. When those in the lower part needed water, they had to go up to

get water. So, they said: Let's make a hole in our part in order that we may not harm those who live on board. If those on board let them do what they intended, they all would drown, but if they prevented them, they all would survive”

Mankind nowadays are like a group of people settled on board of a cosmic vessel sailing through the cosmic space, and it is imperative to avoid any imbalance in it at any cost. The Prophet (PBUH) used in the Hadith the example of a ship which we borrow here to portray the world of today, and to emphasize the necessity of maintaining global solidarity between people.

In spite of the necessity of global solidarity, that solidarity can only be achieved within the framework of a civilizational dialogue that harmonizes the different cultures, so that it can highlight the important common values, and, moreover, can work on the means that can achieve these objectives in the context of each single civilization.

2- Respect for religious diversity:

Pluralism means the presence of many religions, beliefs and cultures at the level of all humanity, whether they live in one country or in different countries. Respect for this pluralism is not to deny the other, or belittle it, but to acknowledge the principle of equality, which is what the Messenger of Allah did in the society of Madinah when he migrated to it. By the time, three different classes of people existed there, the conditions of each of them differ in relation to the other; the companions of the Prophet (PBUH), the polytheists who had not yet accepted Islam, and they belong to the original tribes of Madinah, and

the Jews. The Prophet (PBUH) wrote the first treaty between these three classes, in which he laid the principles of religious freedom, acceptance of the other, and complete equality in duties and rights without the least of injustice or discrimination. The Orthodox Caliphs followed his same path.

Likewise, Andalusia included social elements descending from different ethnicities and religions, mainly, the Christians and the Jews. Despite the religious diversity and ethnic differences that prevailed between these social elements, Andalusia was able, under Islamic rule, to establish an advanced and sophisticated model of coexistence and tolerance that is still inspiring to many who are talking about the relationship with the other, theorizing for tolerance and coexistence.

3- Cross-fertilization of cultures:

A process of enacting mutual influence between different cultures, within the limits tolerated by each culture. This was evident among the Arabs. Muslims received cultural and intellectual contribution of several human cultures from India, Persia, and Greece through translation. They grasped what they received and reproduced it in a better form that has its own character and characteristics and adapt with their mental environment and religious concepts. So, they conducted several experiments and the science gained great advancements on their hands. They proved that preserving their own character does not mean to be isolated from other cultures, neither is

it incompatible with the coexistence between cultures and the exchange of benefits between them.

4- Civilization Scramble:

Among Allah's practices in the universe is making mutual jostling between His creation a reason for survival; a great practice mentioned in His Book, and a condition for establishing goodness of the earth, that is, no goodness would take place on earth unless people jostled and corrected each other. Allah Almighty says: "If Allah did not drive some back by means of others, the earth would be completely corrupt, but Allah is bountiful to all" (2:251).

In his masterpiece "The Arab Civilization", Gustave Le Bon maintained that the European civilization owes the Arabs to their civilization, because the Arabs were the ones who opened to them the gates of what they were ignorant of philosophical, scientific, and literary knowledge, so they were creditors of the West and their imams in six centuries, a matter that led the Europeans to acquire the Greek heritage and to explore its past.

The interaction between civilizations, in the Islamic thought, is based on the principle of civilized stampede, which is a purely Qur'anic principle, not civilized conflict. It is a process of mutual jostling that does not conflict, dialogue that does not fight, interaction is life, and the conflict is annihilation.

Tolerance: Tolerance is one of the most important moral goals that lead to peaceful coexistence between nations. It is the individual capacity to absorb, digest and interact with difference. The Ever-

Glorious Qur'an had a precedent in calling not only to observe this great principle, but rather to what is beyond that of intermarriage and blood mixing, as it says: "And He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes: Allah loves the just" (60:8); a call to free oneself from fanaticism and racism.

Again, Gustave Le Bon says: The Arabs were able to transform Spain financially and culturally in a few centuries and to make it the head of all European kingdoms. Moreover, they affected their morals as well and taught them tolerance, which is the most precious quality of man. The Arabic Spain at the time was the only European country in which the Jews entertained the protection and attendance of the state, therefore, they greatly proliferated in number.

