



TURNING FROM DOOM-LADEN SOOTHSAYINGS TO MUTUAL COMMUNICATION AND WISDOM (TA`ARUF)

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Abstract

Doom-laden forecasts like Huntington's projected 'clash of civilizations' use imaginary fears as a mechanism to condition individuals and societies to accept the division of the world, especially its future energy supplies, in favour of those who currently wield power and supremacy. Previously the NATO and Warsaw Pact blocs were used to maintain 'blocs'; now the 'clash of civilizations' is being used to make 'blocs' along religious/cultural lines. Division and conflicts are generally based on unreal fears of the other, by means of which the emotions of the masses are channelled into whatever direction suits the wielders of power. All the revealed religions, from the first prophet, Adam, to the last, the Prophet of Islam, in their true nature reject the conflict-building tendencies that lead humans to war and bloodshed. Briefly, religion means cosmos or 'universal order' and bringing 'order' to the chaotic experiences in human history in the world. Islam, by its very name, affirms peace, safety, and happiness for all humankind. In Islam, as in any other religious traditions, war is incidental; peace is the norm. On the other hand, to prevent chaos from undermining cosmos, wars become necessary at times. In Islam war is regarded as a natural but incidental feature of human collective life; the incidental necessity of it is balanced by its being subject to certain principles and constraints. Islam proposes justice and peace for all the world's peoples, and through certain precepts sets up a 'firewall' designed to protect religion, life, property, mind, and generation. The world needs to encourage an ethos of peace and dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims so as to maintain the an orderly, harmonious co-existence in the global village. It needs to discourage and battle against all clash-centred discourses and practices. With the resuscitating breath of love and peace inherent in all religions, preserved and well-maintained in Islam as in the Abrahamic traditions generally, humanity may be able, for all our sakes, to strengthen order and enfeeble chaos. For Muslims, who share the aim of defeating the doom-laden fear-rousing predictions of a long class of traditions, Gülen's insights and parameters can be reconstructed again. In particular, commitment to dialogue and tolerance should build up our spiritual capital so that we can adhere to the perennial values and understand the wisdom codes of out respective traditions.

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1. Prologue & Methodological Postulates

The future is always predestined from “now” and “here”. One of the future predictions was that the future will be the age of knowledge. The futurists or other future-readers are pretending to be an augur; thus, rather than objective estimations and predictions, the whims and wishes of the reader are over imposed on the future. Therefore, these kinds of future-reading praxes are only contingencies without any real content and context. Yet based on these kinds of future-readings, humans are led to a psyche of supplication and thus await something in accord with what was read before. This psyche in the end forms a mode of practical preparation and strife. Once a target is determined; then all means and projects to get this target are utilized vastly and professionally.

At this juncture, Huntington's theory can be deconstructed in the aim to negate all doomsday fantasies and soothsayings.¹³⁷ The “doomsday” fantasies and fears conditioning societies and individuals seem to be just an apparatus to parcel out the future existence and energies of the world at the hands of those upholding power and supremacy. Through these kinds of projects, or more correctly, predictions, humans are conditioned to get aligned along the line of the holders of economic powers. Just as the blocs of the Cold War aligned around the NATO and Warsaw were just ephemeral entities to get humanity divided, by now the thesis of the clash of civilizations is being discoursed and practiced by referring to certain religio-cultural sensitivities. Hence, these types of clash scenarios help the holders of imperial power control the less-privileged parts of the world.

As a matter of fact, the ethos of tension and conflict is always beneficial for the unjust upholders of power in history. Conflicts are generally based on phantasmic fears, an imaginary other, by which the masses are goaded whatever these power wants to canalize. All religions from the message of Adam to that of the Prophet of Islam in their pristine nature can and may never wish enmity and conflict, rejecting all conflictual tendencies that lead humans to wars and bloodsheds. Briefly, religion means cosmos and “cosmicizing” all the chaotic experiences in the world in human history. As such, Islam, with its very label, means and declares peace, safety, and happiness for all humankind. In Islam, like any other religious traditions, war is accidental; where peace in the cosmos is essential. On the other hand, lest chaos besieges cosmos in the cosmos wars at times becomes necessary. Be it defensive, or protective for chaos, wars are conditioned with some fundamental principles. In Islam war is regarded as natural-but-accidental feature of human nature and in order to balance it Islam put principles and restrictions. Islam proposing justice and world peace establishes a “firewall” in the aim to protect one's religion, life, commodity, mind, and generation through certain precepts.

