

WHAT WE'RE DEFENDING

A Letter from Makkah

In Response to the Open Letter from Sixty American Intellectuals

There is nothing worse than violating moral values such as freedom and peace, except that the elite group which has chosen itself as defenders of these values are willing instruments of despotism and violence; and nobody is worse than politicians who hurl themselves and their peoples into the flames of hostilities and wars, except for educators and academics who justify what they do. If this is the case in the land of freedom and democracy, then it is a case of inversion in the world of values, worse than the disaster of destroying a building or the killing of a few thousand people in the material world.

If sixty Soviet intellectuals in the days of Stalin gathered in support of his dictatorial methods it would have been the defect would have been obvious, but in any case it would still be less evil than the gathering of sixty intellectuals from the free world to support something of that sort.

The American president's announcement of the beginning of second phase of the so-called "war on terrorism" coincided with the publication of the letter from sixty American academics justifying this war. Similarly, his announcement of the "axis of evil" coincided with the announcement of the intellectuals in which they identified the evil faction which –according to them- is a threat to the entire world, and in which they claimed that the events of September 11 were an attack on freedom, which corresponded to the opening of the President's address concerning the crisis. The address was in the language of revolutionary declarations:

"In the name of universal human morality, and fully conscious of the restrictions and requirements of just war, we support our government's, and our society's decision to use force of arms... with one voice we say that the victory of our nation and its allies in this war will be decisive. We fight to defend ourselves, but we also believe that we fight to defend these universal principles of human rights and human dignity, which form the best hope for humankind."

If the World believed their claim to represent the American nation, then it would dash the greatest hopes for a nation which is considered to be a leader of the free world. However, something that provides a small glimmer of hope in the basic good in human nature, is that these sixty do not represent the nation on whose behalf they speak. Rather, most of them are members of the well-known movement rejected by most intellectuals and people, and even perhaps, by some members of the American administration. Nevertheless, the sixty do not merely speak in the name of their nation, but have delegated themselves to speak in the name of followers of the World Religions (Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Hindus), but instead of warning about extremism in every culture and religion, and that violence only begets retaliatory violence, they claim that the only danger to the followers of these faiths –and to the entire world- is the Islamic movement in all its divisions, of which the "Al-Qaeda" organization is described as only one of its arms. Nor were they satisfied with making misleading generalizations, but had to plainly lie when they said that this movement "openly professes its desire and increasingly demonstrates its ability to use murder to advance its objectives."

They went beyond accusing the Islamic movement to accusing Muslim governments of “tolerating” or sometimes even supporting these movements.

Doubtlessly, fair and good persons in America and throughout the world –even those who have gone beyond accusing Al-Qaeda to convicting them- will reject this false accusation against an international religious movement which possesses diverse forms, locations and means, and whose general aim is to return its community and the world to the light and justice of Islam: the same Islam which produced the first and greatest of humane civilizations in history: a civilization which reached from the Pacific Ocean in the East, to the Atlantic in the West, in which a level of human dignity and religious freedom was achieved whose light had not yet shined in the darkness of Europe which instead, turned toward revolutionary violence in order to achieve slogans which in Islamic civilization were universal rights like water and air –for all sons of man.

This is what we believed when we first saw the open letter, and now our suspicions have been confirmed by the release of a letter from 128 American intellectuals who oppose it, in which they accuse the war against terrorism and its supporters of racism.

For this reason, this letter of ours ought to be understood as a clarification of that of which these signatories are ignorant, or which they chose to ignore, and a reminder of that which they forgot. It is not meant to be either a refutation of the distortions against the modern Islamic movement, or a critique of American values–that would require a long and detailed presentation- it was written in the hope that they will reexamine and realize their error in the basic subject matter of the letter. That is, support for the so-called “war against terrorism” in the name of what they call: “universal values” -a campaign that targets the Islamic World because of its Islamic character, without equivocation.

We are encouraged in this hope because of glimpses of truth found in the letter which our ethics require us to assume to be from the sincerity of its writers.

In actuality, the tendency to racism of the sixty signatories (which is most unfortunate) goes beyond denying the status of Islamic values to dispute the values of the West itself:

“No other nation has forged its core identity –its constitution and other founding documents, as well as its basic self-understanding- so directly and explicitly on the basis of universal human values.”

When John Smith founded the Colony of Virginia in 1607 he said, “Heaven and Earth never agreed to better frame a place for human habitation.” Thus, have four centuries passed without changing this idea of superiority, as if the people of the West –at least- did not know that this nation was produced by a revolution against the most stable of Western democracies, arrogating to itself the slogans of those French intellectuals whose thought provided the foundation for the later French revolution, so as to found the most bloody and racist society in human history.

The modern American empire is not necessarily what was intended by its founding fathers, just as it is not fair to claim that the American people are fully satisfied with and supportful of the imperial military establishment in Washington. Rather, it is they who are the victims of a tremendous deception. Nevertheless, they are responsible (as is any free people) for what they believe and do. For this reason, it is their duty to judge the actions of this establishment according to ethics and values, not to believe those who would disguise them with false ethical and moral garments, and provoke their tendency toward discrimination and superiority to silence their conscience.

Otherwise, they will be tricked into abandoning universal values, by [the claim that] they are their first discoverers and their truest representatives, when the general feeling of the peoples from whom the Americans learned their values, tends toward the complete opposite. Thus, the danger, which currently concerns the protectors of freedom in Britain and other nations, is that their countries will abandon some of their firm, democratic values in imitation of the American example of restricting freedoms. This reversal shows that American arrogance, which is acknowledged by the sixty intellectuals, has also cast its shadow on the world of logic, and when it is the logic of the mighty which asserts itself and there is no choice for others but to submit, that is the tragedy!

Nearly two hundred years ago Hegel claimed that the end of the dialectic of history had been achieved under the shadow of the mighty Prussian emperor. Marx stole this idea and announced that the end would only come with the establishment of the Proletarian state. When Lenin established this state he made that belief the cornerstone of revolutionary thought which overran half of this planet, and at the end of the century, Professor Fukuyama (whose fingerprints are clearly seen on this open letter) seized upon the fall of the empire of the Proletariat and made the last state to be not Prussia or Russia, but America. At this point, amazingly, he agrees with the “born-again” types one of whom was Reagan (creator of the slogan “Evil Empire” which today has become the “Axis of Evil”), who believe in the coming Millennial Kingdom which they believe will begin around the year 2000. It is as if this were a surprising proof for Hegel’s critics among the German and other philosophers who claim that he took his idea of the “end of history” from Christianity!

This intellectual detour to fabricate philosophical foundations for superiority over others demonstrates a skewed central attitude, which does not allow any consideration for others or their values, but it conceals this by summoning the other to belief in values of which they suppose themselves to be the creators or discoverers.

There is another question about the role of Professor Samuel Huntington, author of the theory of the “clash of civilizations” whose fingerprints are also clear in this letter, and who represents the other face of the crisis of American intellectuals who rejoice in the fulfillment of their prophecies, even if it comes about through the destruction of several nations of the world.

The answer in short, is that the Millennial Kingdom which the fundamentalist right in America believe in, will only be achieved through blood that will be as deep as a horse’s bridle for a distance of 200 miles during the slaughter of Armageddon,¹ which the fundamentalists believe will be the decisive victory of the good, Christian West over the evil, Muslim East, with the participation of 400 million men as well-known fundamentalist Jerry Falwell claims.²

From this we may understand how both Huntington, Fukuyama and others came to meet on the soil of the current all-out war against Islam with a group of other well-known members of the American right.

From this we may also understand the lack of signatures from Americans such as Noam Chomsky, Ramsey Clark, Paul Findley others who represent another, more just face of America to a world frightened by the somber countenance of American arrogance. Since the meeting at the “lake of blood.” necessarily excludes them (and necessarily excludes most Americans whom we believe are among the greatest lovers of truth and justice in the world, which has been proven by their great care to learn about Islam after the incidents of 11 September instead of drifting along with the media uproar

¹ See Grace Halsell’s “Prophecy and Politics”

² Prophecy and Politics: the End is Near.

created by the political administration through the means of the media deception unit exposed by , as indeed these sixty intellectuals have, unfortunately, drifted.

Not surprisingly, the events of 11 September are the last in a list of “terrorist attacks” which the sixty intellectuals cite as evidence that the just and free America (in their view) is under attack by the enemies of justice and freedom. But the strange thing (in our view and the view of every seeker of truth and justice) is the absence of the other list, or what may be called the elimination from existence of the other pan in the scales of justice. This was not done by the leaders of the Pentagon, but by the hands of intellectuals who want to monopolize the discussion of values, or rather, to dictate values for the world which are –in their opinion- the loftiest values and fairest scales.

The Creator of the world has revealed that He has perfected its creation in justice, and that it is the duty of man to establish human life on justice also. According to this, people who do not measure with a just measure are in collision with the laws of universe, not just with the human preachers of justice:

The Most-Merciful, it is He Who has taught the Qur’an. He created man. He taught him eloquent speech. The sun and the moon upon their courses, and the stars and trees bow down. Heaven He has raised high, and the scales of justice He has set down: that you may not transgress the scales. So establish weight with justice, and do not fall short on the scales. –Qur’an 55:1-9

The truth is that the other list is too heavy for any scales no matter how large, since Hiroshima alone would fill it to overflowing, so where will we place the other examples of America’s pure and just war, such as Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War...?

Speaking of the Gulf, my conscience forces me to interrupt here in order to whisper to the consciences of the sympathetic mothers among the group such as Ms. Aird. While signing along with these three men and the others, how did you set aside the noblest of feminine emotions and forget the two million Iraqi children devoured by diseases caused by the vicious biological war against Iraq? Is that not enough to make you think seriously before signing onto the justification for American bombing of the children and women of Afghanistan, which used weapons of mass destruction previously unknown to the world, putting thousands of them to death while they lie sick and starving, so isolated in their steep mountains that they never heard of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, or Al-Qaeda?

Perhaps questions such as this are called for:

Why did the atomic bomb target the general hospital of Hiroshima, from there obliterating tens of thousands of people, and deforming tens of thousands of others? Why was the ‘Amariya bomb shelter in Baghdad targeted for a bombing in which 1,500 women and children were obliterated in an unprecedented hell-on-earth? Why did the bombing of Kabul target the Red Cross relief warehouse, turning their food and medicine into ash before the eyes of millions of the miserable poor? If that was an accident, then what does the repetition of the same mistake demonstrate to the world of values? If it was done on purpose, then does it have any place in the world of values?

Next, you ask, “what are we fighting for?”

We accept this question as a starting point for awakening the mind and conscience, and taking account of the soul, but as a prelude intended to defend immoral behavior in opposition to the conscience of the world, the nation, and Muslims, there is no point in theoretical discussion.

The case here is not a philosophical problem, or a theological issue, these are moral and ethical values which we are able to test by going down to the real world and

seeing how these values take form in Kabul and Mazar Sharif after the guns go silent, then we will know what values you were actually fighting for.