Fifth: Preserving human dignity:

It is certain that one of the most important goals and fruits of dialogue is preserving human dignity. We will trace how human dignity was dealt with in three international documents that are deemed in our time being the well-established international authority of human rights:

- 1- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 2- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- 3- The international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The first thing that the researcher observes in these three documents is that they all agree in the preamble on identical vocabulary, that is, acknowledging the inherent dignity of the human family. They all state that:

Acknowledging the inherent dignity of all the human family, and their equal and stable right is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

Thus, we see that human dignity in the concept of international legitimacy is an inherent dignity in all the members of the human family, and the term “human family” corresponds to the same meaning mentioned in the Qur’an “children of Adam”, Allah Almighty says: “We have honored the children of Adam and carried them by land and sea; We have provided good sustenance for them and favored them specially above many of those We have created” (17:70)

Obstacles to cultural dialogue between East and West

The conflict between East and West throughout history has formed a clear negative image for both sides. Memory, therefore, often recalls a state of fear mixed with suspense and apprehension on both sides, of which none of them could rid himself of, because it is deeply penetrated in memory, and is transferred from one generation to another, which created many obstacles to dialogue.

First: How does the West view the East?

For the West, the East was the source of good deeds, and a land of wealth. As for the eastern society, the West is seen as a society that lacks much, including:

- It puts faith rather than mind.
- Misunderstanding predestination, which made the eastern mind seen, according to some, as an inert mind that believes in magic and sorcery.
- The oriental mind cannot invest the land and wealth due to this mystical mentality.
- The eastern mind has no ability to invest in land and good things as a result of this superstitious mindset.
- The oriental mind is a linguistic one, that is, it has a verbal culture that appeals to figures of speech more than using logic and reason.

This negative view was not the whole of the scene, as there was a Western perception characterized by neutrality, or objectivity mainly based on philosophy and literature. Durant says: Avicenna had an extreme influence on the philosophers and scholars who came after him. This influence went far beyond the countries of the East to Andalusia, where he shaped the philosophy of Averroes and ibn Maimun, and to the Latin Christian world and its philosophical teachers. It is amazing to find a lot of Avicenna's opinions in the works of Alberts Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas. Rodger Beacon calls him "The biggest dean of philosophy after Aristotle".

It will take us too long if we tried to count the aspects of the influence of the Arab-Islamic civilization on the West. Many western researchers and scholars have admitted this influence; Durant says: As for the Islamic world, it has had a profound impact on the Christian world in various types. From the Muslim world Europe received food, drinks, drugs,

medicine, weapons, armor badges, art masterpieces, antiques, fabrics, merchandise, many industries, legislation, and marine techniques.

Also, the Arab scholars were the ones who preserved the Greek disciplines; mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and medicine. They transferred this Greek heritage to Europe after they refined and added a great deal to it. The Arab physicians continued to hold the banner of medicine in the world for more than five hundred years, and it was the Arab philosophers who preserved the works of Aristotle to Europe. Avicenna and Averroes were two rising stars from the east to the philosophy teachers who transferred their knowledge, relied on their books, and it was only the Greek texts that they trusted more than they trusted the Arab scholars.

Second: How does the East view the West?

The Arabic though and the Arab and Eastern societies at the same time divided into several trends towards the West as follows:

- **A trend that rejects the West as a whole**, and this trend has resorted to self-isolation and rejected any cultural exchange and became more attracted to the past – in its narrow sense – than to present; we can call them: Expatriate in time.
- **A trend that believes in the advancement of the West** and believes that we must start from where others have ended, and that the western product is the product of a civilized dialogue; it calls for leaving the east and catching the west; we can call them: Expatriate in place.

- **A compromise trend**, that believes in the necessity of compromising between the contributions of the western civilization, and those of the Muslim civilization. The holders of this trend are divided into two parts:
 - **The first:** takes off from the heritage and does not lose its connection with the present. It believes that the Ever-Glorious Qur'an came to support the mind not to contradict it and believes in *ijtihad* "diligence" which gives authority to mind and makes it the governor.
 - **The second:** takes off from the present but does not lose its connection with the past (heritage); rather, it tries to create some sort of connection with what might ignite the sparkle of Arab illumination. It found its ultimate goal in Averroes, as he represents the zenith of the reasoning mentality reached by the Arab.

- **Third: Orientalism:**

Orientalism as a rising scientific movement, and as a manifestation of the identification of the other in a way that leads to understanding and dialoguing with him, has certainly had its positive aspects in research, discoveries and analysis. On the other hand, it also had some negative aspects in misunderstanding and forgery.

Orientalism, in its negative sense, has been one of the reasons that deepened the negative views between the parties in the east and west, which caused the orientalists to refuse to be classified as 'orientalists' due to the negative reputation attached to this description. But this does not relieve them of some historical consequences.