Lastly, humanity with Muslims and non-Muslims needs an ethos of peace and dialogue in order to maintain the cosmic situation of our existence in the global village, degrading all clash-centric discourses and praxes. With the resuscitative breath of love and peace inherent in all religions, refurbished well in Islam in particular, and in Abrahamic traditions in general, humanity may able to cosmicize chaos for the sake of itself and make the bleak futurists unwarranted in the case of the

¹³⁷ Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” in *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993). Later his article was published as a book with the same title. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997). In the nearly same vein with its epistemic and apocalyptic tones, Francis Fukuyama wrote an article, entitled “The End of History?” in the *National Interest* (Summer 1989), later published as a book with the same title, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free P, 1992).



chaotic prediction of our world. For Muslims, in the aim to reach such a *telos* of “cosmicizing cosmos”, the following insights and parameters can be reconstructed again for the war-torn, hoary world:

Islam... lays the ground for a relation with all peoples, not only with Jews and Christians whose prophets are confirmed in the Qur'an. Having once been the recipients of revelation, and of a revelation that is identical to that of Islam, the whole of mankind may be recognized by Muslims as equally honored, as they are, by virtue of revelation and also as equally responsible, as they are, to acknowledge God as the only God and to offer Him worship, service, and obedience to His eternal laws.¹³⁸

Or more recently, as Gülen indicates in his masterpiece, *İnançın Gölgesinde II* (Under the Shadow of the Faith-II):

Our age is an age of positive sciences together with the epistème molded with inspiration wrought with thought and culture. Our people can only catch up, communicate with and respond to the contemporary age through wielding these aspects of life as if four or five-dimensional angels. What we need for is thought as much as inspiration, inspiration as much as experience, experience as much as love and ardor.¹³⁹

At this juncture, the following thesis can be encapsulated: On the threshold of the quagmire leading universal existence to global perdition and doom, to universal inequities and oppressions, and the like, mutuality, communality, cooperative and proactive praxis enhanced by dialogues and alliances is a both cosmic and cosmicizing solution to our fragmented and debased existence at the expense of doomsday soothsayings. Theoretically, grace and love cannot be counted and thus are not squeezed into certain formula or categories, whereas hate and enmity can be categorized and squeezed into certain formulae through practical and existential manifestation in the daily lives of human being. Furthermore, it is also important to accentuate that all power and hegemony-tainted discourses and praxes are essentially and pragmatically diabolized and manifested through spiritually attuned umbrellas and supra-structures. Hence, what is in conflict, clash, or doomed is, to a great extent, the wish and will to power and otherize human beings for the sake of predominance.

For the sake of brevity, dialogue and tolerance should be our eternal spiritual capital through which the world may able to get cosmicized in a continuous manner. By resuscitating the perennial values and mutual wisdomization codes, the whole world may be able to get resuscitated. This resuscitation can be made possible by communicative and dialogue-centric strives of the members of the Abrahamic religions. By doing so, a new mode of existence and peace may one day prevail in our war-torn world. In other words, dialogue that sets the path for “mutual communication and wisdomization (*ta'âruf*) has been a necessary mode of existence for several centuries; but it is a quintessential asset since the beginning of this century. In this study, the following questionnaire will be sought to answer: Why does humanity need an ethos harboring mutual communication and wisdomization through dialogue in our precarious existence? To what extent and to what degree can one anticipate a more just, equitable, and fraternizing *epistème* by way of dialogue and mutual understanding? What is the

¹³⁸ Isma'il Raji al Faruqi, “Islam and Other Religions” in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* vol. 2, no. 1 (1985).

¹³⁹ M. Fethullah Gülen, *İnançın Gölgesinde-II* (İstanbul: Nil Yayınları, 1994), CD-ROM.



rationale for “cosmizing the chaos at the expense of cosmos and order? And most importantly to what extent do the notions of Gülen support this goal of “cosmicizing chaos through mutuality and communication?