In the Gospel, Jesus said, “By their fruits you shall know them.” The American constitution, which is the embodiment of American values, remained preserved like a holy relic of the middle ages until the following two amendments were enacted: the first prohibiting alcoholic drinks, and the second which abrogated the prohibition. Although the second is a clear example of the defeat of values before the power of destructive lusts, that is not the point. The point is that American values in Afghanistan have been completely reversed. The conquering Crusaders have given the Afghani people the good news that alcohol and its accompanying vices are permitted. Despite the fact that it is human nature to deviate, those who responded to this type of values were a minority among the Afghani people. At the same time American values expressed themselves in tangible proof when they did everything to oppose democracy by giving power to armed gangs from among the ethnic and religious minorities with a bloody history frequently mentioned by the Americans themselves. They immediately set about destroying morals and behavior standards through the temptations of freedom, until it became clear that the government of the Taliban were of more advanced values than those who removed prohibition from the American constitution, and that the people of Afghanistan in welcoming prohibition were of a higher standard of morality and ethics than the American people who rejoiced at the cancellation of prohibition, and have never since reconsidered it.

Three months were enough to end these vaporous [new] values, when the Minister of Justice of the temporary government in Kabul announced under the pressure of popular demand, that the application of the Islamic Law that the Taliban applied is unavoidable, including the punishment for drinking alcohol. Opium growers’ and dealers’ sense of the smell of American values was truer than that of many of those who fervently support those values, since they quickly proceeded to return to Afghanistan following the American occupation, anticipating a new future for their humanitarian work, and an opening of the American market which is the largest market for this plague.

George Bernard Shaw made the sarcastic comment on the duplicity of Western values: “I can forgive Alfred Nobel for having invented dynamite, but only a fiend in human form could have invented the Nobel Prize. “Similarly, the Afghani people may forgive the Americans for bombing the warehouses of food supplies, targeting orphanages, and their other actions in the name of the so-called “just war,” even the prisoners in the Ganjee? Fortress and in Cuba, but they will never forgive their insult to the values in which they believe and their preference of arbitrary, man-made values which are neither stable or just, and their attempt to drag them down to the lowest American values, both in war and peace.

Furthermore, the Islamic World may reluctantly come to understand the arrogance of the American administration, and its blundering and abuse, by considering it to be the pharaonic tendency of all historic empires, but it absolutely will not accept American intellectuals teaching us Islamic values, and setting themselves up as preachers of these values simply because a very small number of Muslims did –or are accused of doing- an action that is minor in comparison to what the American governing institutions have done in all the inhabited continents for nearly a full century, with the very important distinction that no Muslim, whether moderate or extremist, ever thought of harming America before America’s bias toward the Zionist entity and offering it every support for its terrorism and violence, and before America attacked more than one Islamic country and proceeded to classify the states as “supporters of terrorism”, and the “axis of evil” on

the basis that the Muslims are at the head of the list and its target, which is what the open letter from the sixty intellectuals came to consecrate with a philosophical consecration.

We do not claim that what the signatories wrote was a Freudian slip. But there may have been an attempt to deceive the twinge of conscience when morality is evoked, not in the inhumanity of war, but in the military tribunals and treatment of prisoners, and the restrictions against the media and concealing of factual information from the people, such as when the CNN news network has two separate broadcasts, one for domestic consumption, and one for overseas, reminiscent of the media in Eastern Europe during the Communist era.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that we are in a situation similar to the situation of the Popes, bishops and kings of Europe during the Middle Ages who sent crusade after crusade against the Islamic East. The current Pope has apologized to the Islamic World for those wars, but we believe these intellectuals ought to be ahead of their time and present a similar apology for what the American administration is doing to the Muslims, and therefore open the door to dialogue and understanding between the two religions and two civilizations. Unfortunately, they chose another path, and it may take centuries for us to hear this apology, if such values that call for one even exist.

The open letter contains historical and philosophical generalizations in need of a thorough examination, but we are not prepared to enter into a debate about philosophy or theology, not only because of the lack of space, but also because of our absolute conviction that we must believe in and accept as fact, all that is true and just, no matter what its source, and that we must reject all that is false and unjust, no matter where it is from. Except that the problem, which we shall consider forthwith, is that they ascribe absolute truth to the temporary historical situation of a particular nation, in a particular stage in history, calling it “universal moral principles,” which is a claim any nation can make. The result will only be to transfer wars from the battlefield to the world of values, which contradicts the apparent intention of this letter as stated in its conclusion. That is, unless we believe the Zionist journalist, Thomas Friedman, who clearly states that it is the cultural war which is more important to America, and that changing the social system, regime, and school curriculum is the most important part of the battle with the Islamic world. In that case, “universal values” become a means, not a goal. The reader has a right dispute this, so we will leave off this possibility and discuss the subject based on historical facts and logic.

The logical basis of this great claim is lost for a simple reason: the principle on which these universal truths are based is the principle of “natural law.” It is unacceptable to rely on invoking an obscure principle like natural law whose existence is hard to prove, let alone accepting it in the most complicated problem to face mankind.

Rather, historical reality bears witness that the theories which have done the worst injustice to human rights were able, and are able, to base themselves on this principle.

Ricardo, in his justification of capitalist greed which was the primary motive for the colonial conquests in human history, depended on it, as did Malthus and Bentham in forbidding charity and benevolent treatment of the poor in violation of the greatest human values, more shocking than Darwin’s decision that natural law is established on the principle that life is a struggle and survival is for the fittest, which became the philosophical basis for the destructive wars and totalitarian systems of Modern Europe. As for the founding fathers of America, they only cited it due to their belief that it was the most modern theory, just as if someone today believed in the “end of history” for example.

It is well known to researchers that Thomas Jefferson and those who worked with him borrowed the terminology of the Declaration of Independence from the ideas of English philosophy, especially John Locke, and from the founders of the ideology of the French revolution such as Rousseau and Montesquieu. At that time, the idea of natural law and natural rights was in vogue.

The origin of the problem for them and other social philosophers was the lack of a doctrine and law on which Western thought, which aspired to freedom from “ecclesiastical theocracy,” might build, and to which it might refer for judgment. This lack caused them to invent philosophical bases on which to construct.³ A comparison is in order at this point, between the Islamic World possessed (beyond practical experience) a great legacy of revealed texts and explanatory legal codes which carefully defined universal moral truths and provide detailed laws governing human interactions six centuries before the promulgation of what the English call “the Magna Carta. Europe did not seriously attempt to emulate Islamic Law or even borrow from it, until the Napoleonic Code of 1804, that is, a generation after the Declaration of Independence of 1776.

To clarify this we will take an example from the values that you mention, which can be summed up in two words: “freedom and equality;” two old slogans, your discussion of which, contains nothing new. Which, moreover, were not the invention of the Founders. More importantly, these two values cannot possibly be derived from the vague principle of natural law in pure logic, let alone in the real world. Similarly, a little deep thought shows that they are contradictory –not complimentary- values. Here lurks the danger, as the events which transpired after the French Revolution (the revolution which clearly exalted these two slogans in the West) clearly confirm. For this reason the world historian Toynbee says:

“Human history may be summed up as a struggle between these two opposing principles: the principle of freedom and principle of equality.”

Since man is unable to define the limits between these two opposing principles, or rather, between the freedom of each party in the branches of human relationships (governor and governed, husband and wife, one state and another, minority and majority, etc.), and since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been able only to provoke a new debate of the problem (from its proclamation until now its interpretation has been disputed, and most totalitarian and violent regimes unabashedly describe themselves as democratic.) Quotes such as Martin Luther King’s about the “arc of justice” is most like describing water as “water.” Similarly, the letter’s quotation of Augustine is exceeded in eloquence by the quote in Gospel of one who is better than and antedates Augustine, Christ –peace be upon him- but it is only an ideal for ethical guidance. For this reason, there is no alternative but for all of humanity to return to an absolute detailed, universal source, or to borrow the phrase of Duguit, the Dean of French jurists:

“It is not possible for man to legislate for man. Rather, that is possible only for an unseen absolute power beyond the power of all mankind.”

This source is found in divine revelation preserved from alteration, and this is found only in Islam, and only in Islam because it is the Faith of all the prophets, and all the divine messages to humanity. In the shade of its law, freedom, justice and equality are achieved according to all their criteria and definitions, and in their most advanced

3

forms and practices. This does not mean to equate the current state of Muslims to the ideal of Islam, we affirm the contrast between the two. Not, by way of the open letter which differentiates between “Muslims” and “Islamicists,” but on the basis that the human soul is bound to the earth until faith raises it to heaven. We are not speaking of nationalism here, as the signatories do, but of an international religion which is more widely spread throughout the world than any other faith. They claim that it is possible for anyone to become an American, however, the reality [of that claim] does not escape anyone. In fact, however, anyone can become a Muslim, and that is the true tie that can bind all of humankind. Islamic values are the common denominator of the positive facets of all civilizations. Not only because of the Islamic influence on most known world cultures, but because no matter how large the circle of Islam grows, it does not claim to encompass within itself all truth and justice, as many in the West may suppose (perhaps due to the errors of some Muslims in their understanding or presentation of Islam). Rather, it understands out of certitude that as one of the principles of Islamic Law states, “Wherever justice lies, there is God’s Law,” and, “Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer, wherever it may be found, he may lay claim it.” The greatest truth of Islam is the exclusive devotion of worship and service to God alone, without taking any partners beside Him. Yet Islamic doctrine clearly and unequivocally states that it is the religion of all prophets, and specifically the religion of Abraham, and that Muhammad –blessing and peace be upon him- is only the reformer and interpreter of the Faith of Abraham.

For this reason, Islamic jurists, and even the Orthodox Caliphs, never ceased to utilize any source no matter what its origin. Moreover, the Prophet himself –blessing and peace be upon him- accepted laws that conflicted with Arab custom derived from the practices of the Romans and Persians, as did the voluminous and detailed books of the Muslim jurists concerning war and its laws based on verses of the Qur’an, hadiths of the Prophet –blessing and peace be upon him, and practical examples from the Prophetic biography and the history of the Orthodox Caliphs whose rule was the most just ever seen in history after the rule of the prophets. The great openness of Islamic civilization went beyond the barriers in whose fetters modern civilization still stumbles. There was no racial discrimination or immigration and travel restrictions to prevent a delegation of pagan Turks from Central Asia from presenting their claim to the Caliph in Damascus against the general of the Muslim army that conquered their land. Even earlier, a Coptic Christian came to Medina to complain to the second Orthodox Caliph about the deeds of his latter’s son. In both cases the judgment was in favor of the plaintiff!

It is not surprising that these and many similar cases occurred, the amazing thing is that people of that era were not surprised by them because what they saw and heard of Islamic justice caused them to be ordinary events. In contrast, we find that the American administration has given a stern warning to the American media not to publish the views of Mullah Muhammad ‘Umar concerning the situation. Justice demands that those who claim to uphold it allow opportunities to hear the other side. Justice is the stronger even if it is weak, and weak is the oppressor even if he is strong. That the huge American media arsenal of Voice of America Radio would be restrict the half-hour broadcast of the opposing side is a decisive proof of the killer’s weakness with which God strikes down tyrants no matter how mighty they may be. Otherwise, why would the mass media fear the effect on an informed public of the statement of a person frequently discredited by the same media as stupid and simple-minded?

When Islamic belief opened the gate to independent inquiry and research concerning the rules of justice in any situation within the unified framework of values disciplined by the religious texts and universal principles derived from them, it set down the firm rule upon which justice between men is established, and on which the claimant

bases his claim. Therefore, the law requires hearing the claim just as it grants opportunity to respond to it. Thus, humanity opened for the first time, the gate of complementarity and mutual responsibility to protect the dignity of each human being, by granting the right to anyone –whoever he may be- to bring suit against anyone –whomever he may be. Not on an abstract, literary basis as is the case of international human rights organizations, but on a compulsory, enforced basis that could not be violated even by the supreme leader of all the Muslims.