For example, but not limited to the American orientalist "John Esposito", and "Dominique Shefali", "Maxime Rodinson", and "Jack

Tobie” the French Orientalists, as well as the Roman Orientalist “Nadia Angelesco” believe that they are historians of the East not Orientalists.

The misconceptions about orientalism in its negative sense revolve around questioning the Islamic faith, the Ever-Glorious Qur’an, the Prophet’s biography, and Prophetic Hadith. Modern orientalist schools are addressing some topics which were not addressed in the past, including the Western European role in achieving Modern colonial goals in the Islamic world.

Fourth: The trend of radicalism and fanaticism:

Radicalism means to go beyond rational limits and contravene moderate behavior.

Fanaticism means rejecting whatever is right and sticking to extremism and militancy.

Radicalism is neither confined to a certain religion nor a specific society, rather, it is an epidemic that no society can escape from it or from some of its effects. Despite the spread of the phenomenon globally, its intensity varies from one society to another, in some societies it is clearer and stronger than it is in others, and this is due to the strength of the factors that nourish this tendency.

There is no doubt that serious dialogue and goodwill argument by specialists is one of the important mechanisms to address fanaticism and radicalism; lack of a culture of dialogue on both sides does not help refuting their pretexts and claims and highlighting their points of deviation. Some sorts of discourse exchanged between the two sides represent this extremist and fanatic tendency Which is one of the most important

obstacles to cultural dialogue between East and West, and the following is an indication of this:

- **The fanatic eastern discourse against the West:**

The fanatic discourse held by some in the East against the West believes that the West and the East are enemies throughout history, and it is impossible to understand one another or co-live with each other within the framework of a human relationship and international cooperation. The holders of this radical view see that the West is the genuine enemy of Islam and ignorantly describe it as infidel. They even describe their Muslim fellows who oppose their ideas as infidels and see that the dialogue with West is futile.

There is no doubt that no goodness can be gained out of this discourse and Islam is innocent of these scourges and the way they see and deal with the other. Allah Almighty says: "(Prophet) call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching. Argue with them in the most courteous way, for your Lord knows best who has strayed from His way and who is rightly guided. (16:125)

Whoever commits such heinous acts is pervert with a deviant belief and is responsible for his acts which are not counted on Islam. Neither Islam nor righteous Muslims are to be blamed for such people, but rather Islam and righteous Muslims are completely free of this behavior. And the culture and morals of the Arabs is a good example of this.

- **The fanatic Western discourse against the Arab East:**

The material and scientific power gained by the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was introduced into the hearts of some of their scholars, historians and writers with a great deal of arrogance, and this appeared in the strict Western discourse held by some Westerners, and showed clear hostility to the East, Arabs, and Muslims. It sees nothing in the Arabs but an enemy who threatens its interests and tries to demolish its civility.

On the other hand, the western objective scholars who rid themselves of fanaticism were equitable to Islam and its Messenger. An example to be quoted in this respect is Gustave Le bon who wrote "The Arab Civilization". It is the greatest book written by Westerners that shows fairness of Islam and its civilization; this is because Gustav Le Pen is a materialist philosopher, who does not have a fanatic view for or against a religion. Therefore, fanatic western discourse does not acknowledge him, due to his fairness to Islamic civilization, in fact, he is one of the most notable figures in sociology and history in the nineteenth century, yet, the westerners have not favored him.

Mechanisms of enhancing cultural dialogue between the East and West

Among the Mechanisms for promoting cultural dialogue between East and West are the following:

- 1- Religious institutions:** Religious institutions such as Al-Azhar, the Ministries of Endowments and Religious Affairs, and Fatwa Institutions in the Arab countries, have a prominent role in promoting the process of cultural dialogue; through publications, symposia, lectures, joint conferences, dialogue management, and joint work as reflected by the Egyptian experience in creating outstanding relationship between the inhabitants of one country, and joint initiatives between Al-Azhar and the Egyptian church like “Family House”, and the initiation of “Together in the service of the Nation” which is held annually in cooperation between the female preachers

of the Ministry of Endowment and church nuns in order that they may correct many misconceptions among others, and publications that contribute significantly to promoting the cultural dialogue process such as “Islam and the issues of dialogue” and “Muslim-Christian Dialogue”, issued by The Egyptian Ministry of Endowments and written by Professor Dr. Mahmoud Hamdy Zaqzouq, former minister of Endowments.

These efforts culminated in the inaugurating Al-Fattah Al-‘alim mosque, and Jesus Cathedral in the New Administrative Capital, in Cairo in one day, in addition to the great efforts being made by the Ministries of Endowments in many Arabic and Islamic countries.