2. Epistemic and Historical Prolegomena: From Clash and Chaos To Peace and Cosmos

2.1. From *Veni, Vidi, Vici* to Mutuality and Wisdomization

Are the religions of the world for the disparity of human being? At the outset, religious traditions have, as if, been the cause of all conflictual tendencies and inclinations. Nevertheless, a judgment something like this is not correct and cannot be evinced. What is witnessed on the scene is in fact the paraphernalization of religion/sacred in favor of power struggles, politico-economic hegemonies, and so forth. The existential ramification of this situation can be seen also in religious “contact instances”. For instance:

When different religions or ideologies met in the past, the main purpose was to overcome an opponent, because each was completely convinced that it alone knew the secret of human life.¹⁴⁰

Living no longer in “isolated islands”, humanity have to come to contact with each other. The “contact zones” are now expected to be prepared through dialogue and communication. Hence, “(d)ialogue, as the term is used today to characterize encounters between persons and groups with different religions or ideologies, is something quite new under the sun.”¹⁴¹ If the genealogy of dialogue in the 20th century is reconsidered, the following statement seems appropriate in showing its general rationale and program:

The impetus for dialogue in the contemporary world has generally come from Christians, and secondly from Jews. Thus it is natural that when Islam enters into dialogue, it is most likely to be first with Christians and then Jews. To be sure, the need for dialogue between Islam and Hinduism and even Buddhism is underlined almost daily in the newspaper reports of mutual hostility and killings. But it is overwhelmingly the encounter with the

¹⁴⁰ Leonard Swidler, “Islam and the Trialogue Of Abrahamic Religions” in *Cross Currents*, vol. 42 Issue 4 (Winter 92/93), 444-6.

¹⁴¹ Swidler, *ibid.*, 444.



other two Abrahamic religions, Judaism and Christianity, that has been the motor driving Islam toward dialogue.¹⁴²

The reason why some of those who resist dialogue can be given, it would seem, to the lack of knowledge in the extent and content of the dialogue. In the aim to clarify this activity, it is important to know what dialogue is not as well as what it is.

This process or act is not a new mode of syncretism, nor an attempt to form a new religion; rather it is an attempt to search for mutual initiatives for peace and congruity in a tolerance and understanding ethos without constraint while preserving differences. By virtue of its emphasis on mutuality and alterity, the practice of dialogue does not aim to proselytize or to make concession. Thus, this practice may not be a missionary activity; whereas s/he is able to share each other's religious experience in this practice. Hence, dialogue and missionary activities are drastically different activities; because the latter activity regards the collocutor as a prey and acts accordingly and calls any means for changing collocutor's belief and way of life. Thus, what dialogue aims at is just presentation of one's experience and conviction in a mutually constructive setting. This presentation, as indicated before, comprises mutual recognition and understanding without any pressure and insistence. On the other hand, dialogue enables one, to some extent, to communicate the one's religious beliefs and thoughts. It can even enhance the scope and depth of one's religious experience. Only at this juncture can dialogue and missionary activity overlap. It is obvious that every religion, by and large, wants to expand its followers as many as possible; nevertheless this "want" should not and may not be put in the activities of dialogue. This is because dialogue does not mean to reject or proselytize "other"; but to wish the collocutor's adherence to a right way and a right conduct (*hidayah* in Islam).

What is more, it is essential that the issues causing conflicts and intense discussions be avoided; rather the common grounds that religions share be emphasized and brought forth.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Leonard Swidler, "Islam and the Trialogue of Abrahamic Religions" in *Cross Currents*, vol. 42 Issue 4 (Winter 92/93), 444-53. Here also Swidler gave a brief history of Trialogue: "(T)he longest-lived (1978-84), most organized trialogue, see the report by Eugene Fisher, "Kennedy Institute Jewish-Christian-Muslim Trialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 19, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 197-200. In April, 1989, another ongoing trialogue, this time international, sponsored by the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* and the National Conference of Christians and Jews, held its first, very successful three-day meeting; the fifth was held in January, 1993 in Graz, Austria. A dialogue between Muslims and Hindus has been launched, but only on a relatively small scale to date. One such between Riffat Hassan and Kana Mitra was sponsored by the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* in 1985 and was published in Leonard Swidler, ea., *Religious Liberty and Human Rights in Nations and Religions* (New York and Philadelphia: Hippocrene Books and Ecumenical Press, 1986), 109-42. A miniature dialogue between Islam and Buddhism also took place at the same conference between Mohammed Talbi and Masao Abe and was published in *ibid.*; both are reprinted in Leonard Swidler, ea., *Muslims in Dialogue* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992)." Swidler, *ibid.*, 444-5.