Thus, Islam made the entire Islamic society something closer to a universal organization for human rights. Because of this, Islamic society avoided –despite its vast territory- the type of factional quarreling represented by the formation of pressure groups such as unions, parties and organizations for each faction, trade, or class, let alone the war between the sexes!

It also avoided much of the tension in international relations which constantly produces wars that deplete both sides. The nation which has this for its law must be as far removed as possible from the “theocracy” which drowned Europe during the Middle Ages. Inasmuch as theocracy, as a license to kill from God –as happened to _____ as well as to the Muslims in the name of the Crusades, is considered apostasy in Islam in the case of those who believe in it, and an attack on the exclusive attributes of divinity for those who make such a claim. The Prophet –blessing and peace be upon him- himself is only conveys a message from God, and clearly and unequivocally stated that he judged according to his opinion in a case, and that his judgment may coincide with what is actually just in the case, or it may not. He did not know the unseen, and therefore, he could not be responsible: “You come to me with your disputes, and perhaps one of you is more convincing in argument than the other so I judge in his favor according to what I hear from him. If I ever grant to someone what is rightly his brother’s, I am only granting to him a piece of Hellfire.”⁴

Thus, the discussion of the advantages of American secularism over theocracy becomes meaningless if it is connected with Islam, since identical or superior advantages are found in and encouraged by Islam in its universal summons to search for truth wherever it may be found, to fight superstition, blind traditionalism and bias for one’s own opinion, and to discard tyranny and despotism in every form, while preserving the greatest of divine blessings upon mankind and the greatest human achievement: faith in God and obedience to his perfect and just world law.

Secularism may be the better of the two evils in the case of the West, but none of its causes exist in Islam.

Thus, Islamic civilization was the vessel for many different examples of civilization, not only during its golden age, but even in recent eras. In all due humility, nobody from this civilization claimed that it represents the end of history, or that it exemplifies universal values. Rather, these values flow within the universal entity of the Islamic community as blood flows within the body.

Let us take India and Spain as examples, since original Islamic principles were preserved in both places despite the severe decline from the peak of justice at the time of the Orthodox Caliphate. Muslims ruled India for eight centuries in which all people were equal there before the Islamic Law, free in practicing their beliefs. Neither Hindu nor anybody else was forced to change his beliefs. Rather, there was a degree of social harmony which both the British Raj and the secular Congress party government after it were unable to achieve -a failure which led to the arrival of Hindu extremists to government, and the committing of horrible crimes against mosques and churches alike. As for Spain -which was another mode of civilization- it suffices to mention without

⁴ Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

elaboration the religious and academic freedom that flowered there in contrast to the severe fanaticism of nearby Europe. It is sufficient for us to merely recall the Catholic inquisition that followed the fall of Islamic civilization there, and the total annihilation of its cultured people at the hands of those who learned the basics of civilization from them. Perhaps it would be appropriate to mention the example that many Muslims and non-Muslims hold to be the worst in Islamic history: the example of the Turks. This was the example that Martin Luther used to cite as the ideal of freedom of belief in contrast to the blind papist tyranny. He was amazed that a Turk could be a Jew or Christian, not only a Muslim, and that every Muslim could read the Qur'an at the time when the Pope alone reserved the right to interpret the Gospel and prohibited its translation.

This inspired his 95 theses that he nailed to the door of the church at Wittenburg, which came to embody the Protestant doctrine upon which the United States was founded. Istanbul was an international center of culture in which all religions and philosophies coexisted, not only in its architectural advancement that dazzled ambassadors and travelers then (and continues to do so), but also its moral and cultural advancement.

It is enough to know that the worst period of violence and violation of human rights in Turkey is associated with the removal of Islamic law, and the imitation and implementation of Western secular nationalism and legal systems from the end of the nineteenth century until the present. Yet secular Turkey is the second-place strategic ally of America after Israel.

In general, we say that Islamic justice and values are not founded on a philosophical opinion, or political theory, but that they are established on the imitation of the prophets, especially Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad –blessing and peace be upon them all. That is sufficient in itself to be the true universal values, and therefore, it is the duty of every person to morally be a Muslim, regardless of whether he is a Muslim, Christian, Jew, or follower of any other religion.

The difference between Islamic values, and those found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is very great. Islam does not make dignity, freedom, justice, and legal equality to be rights that must be sought, but duties whose execution is incumbent on both plaintiff and defendant. Moreover, it is incumbent on others to strive to enforce them on both parties, and to advise each individual of his rights should he be unaware of them, and to protest against the other party if he should reject those rights.

In contrast, the undefined terms and vague indications of values in the statements of the American founding fathers, and the authors of the International Declaration of Human Rights, and other social philosophers since the European Enlightenment until today, and in contrast to the absence of discussion of international relations and foreign policy in the American constitution (since it is no more than the document of a local alliance at a particular stage of an isolated people whose features had yet to be completed, such as these can never be universal) in contrast to all of that we say that in the divine book -the Qur'an- we find hundreds of clear and explicated verses defining accurately and in detail, the values which all humanity must apply in sincere service to God - not as eyeservice or pretense- since He will judge them because of it on the Day of Judgment:

Humanity, We have created you all from a single male and female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Truly, the most noble among you is he who is most righteous. For God is All-Knowing, All-Aware. –Qur'an 49:13

There is no compulsion in Religion: Truth is clearly distinguished from falsehood; so whoever rejects idols and believes in God has grasped the firmest handle, which will never break. For God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. –Qur'an 2:256

Those who believe, those who are Jews, the Christians and the Sabeans, who believe in God and the Last Day, and do righteous works, shall have their reward with their Lord. They shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. –2:62

Say: "Followers of the Bible, let us come to common terms between you and us: that we shall worship none but God; and worship none other beside Him; and that none of us shall set up lords from among ourselves other than God. " If they then turn back, say: "Then bear witness that we are Muslims." –3:64

All food was lawful for the Children of Israel except that which Israel forbade for himself before the Torah was revealed. Say: "Bring the Torah and read it if you are truthful." Thereafter, whoever forges a lie about God, it is they who are wrongdoers. Say: "God speaks the truth, so follow the Faith of Abraham who departed from idolatry and worshipped none beside God. –2:93,94

Believers, fulfill your covenants. Lawful for you are the beasts of cattle other than those which are recited to you. But game animals are forbidden to you while you are within the sacred precincts or in the state of pilgrimage. For God decrees as He will. Believers, do not violate God's sacred rites, nor the sacred month, nor the sacrificial animals, nor the garlands [which mark such animals], nor the security of those at the Holy House seeking the favor and acceptance of their Lord. But when you are outside the sacred precincts then hunt. Do not let the hatred of some people who prevented you from entering the Holy Mosque lead you to hostility. Help each other in righteousness and piety, but do not help each other in sin and hostility. Fear God: for God is severe in punishment. –Qur'an 5:1,2

Believers, stand firmly for God, witnesses for justice. Let not the hatred of others lead you away from fair treatment. Be just: that is nearest to piety. Fear God. For God is All-Aware of what you do. 5:8

Stand firmly, witnesses for God even if it may be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, whether rich or poor it is God who can best protect them. So do not follow your vain desires and depart from justice. If you distort justice or refuse to do it, God is All-Aware of what you do. –4:135

Say: "Come, let me recite what your Lord has forbidden you": Do not worship anything beside Him, and be kind to your parents. Kill not your children from fear of want –We provide sustenance for you and for them. Do not approach indecent acts whether openly or in secret. Take not life, which God has made sacred, except by legal right. That is His commandment to you, that you may learn to reason. Do not approach the property of the orphan unless to improve it, until he reaches maturity. Give the full and fair measure and weight. We place no burden on any soul, but that which it can bear. When you speak, be just, even if it may concern a close relative. Fulfill God's covenant. That is His commandment to you, that you may remember.

This is My straight path, so follow it. Do not follow the other paths that will cause you to scatter away from His path. That is His commandment to you, that you may be righteous. –6:151-153

Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and be kind to your parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in you lifetime say not one word of contempt, nor repel them, but speak to them in terms of honor. In mercy lower over them the wing of humility, and say: “My Lord, have mercy on them even as they cherished me in childhood.”

Your Lord knows well what is within your souls: if you will be righteous, He is Most Forgiving to those who repent.

Give your kindred their rights, and the poor and the wayfarer; but do not squander away your wealth. For the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and the devil is ungrateful to His Lord. If you must turn away from them seeking the mercy you expect from your Lord, yet speak to them a word of kindness. Be neither stingy withholding your hand to your neck, nor a spendthrift stretching out his hand as far as it can go, or you will become blameworthy and destitute. Your Lord sends forth abundant or limited sustenance for whom He will. For of His servants He is All-Aware, All-Seeing.

Do not kill your children from fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Truly, killing them is a great sin.

Do not approach adultery. For it is an indecent act and an evil path.

Nor take life –which God has made sacred- except by legal right. If anyone is wrongfully killed, We grant to his heir authority: but let him not be excessive in taking life; for he is assisted [by the Law].

Do not approach the property of the orphan except to improve it, until he reaches maturity; and fulfill the covenant, for covenants must be accounted for.

Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a straight balance; that is better and a more fair in the end.

Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Surely, the hearing, sight and mind, each will be questioned.

Do not walk proudly upon the earth; for you can neither rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height. All of these are evil and detested before your Lord.

These are some of the wisdom revealed to you from your Lord. Make no other god to be worshipped beside God, so that you will be cast into Hell, blameworthy and rejected. –17:23-39

Have you seen him who turns away, gives a little, then hardens his heart? Does he have knowledge of the unseen so that he can see? Has he not been told of that which is in the books of Moses, and of Abraham who was loyal? That none can bear the burdens of any other; that man can have nothing but what he strives for; and that he will see the fruits of his striving; then will he be reward the full reward. –53:33-41

Say: “I admonish with only one thing: That you would stand forth for God in pairs or singly and think. Your companion is not possessed. He is only a warner sent to you before a severe chastisement.” –34:46

Say: “Who grants you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?” Say: “God; and either we or you are rightly guided or in manifest error.” –34:24

Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not initiate hostilities. For God does not love transgressors. –2:190

God does not forbid you regarding those who do not fight you for your Faith, and do not drive you out of your homes, from dealing with them kindly and justly. For God loves those who are just. –60:8

Among the people is one whose speech about the life of this world may dazzle you. He calls God to witness what is in his heart; but he is the most contentious of enemies. When he turns away, he strives everywhere to spread corruption in the land and to destroy crops and progeny. But God does not love corruption. When it is said to him, “Fear God, “ his arrogance leads him to more sin. Hell is sufficient for him, and evil resting place indeed. –2:204-206

If you fear treachery from any people, pay them back in kind; for God does not love the treacherous... But if they incline towards peace, incline towards it also, and trust in God; for it is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. 8:58,61

(The righteous) give food out of love of God, to the poor, the orphan, and the captive. –76:6

Not all of them are alike: among the followers of the Bible are a group who are upright, reciting God’s revelations throughout the night, bowing down in submission. 3:113

Among the followers of the Bible are some who, if entrusted with a treasure, would readily pay it back; and among them are some who, if entrusted with a single coin, would not pay it back unless you were to stand constantly by them demanding. That is because they say: “we are not held to account for what we do to the gentiles,” but they speak a lie against God when they know the truth. 3:76

Among the followers of Moses is a group who guide towards truth, and by the truth do justice. 7:159

Those who reject God and His messengers, and desire to separate between God and his messengers, saying, “we believe in some and reject some,” desiring to take a middle course, it is they who are truly unbelievers; and We have prepared for unbelievers a humiliating chastisement. But to those who believe in God and His messengers, and make no distinction between any of the messengers, We shall soon give them their rewards. For God is Oft-Forgiving, Ever-Merciful. –4:150-152

If only the followers of the Bible had believed and been righteous, We would indeed have atoned for them their evil deeds and admitted them to gardens of bliss. If only they had acted according to the Torah, the Gospel, and that which has been revealed to them from their Lord, they would surely have received provision from above them and from beneath their feet. Among them is a group who are on the right course, but evil are the deeds of many of them. 5:65,66

Perhaps it is appropriate to move on to another issue in order to discover the truth about the disciplined freedom of Islam, a lighter topic which is still a sensitive issue: the issue of sex and sexuality. American values and laws restricted even the mention of

unambiguous sexual terms and referral to the sexual organs until the beginning of the twentieth century. Some European novels that contained such terms were restricted from publication until the sixties. The famous Kinsley report and other medical and sociological studies until today make clear that many Americans suffer from great ignorance about sexual subjects!