Besides, the Da’wa work continues to effectively promote the process of cultural dialogue through:

- 1- Launching dialogue convoys concerned with listening to young people, and rationally discuss their concerns in a way that matches the requirements and developments of the modern time and its changes.
- 2- Holding cultural and religious dialogues in schools, mosques, institutes, youth centers, and the institutions concerned with this issue, with the participation of specialist scholars and young distinguished Imams.
- 3- Holding educational and awareness-raising symposia and lectures to support the means of dialogue, and renunciate all forms of blind intolerance and fanaticism.

- 4- Closely investigating intellectual and cultural problems and working hard on erasing Islamic illiteracy among all layers of society, especially young people.
- 5- Producing religious and cultural “drama” that disseminate moderate cultural content transmitted in a manner consistent with our civilization and consolidates the values and culture of dialogue.
- 6- Youth participation in international conferences and public forums concerned with disseminating moderate Islamic thought.
- 7- Expanding local and international religious and cultural competitions.
- 8- Coordination between the institutions concerned with Da’wa, thought, and culture in our Arabic and Islamic world in order to spread a culture of peaceful coexistence in accordance with the moderate understanding of Islam, and to establish intellectual and cultural partnerships with the international institutions and forums concerned with communication of civilizations.

There is no doubt that mankind needs to emphasize through religious institutions the system of human values, belief in civilizational and cultural diversity, and co-living through what is common between mankind, and affirm that this coexistence is at the core of the message of all religions in order that religions may not be exploited in political, interests or economic ambitions, and accordingly, killing, destruction and sabotage can be committed in the name of religion, whereas religion is completely clear of it.

Divine Laws have unanimously agreed upon a large set of human values and principles,, the most important of which is the preservation of the human soul, Allah Almighty says: “If anyone kills a person – unless retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land – it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind. Our messengers came t them with clear signs, but many of them continued to commit excesses in the land” (5:32).

Among the values acknowledged by all the divine laws: Justice, tolerance, fulfilling promises, returning things entrusted to anyone, telling the truth, dutifulness to parents, sanctity of orphans’ wealth, observing neighbor’s rights, saying good words, giving full measures; because the source of divine law is one. And this is why our Prophet (PBUH) said: “The prophets are brothers of different mothers and one father, their laws are different, but their religion is the same”

Show us any divine law that permitted taking a life, which Allah has made sacred except for the pursuit of justice, committing adultery, disobedience to parents, eating the unlawful, eating orphans’ wealth, or eating workers’ wages. Or show us any divine law that permits lying, cheating, betrayal, breaching promises, or rewarding the good with bad.

On the contrary, all the heavenly laws have agreed to appreciate the noble human values and reject unjust morals. So, whoever departed from what these unanimously agreed upon, he actually renounces humanity and dissociates himself from it and from the sublime nature that Allah has endowed mankind with, Allah Almighty says: “This is the natural disposition Allah has instilled in mankind, there is no altering Allah’s creation” (30:30).

The Ever-Glorious Qur'an provided for the ten commandments agreed upon in all religions, so, Allah (SWT) has commanded His Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) to call all mankind to listen to what Allah forbids in the Islamic law (Sharia), the seal of religions, by saying: "Say, Come! I will tell you what your Lord has really forbidden to you. Do not ascribe anything as a partner to Him; be good to your parents; do not kill your children fearing poverty' – We will provide for you and for hem –'stay well away from committing obscenities whether openly or in secret; do not take life, which Allah has made sacred, except by right. This is what He commends you to do: so that you may use your reason. * Stay well away from the property of orphans, except with the best (intentions), until they come of age; give full measure and weight, according to justice' – We do not burden any soul with more than it can bear – 'when you speak, be just, even if it concerns a relative' keep any promises you make in Allah's name. This is what He commends you to do, so that you may take heed' - * This is My path, leading strait, so follow it, and do not follow other ways: they will lead you away from it – ' This is what He commends you to do, so that you may refrain from wrongdoing" (6:151-153).

Our upright religion taught us to say good word to all people without distinction, so, Allah says: "Speak good words to all people" (2:83). Moreover, we are commanded to say what is best; Allah Almighty says: "And tell my servants to say what is best" (17:53).

In the teaching of our master Jesus (PBUH): "He who slaps you on your right cheek, turn your left cheek for him"; a great call to tolerance in all divine religions so that humankind may live in peace and tranquility, without clashes, discord, violence or terrorism.

All religions came for the good and happiness of man in present and future. Religious values in all civilizations were the basis for noble sublime values, and decent human principles. Civilizations that are not concerned with values and morals carry the factors of their fall in the bases of structure.