¹⁴³ Niyazi Öktem, *Kültürlerarası Diyalog Sempozyumu, İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 7-8 Mart 1998, (İstanbul)163-164.*



2.2. From Theoria To Praxes or Textual Precepts and Historical Manifestations

A. Wisdomization Precepts in the Islamic Sources

a. Mutuality and Cooperation among Humankind according to the Qur'ân and the Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam

aa. Wisdomization and Mutuality in the Qur'ân

There are myriad verses and *ahâdith* (traditions of the Prophet) in the Qur'ân and in the Hadith collections pertaining to dialogue and tolerance. In these authentic sources, save some occasional situations, as a rule peace and tolerance are main traits of Islamic ethics and thought. One can easily grasp in these sources an ethos of tolerance; forgiveness, dialogue, and embracing one's heart all the cosmos in many verses and hadiths. This ethos expresses the pluralist character of the Islamic sources. To illustrate this, the Qur'ân repeatedly emphasizes goodness (*khayr*); hence it make this concept paradigmatic framework as "peace is principal goodness" (*al-sulh khayrun*) (al-Nisâ /4: 128). This also proves both the epistemological and ontological structure of Islam, which means peace, surrender, and safety. That is to say, without forming these virtues and features one cannot be a real Muslim. Additionally, the very concept of "Islam" denotes to embrace and approach the cosmos, human being, and eco-system with love and respect.

In addition, in the Qur'ân all religions are the same in their essence; hence, the hadith of the Prophet makes it clear in the following manner: "The religions of us as prophets are single"¹⁴⁴. In this respect, a Muslim should believe in God, His angels, and the books He sent as well as the Prophets teaching these books without discrimination (al-Baqarah/2: 285; Âl 'Imrân /3: 84). In the same way, the Prophet is ordered in the Qur'ân to follow up the path of the past prophets (Al-An 'âm/6: 90; al-Nahl/16: 123). The path reinstated in the Qur'ân very clearly (al-Mâidah/5: 48), recovering of what is adumbrated in the previous scriptures.

The Qur'ân commands in many verses the Prophet, "sent as a paradigm of universal grace", to act in a tolerant way and communicative way while spreading the message. Its parameter in the vein of dialogue and communication is summarized well in the following verse:

Say: "O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)." (Âl 'Imrân /3: 64)

What is more, it is also important to emphasize here that in the Islamic sources the method and means of wisdomization are well explicated. Hence:

And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury); but say, "We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; our Allah and your Allah is One; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam)." (Al-'Ankebût/29: 46).

¹⁴⁴ Ebu Abdillâh Muhammed b. İsmail, Sahih-i Buhari, "Anbiyâ", 48, İstanbul.



Therefore, it is not an Islamic conduct and ethics to cut off our relations with the People of the Book, or behave harshly, or look down on them. This mode of conduct and praxis apparently contradicts the main character of Islam in general, and of the Qur'ân in particular. In other way, the Qur'ân reinstates this rule in this way:

Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just. (Al-Mumtahinah/60: 8)

This verse was revealed in time of very tense relations with the pagans of Mecca. Despite this tense occasion, it is noteworthy to point out its insistence on goodness, fairness, and justice.

Moreover, with the logic of the verse "the religion before Allah is *islam* (submission to the Divine Will)" (Âl 'Imrân /3: 19), all prophets in human history are preacher of the Divine Message. By virtue of this fact, it may be easier and possible to establish dialogue with those who follow the path of the prophets before the Last Prophet.

On the other hand, it is not a compulsory thing to establish dialogue among the fellows of religions; rather in the Qur'ân, there are advices to behave the best possible just and moral way with those who do not fight with Muslims.

Neither in the Qur'ân, nor in the Sunnah of the Prophet does any order ban the mutual and communicative relations with anyone. This kind of regulations firstly contradicts the very nature of the Qur'ânic message. To exemplify how the Qur'ân wants from Muslims to act the other, the following verses can be given:

...But if ye forgive and overlook, and cover up (their faults), verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Al-Taghabûn/ 64: 14).

And:

Tell those who believe, to forgive those who do not look forward to the Days of Allah: it is for Him to recompense (for good or ill) each People according to what they have earned. (Al-Jâthiyah/45: 14).

For the sake of brevity, the Qur'ân clearly declares forgiveness, tolerance and mutuality in its whole ontological and moral framework.

ab. Practical Manifestation: Wisdomization in the Life and Discourses of the Prophet of Islam

The Prophet of Islam is a paradigmatic model for Muslims in their daily life as well as in their relations with the members of other religions. He used to behave non-Muslims in a very positive and embracing manner on the grounds of being human. Of course the source of this tolerance and indulgence is the Qur'ân, forming the consciousness of its first Receptor and its followers. Hence, this kind of communicative interaction is expected to be an inherent habit in Muslim character. Upon the migration to Madinah, the Prophet established a universal peace constitution, forming the equality of non-Muslims with Muslims in terms of law and administration.¹⁴⁵ In its egalitarian and inclusive spirit, this first constitution has not been surpassed yet by any other universal constitution. Multi-

¹⁴⁵ Muhammed Hamidullah, *Islam Peygamberi*, (trans. By .Salih Tug), Ankara 2003, I, 190.



cultural and multi-religious attitudes were the main trait of the early Muslim community, enabling to live side by side peacefully with the People of the Book in Madinah.