On the other hand, the Prophet –blessing and peace be upon him- who was most chaste in speech and impeccable in manners, spoke about it in clear detail. Moreover, the Qur’an itself speaks about this subject in words that are at the same time both clear and respectful, and many Muslim authors, both ancient and modern, devoted whole books, or chapters of their books to this discussion which are available to everyone. Modern medical specialists are amazed to discover how these works combined scientific biological, physiological and anatomical knowledge, as well as sound psychological and behavioral guidance in descriptive terms that are neither prudish nor trivial. Western experience is divided between total suppression with its source in monastic celibacy, and unrestricted arousal taken from the Freudians and others, while Islamic society is generally free from both.

In general, Islamic civilization did not know of censorship of thought and writing in any subject, of which the rare instances of book burning only serve as evidence. If Giordano Bruno, Galileo, or others like them were able to immigrate to the nearest Muslim country, they would not have been subjected to any persecution. As for Spinoza, his situation can be compared to his Jewish coreligionist Moses Maimonides [whose high position within the government of Islamic Egypt gave him security and freedom to express his opinions]. Despite the fact that Israel is taken as an example of democracy by many Americans, let us ask the Jewish Falasha immigrants there from whom they receive better treatment, from the Muslims of their homeland and within Israel, or from the [European] members of their own religion?

In order to shed more light on the matter, there is no harm in pointing out the events that have happened in the past, and continue to happen in the states of the African lake region [Burundi and Rwanda]. Islam has become a safe asylum for both sides in the repulsive racial wars there, and Western missionaries are bewildered at the nearly four million from both tribes [Hutus and Tutsis] who have embraced Islam. In his address on a national occasion in 2000, the Rwandan president expressed his great admiration for Islam, and his surprise at its greatness, and the speed with which it extinguished the fuse of hostility and hatred between people. The Islamic Mufti of Rwanda (who translated the address for this writer) said to me, “the President was about to publicly announce his embracing of Islam, and I am in the daily expectation that he will do so.”

If we go back to the history of the founding fathers of the United States we discover that it was a very different matter:

The United States was founded on a clear conflict between puritan ethics (of the Calvinists) and their genocidal tendency because of which millions of human beings among the native peoples were sacrificed, something which (along with other evidence) provides confirmation that the founders were inspired to this barbaric holocaust by the law of the maculated text of the Torah, by following the same principles which it is claimed that God commanded Joshua to follow in his wars against the Philistines.

When the groups of colonists were able to become a national force, the violence was quickly directed toward the original peoples from whom the colonists came, especially the English. The American War of Independence was a revolution of white Protestants against a white, Protestant government. This proves that it had no ethical meaning other than continuation of the principle of expansion and conquest, the principle shared by both the [British] government and the colonists. If the matter had been one of

values such as freedom and democracy, it would have been most appropriate out of all the governments of the West, to obey the English government, which was indisputably, the most democratic and open to debate of all the colonial powers. Without praising British colonialism, we can say that the people of other colonies rejoiced at the news of the British defeat of the Portuguese and Spanish for this reason. Then why did the branch revolt against the root? What lit the fuse of revolution was none other than the Sugar Law of 1764 and the [infamous] Tea Tax. Both parties fought over a land that did not belong to either, and human rights had neither mention nor effect!

The third feature besides exterminating millions of the native people, and fighting a democratic government in a civil war, is the most repulsive of features which formed the American national existence: hunting down and enslaving human beings simply because God created them a different color!

I do not know why the sixty intellectuals failed to praise the morality of America's freeing the slaves, although this claim is similar to their claiming universal values and just war in that each is a late justification for a long and painful situation which cannot be justified any more than you can shield yourself from the sun with the palm of your hand. The phrase, "All men are created equal," with which Jefferson begins the Declaration of Independence was not used in the context of inventing or discovering universal values, but was only an expedient argument for the equality of the white man of the American colonies with the white man in the motherland. It never included people of color or women. The Americans took nearly two centuries to pass civil rights legislation and end racial discrimination during the Johnson administration.

At the time that civil rights advocates were seeking to achieve the end of racial discrimination through legislation (which is only theoretical, as evidenced by subsequent and continual incidents) they sought to void the racist laws which were then fully in effect and enforced with the great popular support. As a quick example we recall that the constitution of the State of Mississippi, section eight concerning education, paragraph 207 required separation of white children from Negro children so that each race shall have its own schools.

Section ten concerning reformatories and prisons, paragraph 225 required the legislature to take appropriate measures to separate white prisoners from black prisoners.

Section fourteen, general laws, paragraph 263 declared marriage between a white person and a Negro, Mulatto, or a person of one-eighth Negro blood to be unlawful and void.

Perhaps more surprising than the laws of the State of Mississippi is the following text:

"Whoever prints, publishes, or distributes printed, typewritten, or handwritten materials inciting the population to consent to social integration and marriage between white and black, or presenting arguments or proposals of this kind, his activity is considered an offense punishable by law by a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars, or imprisonment for a term not to exceed six months, or both."

In a document presented to the United Nations in February, 1948 titled: "An Appeal to the World," the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People stated that similar laws to those of the State of Mississippi were applied in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, and that similar but less severe laws were applied in Delaware, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, and that there were eight northern states that forbade intermarriage between whites and blacks: California, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah.

The appeal then continues to detail the wrongs borne by people of color in the United States stating that in twenty of the country's states there was [at that time] mandatory segregation of white and black pupils, while the laws of the State of Florida require school books reserved for black pupils to be stored separately from school books reserved for white pupils. In fourteen of the country's states, the law required segregation of white train passengers from black train passengers, while the laws of eight states require the establishment of separate compartments for whites and blacks. As for buses, segregation was required in eleven states. There were laws requiring the segregation of white and black patients in hospitals, and in eleven states, mental patients are also segregated according to color and race. Segregation was required between whites and blacks in prisons and reformatory institutions in eleven of the states of the Union.

There were laws mandating the segregation of whites from blacks in too many aspects to list them all. However, narrating some examples is sufficient to clarify the extent of the oppression which pursued the colored races with the force of law. In Oklahoma, the law mandated separate telephone booths for Negroes. In Texas, it was illegal for white wrestlers to fight black wrestlers, and in North Carolina, it was not permitted for Negro and White workers to work on the same floor in textile plants, nor is it permitted for Negroes to enter and exit from the same doors from which Whites enter and exit.

Before September 11, 2001, America had another September of historical events in the year 1957, when President Eisenhower ordered the unfortunate 101st airborne division to invade the state of Arkansas and remove 10,000 –strong Arkansas National Guard. He announced to the public that he was taking these measures to remove the disgrace which was exposed to the entire world, especially the Communist world, that human rights in America were useless when the governor of the state insisted that he would not permit black children to enter white schools, rejecting the ruling of the Federal Court with the excuse that integration would cause chaos and bloodshed in the state, and that the state would need a five-year transition period beginning the integration of kindergartens in the year 1963.

During the senior Bush's Presidency the worst race riots since the 60's in Los Angeles were sparked by Police brutality in the arrest of Rodney King that shocked the President when he witnessed it on film. Similar incidents occurred during the Clinton Presidency in New York and Cincinnati.

Each incident stirs up a long history of deep-rooted racism which indicates that moral values are a slogan that is quickly forgotten because the basis of those values is not true faith in God. We can compare this to the situation in Islam:

At the largest gathering ever seen in ancient Arab history, the Prophet made his farewell pilgrimage in the company of the Arab rulers and the leaders of their tribes. The entire assembly was eager to see the Messenger –blessing and peace be upon him- especially the rulers of Yemen who had recently embraced Islam and come a long way. They were extremely surprised when they first glimpsed him. What they saw was the face of a prophet, not the face or appearance of a king: He was sitting on his camel along with his freed black slave Usama ibn Zayd who was sitting behind him. This is something that any Arab leader would have disdained to do –even if the man was no longer a slave. A year previous one of the rulers, Wa'il ibn Hajr refused to sit on the same camel with Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan, who would one day become the Caliph of the Muslims.

The Prophet –blessing and peace be upon him- then delivered the greatest sermon glorifying, confirming and describing human rights known in history. He repeated a

similar message on the second day (Eid al-Adhha) and the third day. In one excerpt from it he says:

“Humanity! Do you not share one Lord and one father? Truly, there is no superiority for the Arab over the non-Arab, nor the non-Arab over the Arab, nor White over Black, nor Black over White, except by piety.”⁵

One of the chiefs of the tribe of Quraysh purchased a luxurious robe owned by the famous Yemeni ruler, Dhu Yazin before embracing Islam. He presented it as a gift to the Prophet –blessing and peace be upon him, but he refused to take it without paying its fair price. After buying it he gave it as a gift to Usama ibn Zayd. The Arabs were shocked to see the robe of Dhu Yazin worn by a freed slave. This chief of Quraysh⁶ departed in awe of what he had seen. It is narrated that the rulers of Yemen freed thousands of slaves during that season out of faith in God, and in imitation of God’s Messenger. In this manner, Islam transformed the values of the Arabs and other peoples, and dissolved discrimination without creating an uproar. Those who had been slaves yesterday became rulers, scholars and leaders whose high position and honor was unmatched even by the Caliphs and their sons. If the author so desired, he could fill numerous volumes with such narrations.

Before Islam the law of the jungle reigned supreme. According to it restraining from violent revenge was a shameful weakness. One of the Arab poets mocked a certain tribe:

“A tribe that does not violate its covenants,
And does not a mustard seed of harm to anyone!”

But the companions of the Prophet were educated by the Qur’an, which taught them to be steadfast in the truth:

“Be patient and endure as the most determined of the prophets endured.”

About controlling one’s temper, the Prophet –blessings and peace be upon him-counseled:

“The truly strong man is not he who fights, but he that controls his anger.”⁷

In this fashion, justice, kindness and helping the oppressed became the standards by which societies were judged.

A group of the early Muslims fled from the persecution of the idolaters to Ethiopia. When they returned after a long absence, the Prophet –blessings and peace be upon him- asked them to speak about the wonders they had seen in that country. They said:

“While we were sitting there one day an old woman passed by carrying a water jug on her head, when a boy came by and placed his hand between her shoulder blades and pushed it onto her knees and broke her jug. When she got up she looked at him and said, ‘You will know, you double-crosser, when God’s footstool comes down, when all mankind is gathered together, and their hands and feet are made to speak about their deeds, then you will know what is to become of me and you before Him tomorrow!’”