2- Media:

Media is considered one of the most important mechanisms for civilizational cooperation among nations, and the most vital means of controlling public opinion, and is one of the common terms used by writers, researchers and politicians as public opinion has become a considerable power in most world countries, including the Arab countries.

Media - whether it is traditional as newspapers, television, radio, or modern means: such as electronic press, news and various knowledge sites on the Internet, or social media: Facebook, Twitter, and others, which are now considered one of the most well-known news media all over the world - has a major impact on shaping the perceptual and cognitive structure of an individual and community.

Psychologists and sociologists emphasize that the media, with its multiple means, is the most effective way to influence people's minds and thoughts; it is the first means that shapes people's attitude towards the topics and everyday life situations in which global societies live and face.

Most scholars are unanimous on that the overall quantity and quality of changes that have occurred in the media and communication in recent times, and the results ensued from them in terms of the reality of social

life in its various forms, are among the most important characteristics that characterize our contemporary world. This throws big responsibilities and attaches more importance to the role played by media in promoting cultural dialogue between the East and West through several mechanisms, including:

1- Educated media and its role in transforming the western view:

The educated media has its role in social transformation and defending the vital issues and theories that would not have found much resonance had it not been for the existence of this media. Therefore, it should always be on alert and vigilant in the face of the issues and suspicions raised.

Evidence of this is what some Western media have taken to host many Arab intellectuals who specialize in Islamic studies, and from Arab origins, to clear some basic things that the West has proven unaware of about Arab civilization, as well as to correct some misconceptions.

2- Investigative media and its role in directing the West to the

facts: Investigative media, is the media that is based on trying to reach the facts in depth through questionnaires to show their reality to the public opinion and decision makers, whatever the truth, which leads to the protection of society and warning it against the dangers surrounding it, the risks that target its entity, security, and youths.

Therefore, investigative media, whether written, visual or audible, is one of the most important mechanisms that should be used in correcting the Western view.

3- Making stereotypes to change the western views:

Different media uses stereotypes to express certain viewpoints, whether these stereotypes relate to individuals, institutions, countries, or communities. They often succeed in doing so by entrenching a certain perception, canceling it, or changing it from positive to negative or vice versa, especially as the media of our time has become the main engine for the course of international events, and a factor for spreading ideas in various fields.

4- Social media (alternative media):

Social media sites and networks are one of the most prominent manifestations and mechanisms of the new media, which was produced and helped by the emergence of the Internet revolution. It depends on new technologies such as forums, blogs, and social media programs, and is characterized - as a non-intermediary media - by engaging all participants in give-take communication, unlike traditional media.

This media is known as the new social media or the alternative media, as it has become a vital source for journalists and other media. It has also become very influential in shaping public opinion and changing its paths, as social media is the most important base in changing the Western view, because it addresses peoples and individuals without a mediator.

The most common activities on social media

The seriousness of the role of social media has been demonstrated through its apparent impact on youth and children. Some entities,

organizations and associations finance some web sites or pages on social media with the aim of spreading destructive ideas that are well away from respecting cultural diversity and fair dialogue between nations. The strength and ferocity of digital revolution poses one of the biggest challenges facing the Arab and Islamic world in this century.

Perhaps confronting this revolution, as a threat to the principle of respecting cultural diversity as a basis for dialogue and peace, can only be achieved through taking several measures, in which social media plays a decisive role that would give the Arabs and Muslims a foothold in this digital revolution.

It is necessary to produce digital Arabic Islamic content with a civilized and human face that has cultural, scientific and social dimensions, an industry that requires developing strategic structures, encouraging pioneering projects, and observing global standards in the field of technology and marketing, by monitoring the most common and widespread activities among users in Social media sites in the Arab world, for example, as shown in the illustration issued by the Summit of Arab Social Media Pioneers in 2015.



There is no doubt that the eastern and western media's role in the serious and true introduction of the other and his civilization would lead to affirming the value of positive tolerance towards the other, and this leads to recognition of civilizational pluralism, respect for the civilization and culture of the other, and avoiding prejudices and misconceptions on both sides.

3- Cultural institutions:

Promoting the values of dialogue between cultures and civilizations will confront racist movements through the efforts of the international community, with its various institutions and cultural bodies, and builds bridges of understanding between nations and peoples. It will spread a culture of tolerance, coexistence and harmony, in an effort to build global peace on the basis of international law, and timeless human values, which are common among all religions, cultures and civilizations.