The Prophet replied, “She spoke the truth, yes, she spoke the truth! How can Allah sanctify a nation whose weak do not take their satisfaction from their mighty ones?”⁸

⁵ Musnad of Imam Ahmad.

⁶ His name was Hakim ibn Hazam.

⁷ Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Was your modern version of the Roman Empire built on the skulls of ten million Indians and slaves, or twenty million? If we add the number of slaves who died during transport or during the hunt does it reach 40 million or 100 million? Estimates vary. The number itself does not interest us. The Qur'an states an absolute law: Whoever takes even one life unlawfully, it is as if he killed all humankind!

The readymade American excuse for these atrocities is that some Americans called for freeing the slaves and that they fought the supporters of slavery and eventually won. But they purposely distort the causes of emancipation. It was not out of belief in human equality and dignity as some of them try to portray, because neither side disputed the idea that blacks were inferior to whites! The dispute was whether these inferior people had the right to freedom, and whether it would be more beneficial to the country's reputation and economy?

This detestable belief went to—and still remains at— a level that is difficult for Muslims especially to comprehend, in which even houses of worship are segregated, each race having its own churches, and a black minister in a white church is almost unheard of.

There are some facts that are very difficult for Muslims to interpret. Muslim Imams who have worked in American prisons (whose work itself bears witness to Islamic values and the necessity of them for reform of humanity) have noted the high percentage of blacks among those sentenced for drug crimes. This seems to contradict the official statistics of the Department of Health and Human Services which indicate that there are five times as many drug addicts among whites as there are among blacks. The confusion is partially cleared up when we see that police patrols in America have a dual purpose: to defend the freedom of whites, and to detect crime among blacks. But how do we interpret the statistics that show that there were twice as many blacks as whites arrested during the seventies, while in the nineties there were five times as many arrested!

The answer is that since most blacks are poor, they tend use a cheaper form of drug [crack cocaine] while whites use the more expensive form, and Congress passed legislation imposing stiffer penalties only on the cheaper form.

Through this legal oppression—if that is the correct expression— I will add another cause for the increase in black prisoners and clear up the confusion.

When the novel "Roots"⁹ was made into a film, statistics say it was seen by more than 130 million Americans! Why?

It was not simply because it was a horrible tragedy, but because of the shock that a tragedy of that magnitude had been covered up so long by high-sounding slogans!

The film irritated a deep wound in the human conscience that quickly shredded the thin layer of deception and falseness with the dawn of the truth.

According to the novel, the author discovered that he was Muslim because his ancestor who was hunted down by the "civilized" whites, was Muslim. He was able to trace the event back so that he was able to meet his Muslim relatives seven generations removed in Gambia, who spoke to him about his kidnapped ancestor—the same story that was told to him by his grandmother!

When Columbus arrived at the "Moro"¹⁰ Coast of Cuba and saw a minaret he exclaimed, "My God, there are mosques even in China!"

Yes, there were mosques there built in the Andalusian style, with the motto [of Muslim Granada] "There is no victor but God," written above their prayer niches. The

⁸ Narrated by several companions including Jabir, this version of whose narration is found in Ibn Hibban.

⁹ By Alex Hailey.

¹⁰ Moro or Moorish is the Spanish and Portuguese term for Muslims. Similarly, Magellan called the Philippines "Moro, as well as the nation of Mauritania, and the Canary Islands. Some scholars claim that "America" itself originates from the name Marrakesh or Morocco.

Muslims were the first victims of ethnic cleansing on both sides of the Atlantic: on the eastern side they were hunted down and enslaved, and on the western side Muslim natives were exterminated as part of the campaign of extermination of the native people.

Today, two-billion people of different skin-colors but who share a common faith, believe that America still strives to enslave them –but with more advanced means and slogans, and that their grandchildren will someday will remember that and perhaps have revenge.

There are some in Afghanistan who hope that even sooner Mullah Muhammad Umar will return, and that George Bush will in a few years be nothing- and the entire matter is up to God alone.

What about the Jews?

Violence against and extermination of the adversary has been a necessary token of many people since Cain killed Abel, but in all of history there has never been a less violent civilization than Islam, which, because of the Qur'an, believes that justice is an absolute value, unaffected by difference of faith, color, race, or any of the other bases which man uses to discriminate, and that God has granted every human being a safe refuge which none can deny him in this world.

The Muslim is protected by his faith, the non-Muslim is protected by his covenant with the Muslims, those under truce are protected by treaty, and those at war are protected by the conditions of legitimate war including the conditions of just cause and mercy, which caused those lands which were conquered by the Muslims to consider the Islamic conquest to be a delivery from darkness into light, and from servitude to freedom, and willingly and eagerly embraced the faith of the conquerors, learned their language, and merged with them as much as they could because of what they had learned of the merits of Islam.

Because of this, the Islamic countries remained a refuge for persecuted peoples throughout the world, if the scholars and thinkers, and millions who were burned at the stake by European civilization (represented both by the Church and politically motivated violence) been able to flee to the nearest Muslim country, they would have found safety there (as thousands of Jews did).

Let us take the clearest example of this: the Jews who are the greatest in hostility towards Muslims as divine revelation tells us, and as history and reality bear witness. Let us briefly examine the treatment of the Jews in Islam, and their treatment in Europe and America:

In Islam they were given such care as they never experienced in any country, by reason of their being "People of the Book." The Prophet –God bless him and grant him peace- who was the most just and merciful of men, responded to their ignorant behavior with kindness, and to their intrigues with justice, and as much as possible, he forgave and accepted the apologies of those who did wrong to him, despite the fact that he endured a great deal of persecution and betrayal at their hands, such as their murder plots against him in which they poisoned his food, and conspired with his enemies on several occasions. It suffices that they rejected him as they rejected Christ –peace be upon him- before, despite the clear signs and proofs concerning the truth of his message, and his overcoming the many difficult tests and trials from their Rabbis, and despite the witness of some of their scholars who embraced his faith.

Despite all of that, he never departed from fair treatment of them, and the dispute never took the form of racial discrimination. The Qur'an itself resolved this by demonstrating that good and evil are found in every nation, and that it is never right to say that one people is pure and holy and the other is unclean, as the Jews claim, which

was commonly held during the pre-Islamic age of ignorance, and was prevalent in modern Europe. Rather, mankind (or the nation) sanctifies or pollutes itself. Each individual is accountable before God at the resurrection. There are many clear and unambiguous verses about this:

It is not according to your desires nor the desires of the followers of the Bible: Whoever does evil will be requited accordingly, nor will he find besides God any protector or helper. If any do works of righteousness as a believer, whether they be male or female, they will enter paradise, and not the least amount of injustice will be done them. Who is better in faith than one who submits his face to God and does good, and follows the faith of Abraham –turning away from idolatry? For God did take Abraham as his friend. –4:123-125.

Not all of them are alike: among the followers of the Bible are a group who are upright, reciting God’s revelations throughout the night, prostrating themselves. 3:113

Among the followers of the Bible are some who, if entrusted with a treasure, would readily pay it back; and among them are some who, if entrusted with a single coin, would not pay it back unless you were to stand constantly by them demanding. That is because they say: “we are not held to account for what we do to the gentiles,” but they speak a lie against God when they know the truth. 3:76

Among the followers of Moses is a group who guide towards truth, and by the truth do justice. 7:159

Thus, every Muslim must believe that those Jews who believed in Moses –peace be upon him- were the most favored people of their time. Later, those who believed in Jesus –peace be upon him- were the most favored people of their time. Later, those who believe in Muhammad –God’s blessing and peace be upon him- are counted among his companions, who are the most favored people until the end of the world. Any Muslim who rejects the three messages, or any one of them are not all of the same level of morality. Some of them are sinners and others are virtuous. Some are disloyal, and some are loyal. Some are dishonest, and some are honest. Some are just, and some are unjust.

Muslims do not claim to have a monopoly on justice, but acknowledge it in those non-Muslims who embrace it, as they acknowledge the injustice of those Muslims who cast it aside.

The Prophet sent some of his companions to Ethiopia during the time before the establishment of the Islamic state, because its Christian king at that time allowed no one to be treated unjustly. Similarly, ‘Amr ibn al-‘As bore witness that the Christians of Europe were the most resistant people to the tyranny of kings, and the most compassionate to the poor and the widows.¹¹ As for Muslim rulers whom all Muslims agree to have been tyrants, they are too many to count.

Islam severed the subject of racism at its root when it forbade boasting of ones ancestors and descendants even if it were the truth. It forbade rivalry based on legitimate and praiseworthy titles such as whether one were from the *Muhajirun* (the first Muslims from Makkah who later emigrated to Madinah) or the *Ansar* (those who later became Muslims in Madinah who welcomed and assisted the Makkan immigrants), let alone such aspects as race or color.

¹¹ Sahih Muslim.

In the Prophetic biography a well-known event occurred between the Muslims and the Jews in the Madinah marketplace. A Jewish man wanted to cause chaos by igniting a rivalry with the Muslims. He loudly swore by “Him who favored Moses over all mankind.” One of the Muslims answered him, “By Him who favored Muhammad over all mankind.” Trouble was ready to break out when the Prophet –God’s blessing and peace be on him- put an end to the problem by saying to the Muslims, “Do not make me better than Moses.”

With Islam, human beings are able to give justice its due while defending themselves from the unavoidable hostilities of those who oppose them and deny them their rights:

The Prophet –blessings and peace be upon him- sent one of his companions to the Jews of Khaybar to receive the money that they had agreed to pay according to their treaty with the Muslims. They attempted to bribe the companion, but he refused saying, “By God, God’s Messenger is the most beloved person to me, and by God, you are the most detested people to me, but I cannot love him and wrong you in any way!”

The long history of Islam bears witness that the Jews were not persecuted, but just the opposite, except on rare occasions. The Caliphs and Sultans usually had good relationships with the Jews and gave them preferential status above the Muslims for worldly reasons, to the extent that many Muslims complained and the scholars of Islamic Law criticized the rulers for it.

As for European history –without excusing the Jews- it is a chain of persecution of the Jews so long that it is difficult to measure. Rather, it is difficult to understand or believe some of the persecution. Besides the deep-rooted hostility and continued campaigns against them initiated by the Pope, we find Luther, whose teaching was influenced by Judaism, advised his followers at the end of his life to burn the Jewish ghettos of Germany. For this reason, some researchers consider the Nazi holocaust to be an extension of the Protestant-inspired persecution, let alone the Catholic! (Story of Civilization v26)

The ecclesiastical councils, the Popes, and bishops of every sect sought to prove their faith and piety by issuing laws to punish and expel them, and to excommunicate Christians who dealt with them. In every land and church groups were formed whose sole act of worship was to burn the Jews unless they converted to Christianity. This occurred in France, Spain, Germany and elsewhere, and when the Black Plague struck, all of Europe was overrun by violent waves of Jewish extermination, to the extent that 510 Jewish communities were destroyed in the mid-15th century. Some historians estimate that not even one in five Jews escaped the destruction. All of that because of the accusation that the plague was caused by the Jew’s “poisoning Christian wells,” despite the fact that it was a worldwide epidemic.

The atrocities committed against them (as well as against the Muslims) by the Inquisition are so well known it is not necessary to mention them. In reality, hatred of Jews was so firmly planted within the deepest recesses of the Christian soul as to be beyond the limits of logic, and totally stripped of any cause, as was also the case of Jewish hatred for Christians. Among the evidence of this, is that European dictionaries used the word “Jew” not as a name for a sect of people with their own religion, but as a description for evil, malice, treachery, greed and filthiness. That is quite apparent in literature when the greatest English playwright, Shakespeare, wanted to choose a character to represent these attributes, he chose the Jewish “merchant of Venice,” and when their great novelist, Charles Dickens wanted to show the worst type of demoralizing education he also chose a Jewish character in “Oliver Twist.” The level of

hatred rose so high that Jews began to hate themselves. This happened to many intellectuals such as Marx and Freud, and before them, to Spinoza.

This is an appropriate point at which to mention the distinction of Arabic literature in this regard. Offensive attributes are not personified by race or religion in Arabic literature, they are simply used by themselves to describe whomever they describe, whether Caliphs, ministers, judges, teachers, or commoners, no matter what their religion, such as in “*Kitab al-Bukhula*” (Book of Misers), “*Al-Humuqa’wal-Mughafilin*” (Fools and Idiots), “*Al-Majanin*” (The Insane), or “*As-hab al-Hafuwat*” (Committers of Gaffes).

As for America, whoever claims that it was founded on equality and freedom, its founders tried to be too clever to resort to holocausts, and too fair to kill every child like Pharaoh. They were satisfied to try to cut off the problem at its roots by suggesting outlawing the immigration of Jews to American.

During the Constitutional Convention of 1787 Benjamin Franklin is said to have made his well-known speech:

"I fully agree with General Washington, that we must protect this young nation from an insidious influence and impenetration. The menace, gentlemen, is the Jews.

In whatever country Jews have settled in any great number, they have lowered its moral tone; depreciated its commercial integrity; have segregated themselves and have not been assimilated; have sneered at and tried to undermine the Christian religion upon which that nation is founded, by objecting to its restrictions; have built up a state within the state; and when opposed have tried to strangle that country to death financially, as in the case of Spain and Portugal.

For over 1,700 years, the Jews have been bewailing their sad fate in that they have been exiled from their homeland, as they call Palestine. But gentlemen, did the world give it to them in fee simple, they would at once find some reason for not returning. Why? Because they are vampires, and vampires do not live on vampires. They cannot live only among themselves. They must subsist on Christians and other people not of their race.

If you do not exclude them from these United States, in their Constitution, in less than 200 years they will have swarmed here in such great numbers that they will dominate and devour the land and change our form of government, for which we Americans have shed our blood, given our lives our substance and jeopardized our liberty.

If you do not exclude them, in less than 200 years our descendants will be working in the fields to furnish them substance, while they will be in the counting houses rubbing their hands. I warn you, gentlemen, if you do not exclude Jews for all time, your children will curse you in your graves.

Jews, gentlemen, are Asiatics, let them be born where they will nor how many generations they are away from Asia, they will never be otherwise. Their ideas do not conform to an American's, and will not even thou they live among us ten generations. A leopard cannot change its spots. Jews are Asiatics, are a menace to this country if

permitted entrance, and should be excluded by this Constitutional Convention."

Tamerlane may have been the worst ruler in the history of Islamic civilization, but he never reached that level of racism. The Jews lived in his capital of Samarqand just as they live today in Washington. (Story of Civilization v26)

Without doubt, whoever reads modern European history must acknowledge the level of religious freedom achieved in the United States with fewer losses of life than that in Europe, except that there is a terrible type of religious coercion practiced by and supported by millions of Americans under the eyes and ears of the government, intellectuals, and rights organizations, and which is moreover, supported by most charities in American society: evangelization in which a morsel of food or a dose of medicine is placed before the mouths of those suffering from hunger or pain, and they are told, "if you express your faith in Christ and accept [original] sin, the crucifixion, and the atonement, then take this morsel or this dose, or else..."

To prove that this sort of coercion is not the exception, we should understand that 30 billion dollars a year is spent on foreign missions, and that thousands of people and dozens of supporting universities, institutes, and broadcasting organizations are all working in this area.

There is a further example difficult to interpret in light of so-called religious freedom: Did John Walker, the American youth who accepted Islam and went to Afghanistan, err in his understanding of American freedom, or does this freedom have obscure and flexible limits which can be expanded to include the Israelis who plotted terrorist activities inside America, and narrowed so as not to understand what the actions of this innocent young man?

If it is his duty (according to American values) for a person to fight alongside his coreligionists and fellow citizens, then what if the problem with the Muslim volunteers who fought along with the Taliban? And why were these atrocities committed against them in Mazar Sharif and Cuba?

But if what is illegal is for a person to fight people of his own nationality and religion, then what are the actions of John Walker, who may never fired a weapon, in comparison to the butchery of the Northern Alliance who killed thousands or tens of thousands of their own people?

If only American justice has stopped at this indecent double standard, but it went beyond that to that which is not in the power of any human: seeking to change Muslim's beliefs within their own country in their school curriculum, and by forbidding the third pillar of their faith: charity, in the name of rooting out terrorism.

We ask you, does this request have even the smallest connection with justice and religious freedom? Or anything else mentioned in your letter?

What about the Events of September 11th?

Readers of your letter were surprised to read that "the killers of September 11 issued no particular demands; in this sense, at least, the killing was done for its own sake." This is without doubt, an insult to the intelligence of millions of people from all over the world who heard and saw the leader of the accused group speaking about the tragedy of the Palestinian people and the crimes of America in Iraq and other places, connecting American security to the security of the Palestinians. This connection appears in a great number of testimonies: in the statements of world leaders, in those of the leadership of the United Nations, in reports of the international media, in a American opinion polls in which 68% of the American public opinion wanted a solution for the

Palestinian problem, even in the statements of the President Bush, Secretary Powell, and Secretary Rumsfeld speaking about solving the problem and establishing a Palestinian state, and about concern to improve the political and economic situation of the Islamic world whose troubles can be attributed to American policy. Bush's repeated refusal to connect the two problems is only a response to the clear demand heard by the world, and understood by most of its leaders, the European Union being only one example of that.

So why then the recourse to this fallacy? Why this attempt to discover their motives while denying that they ever issued particular demands?

The very next paragraph us the answer. The whole purpose of the smoke screen around their demands is only a means to say that the attackers targeted America because it is free and democratic, just as the American president stated from the beginning and has repeated many times since. This causes the reader to feel sorry for the position these intellectuals are in, and reminds one of Soviet biologists who altered the results of their research to serve Marxist ideology. But they were forced to do so, while these sixties have voluntarily presented this fallacy to support the statements of their president.

So as not to be unfair, we will ask them only one question:

Why was the Palestinian problem absent from the open letter when it is the fundamental current problem that preoccupies the entire world, America in particular?

Let us listen to the other side of America, the side which recognizes and faces the truth, proposing solutions that achieve America's interests –not Muslim or Palestinian interests. As long as Americans don't understand the cause of the disaster they will never arrive at a correct solution. This point of view was expressed by David Duke in a long article from which we have provided the following excerpt dealing with the issue at hand (knowing that this man cannot be accused of loving Arabs, we do not agree with his well-known opinions on other topics.)

Why was America attacked?

It is vital that we know why bin Laden and millions of others around the world have come to hate America. Why are so many willing to risk or even sacrifice their lives to get at us? I certainly hope no one reading this is so naïve as to believe that the growing millions who hate America do so because we are "free." That canard has to be the most ridiculous notion ever sold to the American people since the pet rock. To end the threat of terrorism against the American people, we must know the true reason why we are so hated...

Perhaps we should have enough courage to consider the possible reasons why so many might hate us. Only when we have all the facts, rather than cute little clichés like "They were attacking freedom," can we decide the best way we can protect our people in the future...

Too many American politicians have treasonously betrayed the American people by blindly supporting the leading terrorist nation on earth: Israel...

I will show you documentary evidence that during the last 50 years Israel has engaged in more murderous terrorism than any other nation in the world; and that by supporting its criminal behavior, America is now reaping the fanatical hatred of hundreds of millions of people around the globe. Support for Israel's terrorism has directly led to the terrorism now going on against the United States. Most Americans don't even realize the magnitude and scope of Israeli terrorism because of the Jewish media control mentioned by General Brown. A pertinent example of their incredible media power is their ability to propagate the Big Lie that the WTC attack had nothing at all to do with Israel; that the kamikaze attackers hated and attacked Americans because we are "free..."

The Jewish-dominated American mass media and the Israeli-controlled politicians do not want the American people to fully realize the incredibly high price America pays for blindly supporting Israel. In the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, 2001, even President

Bush repeated the absurd lie, alleging the attack happened because they hate the fact that we are free. If, as the media says, bin Laden is behind the terrorism, then they know that the attack occurred not because he hates freedom. Just three years ago, ABC television and PBS Frontline interviewed bin Laden during the time of the Clinton administration. Bin Laden clearly stated why he opposed America:

They (Americans) have put themselves at the mercy of a disloyal government,... it is Israel inside America. Take the sensitive ministries such as the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense and the CIA, you will find that the Jews have the upper hand in them. They make use of America to further their plans for the world..."

For over half a century, Muslims in Palestine have been (by the Jews) slaughtered and assaulted and robbed of their honor and of their property. Their houses have been blasted, their crops destroyed...This is my message to the American people: to look for a serious government that looks out for their interests and does not attack other people's lands, or other people's honor..."

Duke then comments:]

Notwithstanding any of his alleged crimes, bin Laden has never in his entire life uttered a word against Democracy! The media invented the lie about attacking Democracy to hide the real truth; that America is being attacked in retaliation for the American government's support of Israel's terrorist policies in the Mideast. The unanimity of the media in propagating this huge lie without contradiction should make every thoughtful person suspect that Americans are not getting the whole truth from the media...

After going into a lengthy list of Israeli terrorism, Duke then goes on to cite evidence of Israeli complicity in the September 11 attacks:

The Washington Times ran a story on September 10, 2001 about a 68-page study issued by the U.S. Army School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS). The study, issued by the elite Army officer's school, detailed the dangers of a possible U.S. Army occupational force in the Mideast. Here is article's comment about the study's view of the Israeli Mossad:

Of the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, the SAMS officers say: "Wildcard. Ruthless and cunning. Has capability to target U.S. forces and make it look like a Palestinian/Arab act."

Duke then comments:

Ironically, within 24 hours of the story's publication, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was attacked. Could the "ruthless and cunning Mossad," as the U.S. Army officers describe it, covertly have been behind the attack?

Duke then presents what he calls solid evidence implicating Mossad which we will not go into here, since it is not our purpose to either prove or disprove it as much as it is our purpose to prove what is –in our opinion- the purposeful sophism of the open letter of sixty intellectuals.

Not only do we cite his evidence, but we will also cite other evidence reported in the American and Israeli press, as well as the International press:

- 1) The case of five Israelis who filmed the attack while it happened, as was reported in American, Israeli, and other sources.

- 2) The case of the arrest of six Israelis in two cars who had in their possession pictures and maps of nuclear reactors in Florida and the Alaskan pipeline, as well as “suspicious devices.”
- 3) The suspicious trading in airline and insurance stocks at the New York Stock Exchange just prior to the events. This is a well-known occurrence which is under investigation, and it is only one piece of evidence that the Israelis at least, had prior knowledge of the events.