The role of institutions and organizations in developing cultural dialogue:

The Arab cultural institutions and foundations are an important mechanism for enhancing dialogue with the corresponding western institutions and bodies, and their primary mission is: reining the differences and preventing them from turning into clashes that may lead to conflict and collision, and then to wars, as well as proving that diversity is not a threat. The human general common factor is what must be focused on in such a dialogue through continuous communication with various mechanisms, so that we

may know how to activate that common factor while preserving the specifics of every human society at the same time. But we must take into consideration that the dialogue between cultures in no way can be complete unless it is conducted on equal terms, common will, and mutual respect. Roger Garaudy said that dialogue can only materialize if both sides are really convinced that they can learn from one another.

Among the institutions that exerted a huge effort in the topic of cultural dialogue with the West, with its different levels of civilization and culture are:

- 1- The Islamic Conference Organization, and its cultural arm (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - ISESCO).
- 2- The Arab League and its cultural window: Arab Organization for Education, Culture, and Science (ALESCO), in addition to some non-governmental, and civil organization, and several Arab and Islamic governments.
- 3- The ministries of Culture, and their great role in promoting dialogue; they are concerned with everything related to culture, whether in the East or the West, and extend the bridges of culture between different peoples through translation, and the holding of some international conferences to discuss the most important issues of dialogue.

A special attention was given to the accumulation of knowledge in the issue of dialogue between civilizations in the knowledge program adopted by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture in Bibliotheca Alexandrina, and this interest is

represented in keenness on Egyptian openness to the world in all its philosophical, scientific and civilizational aspects.

Ways of enhancing dialogue by cultural institutions

The ways in which cultural dialogue is promoted differ from time to time. In the modern era, the huge technological boom has led to the opening of many fields through which one can communicate with others in a short time, wherever they are, and in more than one way, including:

1- Enhancing cultural dialogue through Internet:

The Internet or the World Wide Web has become the fastest tool through which articles can be published in different foreign languages to clarify the most important features of our culture and correct misconceptions in the West about the Arab East. It has also become easy for the bodies, organizations and institutions concerned with dialogue to communicate and extend bridges of culture with their counterparts in the West through it.

2- Promoting cultural dialogue through translation:

Translation occupies a special place, in terms of civilization, as an essential and decisive means of cultural inheritance, and its human value and effects appear in the major moments of civilizational transition at the level of all humanity. For example, the Latin translation of the Islamic civilized achievement in various fields contributed to the founding of Western civilization and the support of its Renaissance. Likewise, the Arabic translation of the Greek heritage, the Persian and Greek civilizational experience contributed to supporting the Islamic civilization

and its development, and the same is said about Japan and the Soviet Union in the first half of the twentieth century

In fact, interpretation has a great factor in promoting dialogue, as language is not just a tool for communication, but it represents the true fabric of cultural expressions, and it is the carrier of identity, values and visions of the world, and many consider that the vitality of language is a criterion by which cultural diversity is measured.

On the other hand, ambiguous language may be a cause of misunderstanding. Therefore, a condition for achieving the goal and objectives of the dialogue required to have clarity in the language and the terms circulated between the parties involved.

3- Promoting cultural dialogue through communication with orientalist institutions:

Cultural institutions in the Muslim world must build a constructive dialogue with the western orientalist institutions, because this supports the Arab-Islamic cultural dialogue with the Christian west, and because Orientalist studies give their opinions on the specifics of Arab and Islamic civilization. and these studies are the most important components of Western religious and civil institutions' perceptions of the East.

4- Educational institutions:

Awareness of the moral, humanitarian and value participant is in fact the practical realization of the culture of dialogue. There is no doubt that educational institutions in the East and West are responsible for adopting educational curricula and policies that expose this common moral, human

and ethical element, and affirming its importance and necessity, otherwise, fragmentation and disintegration will prevail and spread and ignite conflicts.

It is also the responsibility of educational institutions, and universities - in particular - to educate their students to honor sustainable dialogue, because its mission is not only to graduate educated and competent professionals, but to foster citizenship in a pluralistic society by strengthening the bonds of cultural and religious coexistence between individuals and societies.

The mission of the educational institution must work to form a just, flexible and committed society that can face challenges and correct misconceptions that arise from all directions and which do not care about human and spiritual values, and build bridges of communication with the self and with others.

The educational and pedagogical process is still and will continue to be in need for great efforts. Education is not only a transfer of knowledge and the development of unified ideas about behavioral and social skills, but also relates to the transfer of values; therefore education policies have an effective impact on the prosperity or erosion of cultural diversity, therefore that the United Nations I included it in the four principles set by the World Commission on Education in the twenty-first century, namely education for: to be, to know, and to do, and for the sake of coexistence, with the aim of: enabling human rights, promoting democratic citizenship, and promoting Sustainable development.