Let us repeat that we do not mean to exonerate them the one who has been accused and convict someone else, we simply want to direct your attention to the values by which the American administration and the American media operate.

This and other evidence has been totally ignored while the media empires have rushed to accuse Muslims, and to spread anything that would cause them alone to be charged, despite the existence of wide gaps and glaring inconsistencies. We can't blame the press for its ignorance since its bias is well-known, but we can't believe that none of our sixty intellectuals have heard any such as the following:

- 1) The passenger list published by the airlines contained no Arabic names, in contrast to the list published by the government.
- 2) Some persons whose names (of the accused) were announced have been definitively proven to be either previously deceased, or living in their home countries.
- 3) The dependence on evidence such as copies of the Qur'an found in their cars or homes, or the chance discovery of a letter sprinkled with Christian terms not known to or used by most Muslims.
- 4) The steel pillars were melted in the fire at the World Trade Center, but the passport of one of the accused was not destroyed. Why don't the Americans benefit from this discovery and create a vest for the President or a covering for the Pentagon from the same paper as the passport? And why would a suicide bomber carry his passport when he is going to his death in a few minutes?
- 5) The accused were young men who entered America a few months earlier, coming from the poorest country in the world, and received limited training in aviation. But the plot that was carried out was of a very high level of sophistication and required advanced technology, consideration of weather predictions, and skill in making amazingly professional maneuvers of the aircraft, in addition to the possession of detailed intelligence that caused the Secret Service to believe that the President's plane was targeted while in the air, so that reporters onboard were ordered not to use their cell phones and to completely turn them off for fear of signaling the position of the plane.

Many commentators from America and other countries believe that a professional espionage organization on the level of Mossad used those young men and took advantage of their readiness for death in order to achieve its objectives. That in itself is not important to us, we only relate this to ask the sixty signatories:

Is there nothing here that might cast a doubt –and we only say a doubt- and cause you to avoid rushing to judgment, while justice demands that the weakness in the evidence against one party strengthens the case against the other party.

It was expected that our American intellectuals would avoid entangling themselves in the same blunders and contradictions as the American administration

which were ridiculed by many commentators throughout the world, when millions asked: “Has another suicide bomber turned up alive today like yesterday?”

“Did the President give another speech today which Powell or Rumsfeld will have to contradict tomorrow? Each denies the statements of the other, who should we believe? Why did the government cover up the incidents which occurred near the White House on the day of the attacks?”

“If the attackers goal was to attack freedom, why didn’t they attack one of the nations which is more free than America? Why did they choose the Pentagon and World Trade Center instead of the institutions of democracy and human rights in America?”

They expected intellectuals to correct the President’s information; first by informing him that the Taleban are not a group of musicians, and finally, by advising him to delay pulverizing an exhausted, weak people before complete evidence is provided.

We know that the American government had prepared in advance to attack Afghanistan, and we suppose that the sixty intellectuals will not dispute that, but in any case there is no disputing that justice dictates proving the accusation, that the punishment be in proportion to the crime, and that punishment should be limited to those who committed the crime only, even if doing so takes time. Even if we assume that the need for vengeance caused the Americans to hurry the decision to fight a war, what is wrong with reconsidering it now? And why shouldn’t these intellectuals be the ones to raise their voices about it?

Justice demands granting pardon and atonement for wrongdoing. If America had done so it would have been able to point to it as a witness to the world that it is brave, free, and just. Then the signatories would be able to talk!

If only America had the characteristics of the Prophet of mercy and justice, Muhammad –blessing and peace be upon him- who publicly renounced the actions of his great general, Khalid ibn al-Walid who fought a hostile tribe of idolaters, but the tribe claimed that there was a confusion of words during the battle. The Prophet gave the benefit of the doubt because of their presumed innocence and therefore, denounced the acts of Khalid and paid compensation for those of the tribe killed during the battle.

As for mercy and preferring pardon, we know of no place for these in American politics or values, since these belong to the prophets and their followers alone. The idolaters killed seventy Muslim men and the Prophet promised to kill a like number of them, but when God granted him victory and he returned to Makkah and some of the Muslims said, “Now the Prophet –blessings and peace be upon him- will revenge those Muslims who were killed.” But the Prophet –blessings and peace be upon him- recited to them the verse: “If you punish, then punish in proportion to the harm done you, but if you will be patient, then it is better for those who are patient.” He then said, “No, we will be patient and have mercy,” and pardoned all of them except for a very small number who committed particular crimes.

The conditions which you mention for just war are good, even if they don’t reach the level of precision and detail defined by Islamic law, but the question is, “does your government observe these conditions?”

Who among you can say, “yes” when the entire world knows the answer is “no?”

You indicate that the no war is better than war, and that war is not legitimate if it is possible to avoid it by negotiations or mediation. Good words! Haven’t you heard

of the principle by which your government rejected the neutrality of any other party, let alone negotiations with its opponents themselves?

Did it not announce to the world that it must either be with America in all its beliefs and actions, or with the terrorists? Yet you announced, "In the name of universal human morality...we support our government's ...decision."

Let us leave aside justice and values and ask a pragmatic question: What has America profited from this arbitrary principle?: hypocritical statements from world leaders along with an increase in resentment and hatred in all parts of the world.

Wouldn't it be better for your government to admit that rather than continuing to repeat it?

You openly accuse a group and then divide the world into those who are for and those who are against, with no possibility of neutrality, and no room for discussion. Then you dare to ascribe to it the attributes of universal human morality and just war!

This is not the first time in the history of American wars even if it is the most arbitrary. During the Gulf War America rejected the Arab solution despite the fact that it was an entirely Arab matter.¹²

Furthermore, have you examined the statements of your own officials? Of course not, since you have added things which none of them ever said, when you said that the Islamic movements openly professes its desire and ability to use murder, and its willingness to use chemical and biological weapons...

Who made this statement? When and where?

Do you want the world to forgive your government's deeds and lies because they pale in comparison with your own deeds and lies?¹³

Who is Your Problem With?

It is most unfortunate when the view of sixty intellectuals in this age of easily accessible communications -when a researcher can access the newest publications in a matter of seconds- is nearly identical to the view of Islam of the European clergy of the Dark Ages!

Whatever the level of intolerance of the ancients, it is worse for modern people to continue the same pattern. Persisting in a sin is worse than committing it, especially when the means of ceasing are readily available.

When McVeigh blew up the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, the investigators possessed detailed information about his physical description as well as his [political] affiliation. Yet hundreds, or perhaps thousands of reporters, thousands of miles from the site, spoke about "middle-eastern features," and an Islamic connection without any official or unofficial source. Even the Pentagon announced the need for Arabic translators to work in interrogation. Finally when Clinton spoke of the total innocence of Arabs and Muslims in the matter, most of them ceased their disparagement of Islam, and harassment of Muslims. But, when Goldstein massacred people at prayer in the Mosque of Abraham [in Hebron], did they Americans speak about "Zionist terrorism"? Or did they simply talk of a crime committed by a Jewish individual? And that is only one of many examples.

¹² The white paper published by the Jordanian government is the best source for this, the suit filed by former Attorney General, Ramsey Clark also corroborates this.

¹³ From personal experience I can attest to this weakness in keeping to the subject of quotes, Samuel Huntington attributes a statement to me in his book, "Clash of Civilizations (pg 249) which was taken out of context so that the intended meaning is lost.

On the other hand, if we supposed that all terrorist incidents in America for a century had been the work of an extremist Islamic organization, would that excuse accusing all Muslims in general or Islam itself?

America has more organizations than any other country espousing racism, extremist religions, and terrorism. What it then be correct to attribute whatever actions any one of them commits to the American people, or to the religion of America itself?

Or for example, why did the Japanese media not accuse the Chinese or the Communists of carrying out the terrorist incident in the Tokyo Metro? And that they did that because Japan is free and advanced? Was it stupidity on their part, or was it because of God bestowed a different level of justice on all them? Or is it that the American media, along with the American administration, has its own definition of justice?

Why is it that the British media do not attack Catholicism every time there is an incident in Northern Ireland? Aren't the Catholics the traditional enemies of the Protestants? Isn't the war there clearly a religious war? Hasn't the competition between them for converts in Africa led sometimes to burning missionary centers and even bloodshed?

The "Al-Qaeda" organization –if there actually is an organization- never claimed to be a part of the Islamic movement. Nor has anyone of the Islamic movement said, before or after September 11th, that that organization was part of them. In fact, some of them have gone to excess in condemning them, especially in America and its allies. They have even denied that it has any connection to Islam at all!

Yet, the signatories state that this organization is but one arm of the Islamic movement! Exactly as if a Muslim writer claimed that a group such as the skinheads or the Irish Republican Army were only one arm of the International Christian movement which includes the Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Quakers, Mormons, Baptists, etc.

This exposes their real problem, which is in reality their problem with Islam, not with the Islamic movement. Even if we supposed that all Muslims in the world became Americans in every aspect, every incident will still be attributed to them from the first moment! What do you suppose is the cause of this? Is it reason and academic research? Or is it the residue within the unconscious that rushes out, completely bypassing the conduits of reason, which some scholars believe to be deeply rooted violence and made-up enemies within the European psyche mentioning this unforgettable advice:

In order to make the problem clearer let us take the example of the devil. People, without excusing criminals or relieving them of any of their responsibility for their actions, attribute such actions to the devil since the origin of all sin is his temptation and enticement. Thus, he has come to be the incarnation of absolute evil. As you see, the great amount of misinformation and misconceptions about Islam has caused the people of the West (with a few exceptions) to see Islam as the incarnation of evil in their deepest feelings, even if they know intellectually that there are good and evil in every religion. Because of this the Western mind has no problem in attributing any evil deed to Islam, despite the knowledge of its actual innocence. For example, the Jim Jones [suicide] incident had no relation to Islam whatsoever, but if a book came out today or tomorrow saying that it was an Islamic act since Islam is the embodiment of evil and excuses such deeds, many people would accept it without discussion.

When [the boxer] Muhammad Ali visited the ruins of the World Trade Center a heckler said to him, "Aren't you ashamed to belong to the same religion as BinLadin?" He replied, "Aren't you ashamed to belong to the religion that produced Adolph Hitler?" His answer was logically correct, but if the questioner believes that Hitler is exchanged Christian ethics for the ethics of the devil –which he unconsciously equates with Islam-

than Muhammad Ali's answer would not be unconvincing. This shows us the depth of the problem and the size of the tragedy.

The Church used to interpret the "number of the beast –666" in the book of Revelation (the Apocalypse of John) as being Islam, and it seems that this interpretation, or a trace of it, remains within the minds of their descendants –even though they are secularists.

Thus the open letter is contradictory. It uses the voice of reason when it distinguishes between Islam and that which was done by some Muslims, and between Jihad and terrorism; and it uses the cumulative voice of its hereditary culture within the unconscious whose errors are simply compounded by deception of the official media when it describes all Islamic movements as terrorists, or even more, when the term "international terrorism" is applied only to Muslims.

Do we believe that Islamic Civilization is absolutely perfect, or that the Islamic movements are infallible? No Muslim says that. Absolute perfection belongs only to the essence of Islam –in its doctrines, values and laws. Infallibility belongs only to the Prophet himself–God's blessing and peace be upon him- in the message which he delivered from God, and then to the Muslim community as a whole an ideal person following the Prophet. They are only infallible in that they cannot all agree on an error, despite the small number of them who are true and upright.