Among the founding principles of UNESCO: that education is the basis for confronting ignorance and lack of trust, as they are the source of conflict

between people, that cultural openness is the key to intercultural dialogue, and that humanities and social sciences encourage students to examine their biases and reconsider their assumptions. Including world religions and beliefs in school curricula helps to dispel many of the misunderstandings that make living together a difficult issue. International literatures as well are a powerful tool for promoting mutual understanding and peace among people of diverse cultures.

Several committees have initiated UNESCO to build conditions conducive to the Euro-Arab dialogue in the field of education, in line with the calls of the United Nations and UNESCO charters to consolidate peace between peoples and respect for cultural diversity, by conducting studies that highlight stereotypes, forms of misunderstanding and implicit attitudes that are included in the contents of the textbooks in the European countries about the Arab countries, and in the textbooks in the Arab countries about the European countries, in order to monitor stereotypes and vulgar images in the textbooks, because the textbook is has a major role in shaping the future citizen, and the revision of textbooks is the first step that entails a greater step towards the liberalization of the educational curricula from negative prejudices based on racial images.

Hence, we must instill religious tolerance in the hearts and minds of our children in schools and universities through curricula, as the religious values in every civilization were the basis for sublime moral values and high human principles.

If dialogue in reality is a skill that needs practice in order to settle and transform into behavior, then this practice needs to create the atmosphere

for practicing it, through educational institutions; since leaving the question of acquiring dialogue skills to grow according to the traditional environment will not bear the desired fruits, because the previous factors of fragmentation and disintegration affect individuals, and do not find anything that restricts them or reduces their exaggeration, and therefore placing the issue of dialogue in terms of what it is within educational curricula is very important.

5- Popular Communication Channels:

Popular communication channels are distinguished from official diplomacy, as they are concerned with the areas of direct cooperation resulting from contact between individuals and groups in different walks of life, and they can modify and direct external public opinion, and correct the stereotypes of peoples, because cultural relations established by popular channels can be invested in promoting dialogue between East and West. These channels include two main components: communities and tourism.

First: Communities:

Community means: the limited number of human migrations that preserved their own dispositions and their connection with the motherland from which they came out in the countries to which they moved for national or religious reasons; such communities in any country often adhere to their customs and traditions and do not dissolve in the society in which they live. Immigration conditions may change some people and turn them into intellectually and behaviorally alien people, meaning that they would live a state of cultural and intellectual alienation in all their situations.

A - Challenges facing Arab communities:

There are some challenges facing communities in general, and Arab communities in particular, and impede their path in promoting dialogue between East and West, including:

- The negative impact of the internal crises and regional disputes that the Arab region is going through on the activity of Arab communities abroad, in addition to local disputes among the people of the same country.
- The contribution of some Arab elements in the Diaspora to feeding the negative impressions of the West on the Arabs, and this is evident in the adoption by some of the fanatic or extremist ideas in exchange with the West.
- The suffering of Arab communities in several Western countries from the negative image of Arabs.
- The absence of extensive organizational frameworks that help Arab communities in Western societies defend their cultural personality.
- The weak human development indicators of a wide group of Arab immigrants, which impedes their communication with the West regarding their personal issues and the issues of their nation.
- Arab illegal immigration, especially to European countries, which contributes to tarnishing the image of Arabs.

B - The role of Arab communities in promoting dialogue between East and West:

The desired role of Arab communities in the West, oblige them not to be negative towards Arab issues, good behavior, and a rational understanding of the requirements of working to participate in the cultural dialogue between East and West, rejecting extremism and violence, respecting cultural diversity, and spreading common human values that establish dialogue. There are policies and principles through which communities can achieve many goals, including the following:

- Establishing a constructive dialogue and finding common values for work in order to correct the stereotype of the Arabs throughout the world.
- To found friendship societies that carry out intellectual, cultural and social exchanges in order to consolidate friendship and brotherhood among peoples.
- Promoting the role of the communities and disseminating their goals through seminars and meetings, and the participation in national, international and regional events and celebrations.
- Benefiting from informal economic diplomacy, through economists and investors, with the aim of bringing viewpoints closer and supporting them.
- Activating the role of educational missions in establishing a constructive dialogue between East and West in various scientific disciplines, and their influence in correcting both the Western and Eastern worldview.

C- The role of official institutions and bodies abroad:

It has become imperative for institutions and official bodies abroad to guide communities in the framework of the so-called "popular diplomacy", and to support them in order to play their role in promoting cultural dialogue between East and West, through:

- Work to rehabilitate immigrants and enable them culturally and skillfully to integrate and communicate with others.
- Helping communities to participate in cultural activities and events in the country in which they live.
- Removing the obstacles that stand in the way of citizens' cultural contact with other peoples.
- Contributing to the spread and circulation of knowledge of the cultural, moral and social values shared between East and West, as well as what distinguishes each of them in a way that does not contradict the other.

Conscious of the importance of the role played by Arab communities, the Arab League held during the period from 4 to 6 December 2010 the first conference of Arab expatriates (a bridge for communication).

The United Nations also paid attention to activating the role of popular channels to participate in the dialogue between East and West, and it was stated in the Arab Human Development Report issued by the United Nations that Arabs living abroad can act as the bridge between the Arab culture and various human civilizations, on two levels:

The first: the individual level, which is embodied in personal behavior.

The second: The collective level, which is represented in establishing a collective cooperation relationship within the framework of local laws and regulations.

Second: Tourism:

A- Tourism is a bridge for dialogue:

Tourism is a means of exchange upon which relies the popular diplomacy which gained great importance among the various countries worldwide, and which is used as a bridge for understanding and dialogue between nations, and a window on the outside world.

Tourism called 'cultural tourism' can help promote cultural understanding by seeing others in their natural environment and give historical depth to other cultures. The involvement of local communities in this process can help to cultivate an enhanced sense of self-worth and contribute to sustainable development.

The role of cultural tourism has appeared in spreading world peace since 1967, when the United Nations Organization declared that year a global year for tourism under the slogan "tourism is a passport towards peace", a pivotal role that the international community reaffirmed when declaring the year 1986 as an international year of peace under The slogan of tourism as a living force in the service of world peace, and since that date the cultural tourism sector has emerged as an ideal space for gathering all international and human cultures and identities, and it is the gathering that, if well managed, would become the most important practical field to promote cultural dialogue and the spread of a culture of justice and peace.

B- The measures required for activating the role of tourism in promoting dialogue between East and West:

The cultural heritage of the countries of the Arab world is characterized by the tremendous diversity represented in beliefs, traditions, customs, knowledge and social practices, as well as its archaeological, architectural, urban, literal and artistic heritage as evidence of the richness and diversity of this heritage, and therefore the integration of the cultural and civilizational dimension in the tourism strategies of Arab countries is an essential and necessary step in order that tourism would serve the purposes and objectives of cultural dialogue with the West, and a historical and practical bridge to promote communication and understanding with it.

The proper and rational inclusion of this dimension in tourism policies depends on some priorities, including:

- Rehabilitation of tour guides to better deal with issues of cultural dialogue and its implications.
- Creating cultural and historical sites that bear civilizational manifestations related to the contribution of the Arabs to human civilization.
- Take advantage of conference tourism, as it reflects the civilizational extent of the host peoples, and their aware they are of the importance of domestic and international teamwork.
- Improving the eastern social environment for tourism, and addressing the stereotypes that inhabit Western memory, past and present, by educating citizens about the importance of positive interaction with tourists.

- Encouraging tourism activity, as this results in opening long-term horizons in the field of direct contact with the culture of others.

Tourism has a real role in promoting the Arab cultural dialogue between East and West, and attention must be paid to it in a manner that suits the scope of its influence in the field of dialogue, as tourists represent all segments of eastern and western society alike, and therefore positive communication with them and good treatment would make them ambassadors of their culture and a good memory that fairly remembers it in the different fields of life.

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Table of contents

Subject	Page No.
Introduction	
Defining terms	
The importance of dialogue	
The foundations of dialogue	
Ethics of dialogue	
Cultural dialogue between East and West, a historical view	
The historical phases of dialogue between East and West	
The goals of cultural dialogue between East and West	
Correcting misconceptions by both parties	
Enhancing the value of cultural diversity	
Developing relationships based on cooperation between civilizations	
Coexistences as an alternative to conflict	
Preserving the human dignity	
The obstacles of cultural dialogue between East and West	
First: How does the West view the East	
Second: How does the East view the West?	
Third: Orientalism	
Fourth: The trend of fanaticism and radicalism	

Mechanisms of promoting cultural dialogue between East and West	
1- Religious institutions	
2- Media	
3- Cultural institutions	
4- Educational institutions	
5 -Channels of popular communication	
References	
Table of contents	