All Muslims know, whether they are common people, governments, movements, or nations, that the gap between the reality of the Islamic community and true Islam is the driving reason and only purpose for the existence of the Islamic reform movements. For this reason, all the Islamic movements strive -each according to its own distinct understanding and methodology- to bring the community back to the Islamic values that are in reality, as we have seen, the universal values, not to the destroy those values as the signatories to this open letter claim.

Acknowledging this is the key to a great opportunity for dialogue between these movements and the West. That is, based on Western recognition of the positive role they have, and their true representation of the Islamic peoples. Will the signatories to this letter or others do so? I do not believe it would be very difficult for those who love the truth and desire the welfare of humanity, as long as they are sincere.

The hostile stance towards Islam was firmly established in American policy before September 11 and afterwards. The American war against terrorism has only confirmed that fact more firmly for Muslims. The rest is yet to be seen(42).

If this inequity, or better yet, antagonism was limited to the Palestinian problem it could be said to be the result of the Zionist lobby in America, or if it was limited to Afghanistan it could be said to be the result of the presence there of Al-Qaeda. But when it is directed towards all Muslim countries and minorities, then how can we interpret it? To clarify this point, let us take six examples divided into two categories, from which we will deduce our results.

First, two countries: The (former) Soviet Union, and China. Both are former enemies of America, and each contains minorities who demand this right. In the first nation are the Baltic countries on one side and in the Islamic nations of the Caucasus on the other. The second nation contains the Buddhists of Tibet on one side, and the Muslim [regions of China] on the other.

The opposite examples are India and the Philippines on one hand, and Indonesia and Sudan on the other. The first two have Muslim peoples who demand separation, while the last two have non-Muslim minorities who demand the very same thing.

The firm American position is:

- 1) Strong support of independence for the Baltic states, and ignoring the Islamic republics, even sometimes rejecting them and saying nothing about the racist extermination which the Russians carry out there.
- 2) Strong support of the Tibetan Buddhists, while ignoring the situation of the Muslims of China, despite the fact that there are ten times as many of them.
- 3) Treating the separatist movements of Kashmir and the Southern Philippines as terrorists and declaring war on them.
- 4) Strong support for the separatist movements in Indonesia and Sudan.

If the signatories can offer any interpretation for this other than bias against Islam then please do so!

If they suppose that modification of terms such as “Islamic” and “Islamicist” is sufficient to avoid the problem, than that is an even bigger problem.

If they believe there is no reason to even mention the extremist fundamentalist and racist organizations in America, extremist racist organizations in Europe, Hindu fundamentalist organization in India, and religious fundamentalist groups of Japan -in their vast number and infinite variety- then there is no benefit in dialogue with them.

If they felt that it was appropriate to mention them but simply overlooked it, than the dialogue with the Islamic movements can begin with their public apology for singling them out, or rather, for accusing them at all.

As Muslims it does not concern us whether America was authorized to commit the atrocities that it commits against us as you claim, or not authorized as was plainly stated by officials including the Democratic representative from Ohio, Dennis Kucinich. What you should know if your government insists on making war on us with every means, and everywhere in the world –is what we’re defending.

Conclusion:

We are certain that justice is an absolute value, that it is not permitted to take a life which is sacred to God, whether in the name of God or in the name of American values, that it is possible for us to a word of agreement as was revealed by God, and to reconcile based on our common welfare. On the basis of the lives of the holy prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad –the blessing and peace of God be upon them all- and in application of the text of the Holy Qur’an: we express to you our readiness to debate with that which is best, and to meet with you individually or as a group, in our country or in America.

We will send our opinion to each of you, as well as to other intellectuals, and we will treat your opinions with every care.

Our Islam commands that all our actions be devoted as worship of God, and to endeavor to make them right as much as possible. For this reason, we would like to thank all those who have helped us to achieve this goal, and demonstrate our willingness to correct any error in our statements, to clarify any misconception, and to discuss any other subjects which we may have omitted.

I advise you -and myself- to be sincere with God, and to be certain that we will be asked concerning what we say and do, to accept that truth no matter what its source, and to interpret the statements of others according to the best possible interpretation. All of us will die, but the truth will remain forever.

Dr. Safar Al-Hawali

Makkah, Saudi Arabia

sralhawalimakkah@hotmail.com

Endnotes:

Fundamentalists:

1) Only in America are there people who desire to see the planet turned into a mass of fire and ash, and openly strive with all seriousness for this horrific end, using the most modern and advanced media to bring the good news of it to all mankind. Only in America do we find fundamentalist organizations this extreme, a level of insanity to which even most terrorists cannot reach. Furthermore, these fundamentalists have great political influence and tens of millions of followers, and work under the eyes and ears of the government. Not only are they hostile to everyone who disagrees with them—especially those in government, but some of them have beliefs about the federal government that difficult for many rational people to fathom. All their beliefs and attitudes proceed from their belief in the final, horrible battle of Armageddon, and all their activities are attempts to ignite this last war. They cheer every war especially in the Mideast, in hopes that it might be the beginning of the end. If they hear of attempts to achieve peace, they use every means to convince the American government that avoid it and cancel it. Their desire for the end of the world is based their belief that Jesus will raise them to heaven without tasting death, to witness the destruction from above the clouds. 40% of Americans believe the world will end in the battle of Armageddon. 20% believe that it will end in their lifetimes. They seek to interpret texts of the Bible to refer to current events year by year, month by month, and day by day. Every time they err in predicting the end they simply start from scratch. There may be no stranger sites on the worldwide web than theirs. Despite the dozens of incidents committed or attempted by their followers annually, such as murders, bank robberies and blowing up federal installations, yet they are a part of American culture and stand for conservative American values, fighting liberalism with all their might. Whenever anyone of them is arrested, he alone is accused, without assigning guilt to the movement that produced him. For the beliefs of well-known fundamentalists concerning Armageddon see: Falwell's sermons at trbc.org. and Pat Robertson's at his CBN website.

2) The other pan of the scale:

In the letter only one side is given: the operations directed against Americans, but there have been only a few thousand victims of such operations. The other pan of the scale is that history proves America to be the World's most bloody, violent, and oppressive society, a record which from first glance makes it to be the farthest nation from just war. For example:

- 1) The killing of millions of its native peoples.
- 2) The killing of millions of African slaves.
- 3) The killing of millions of civilians during the two world wars, including:

- The incineration of thousands of civilians in Germany and Japan (more than sixty cities in which more than 400 thousand people were killed, including 100 thousand in Tokyo alone.
- The atomic bombing of Hiroshima.
- The atomic bombing of Nagasaki.

(these last two require no comment).

In general, if the victims of these two wars were tens of millions, America is responsible for the biggest share of it.

- 3) After World War II America carried its wars to East and Southeast Asia (Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and China). Some estimates indicate that up to 22 million people were killed, most of whom were civilians, largely the elderly and children. Kissinger admits about a third of that number, but many Americans are convinced that the number is at least half that.
- 4) Iraq = The American government relied on the policy of annihilation by purposely killing the Iraqi people. In one instance alone (the Amariya bomb shelter) the number of victims (who were civilians) were almost half the number of the September 11 attacks, while the torment which they were subjected to was at least as great or greater as that which occurred in New York. I am positive that any good person reads the file of this incident will be shocked, not only by its horror, but by the small amount of discussion of it in comparison to the attacks on America. However, America's just and clean war was not satisfied with that, but had to kill a million generals still in their mother's wombs, and another million after their births. Jeff Simons says in his book about this tragedy, "I know Western observers who were stricken with depression and nervous breakdowns because of what they saw of the American torture of Iraqi children."
To say nothing of the pollution of the environment whose effects may not be seen for years, and will not cease for hundreds or thousands of years as a result of the dropping of millions of tons of depleted uranium and other internationally prohibited weapons. It is an unprecedented, endless war of barbaric annihilation. All to help God's chosen people and the "men of peace" that lead them such as General Sharon, who more closely resemble the hosts of the Assyrian spoken of in the prophecies of the Bible!
- 5) Palestine: Overlooking the continual support the Zionist state receives for its wars with the Arabs, we do not hesitate to say that the American government –without paying the smallest heed to justice- boastfully stands alone in support of the barbaric Israeli massacres to which the Palestinian people are subjected to, and absolutely reject all international decisions and diplomatic norms –casting aside all values and morality: a disgraceful and outrageous situation which no conscientious person can ignore. The Zionist barbarians use advanced America military technology to strike everything: men, women, children, houses, and farms. They prevent reporters and aid workers from even entering, but American unfairness did not stop at asking the two sides to cease fire, but went beyond that and asked the nursing babies and pregnant mothers to first stop fighting.
- 6) The Balkans: American justice in the Balkans is based on equality between the murderer and his victims. America achieved great profits in the name of this justice, the least of which was the tucking Europe under its wings.
- 7) The farce of the war against terrorism: The American government violated international laws and humane norms –let alone divine law- in everything having to do with this war: An war without sufficient evidence, without United Nation's authorization, refusal of mediation or neutrality, the use of deadly and prohibited weapons previously unheard of, the targeting of mosques, and centers for humanitarian aid and the media, barbaric slaughter of civilians on the slightest pretext or without pretext, killing of surrendering troops, violating the rights of prisoners, invoking special laws in conformity with the desires of the administration, imposing a government rejected by the people, covering up information and imposing censorship of the American press itself, conflicting goals which become increasingly vague and are changed from day to day, preventing the expression of opposing opinions in the media, and finally, the issuing of the a supporting letter by certain intellectuals.

The preceding are some types of American warfare, as for the other wars –it is not possible to calculate the victims or to justify it according to any concept of justice.

One type is the war by proxy which has been fought in most African countries, in the states of Central and South America, and in the states of South-East Asia and other places. America makes use of local commanders which have no regard whatsoever for justice and only serve "Uncle Sam," if any of them fail, America disposes of him and his forces, and looks for a new replacement.

Most of the victims of this type of warfare are hostile neighboring countries or those in which America stirs up enmity against them.

Another type is the war of intrigue which is fought in over fifty countries. Its operations include: kidnapping of leaders, revolutions, inciting riots, supporting separatists, and supporting corrupt totalitarian regimes. Many of these states are allies of America, and many of their leaders studied in or resided in America for a time, or were under the patronage of its embassies.

The victims of this type are the allied or neutral nations, elected governments, and nationalist leaders.

Another type is economic warfare: Many studies say that although Americans are 5% of the population of the world, then 95% of the population is affected by American economic warfare: between those millions who die of hunger to the bankruptcy of institutions of national production. The fact is that millions of Americans are also affected by it. The only ones who profit are the monopolistic conglomerates and those nations who cooperate with them.

To achieve the interests of these conglomerates –especially the arms manufactures- America will contrive military confrontations in any part of the world. These wars are just only in proportion to the profit they produce for these corporations! Exactly as the president is electable only in proportion to the amount of campaign money he can gather.

If the administration is unable to create a war for some reason, it cancels or delays some of its nuclear arms agreements, then uses the threat to national security to finance imaginary projects to be implemented by these corporations.

Another type is biological warfare: Despite the high secrecy that surrounds this evil type of warfare, the Aids virus has exposed it to some extent. Dr. Len Horowitz, graduate of Harvard shook up world public opinion with evidence that Aids and Ebola are both products of the American biological war laboratories.

Endless wars and endless justice!