To illustrate the praxes of dialogue and cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims, the following cases can be remembered: During his first prophetic experience in Mecca, the Prophet came across to some Christians. One of them was Waraqa b. Nawfal, who console him and his wife, Khatijah, by mentioning the challenge of the prophets by their community based on the Gospel manuscripts he owned.¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, during his Meccan phase, on the issues not regulated with revelation he used to act in accordance with praxes of the People of the Book opposing the associators of Mecca.¹⁴⁷ As a rule, the relations of the Prophet with Christians in Mecca were peaceful and communicative; hence, they console and support each other physically and psychologically. For instance, in the third year of his prophetic mission the Christian (East) Roman Empire was defeated by the pagan Sasanid Empire. This defeat news saddened Muslims due to the fact that the former was the "People of the Book". Upon this episode, a verse was revealed heralding the feat of the Book-Owned Rûms/Romans in a near future and thus consoling Muslims (Al-Rûm/30: 1-5).

In addition, the Prophet was inclined to migrate first to Abyssinia, whose ruler was a Christian. On the occasion of strict oppressive regulations practiced by the pagans of Mecca, he wanted the Muslims to migrate to a near Christian country. He expresses his emotions by saying:

If you want and able to do, do seek refuge in Abyssinia; for in the land of the ruler of Abyssinia no one is oppressed. That place is a secure and suitable place and stay there till God give easiness.¹⁴⁸

Compared to the Meccan period, in Madinah Muslim-Christian relations become intense and hectic. The reason for this intensity was the process of founding a state in Madinah and the practices of the Prophet to spread the Islamic message throughout the region, be it states, tribes, groups, or individuals. These diplomatic interactions also explain these dense interactions with the Christians of the era.

As for the relations with the Jews, another group from the People of the Book, it came to its crescent when the Prophet migrated to Yathrib (622). In the would-be capital of the first Islamic state, then *al-Madinah al-Munawwarah*, Jews alongside the Arabs used to live for centuries. In the first phase, the Prophet needs to regulate the relations and rights and responsibilities of emigrant Meccans, native Arabs and the Jews of Madinah. In terms of education, justice, economy, military, and the like, the new community needed to get organized and regulated. Thus, by bringing together the head of groups and tribes the Prophet formed a regulation of city-state, the first written constitution, which has been handed down to nowadays.

This regulation consists of nearly fifty articles, in many of which the Jews were mentioned. In the 2. and 25. articles of the constitution, the Jews along with the Muslims of Mecca and Madinah were regarded as "ummah" (community). In the 25. clause, the Jews and their allies have religious freedom. Briefly, the state and its constitution prove the way to live various races and creeds together under an administration.

¹⁴⁶ Buhârî, "Bedu'l- Vahy", 3.

¹⁴⁷ Buhârî, Libâs 70; Ebu Huseyin Muslim Ibn-i Haccac, Sahih-i Müslim, İstanbul 1955, Fedâil 90.

¹⁴⁸ M. Hamidullah, İslam Peygamberi, I, 109.



In Islamic sources, there are many occasions in which the relations between Muslims and Christians are treated intensely. The Prophet himself appointed many non-Muslims as state functionary, technician, contractor, soldier, etc. What the Prophet used to search while giving duties to individuals was trustworthiness and competence only. He made many commercial contracts with non-Muslims having these attributes. He used to purchase foodstuffs and debt from Jewish merchants. In one of the verses, this situation explains like this:

Among the People of the Book are some who, if entrusted with a hoard of gold, will (readily) pay it back; others, who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless thou constantly stoodest demanding, because, they say," There is no call on us (to keep faith) with these ignorant (Pagans)." But they tell a lie against Allah, and (well) they know it. (Âl 'Imrân/ 3: 76)

The Qur'ân gives privileges to the People of the Book compared to those people without any religious books. For instance, in the matters of marriage and diet the People of the Book were treated defiantly. Muslims may able to marry with Jewish or Christian women and these ladies were able to keep their religious beliefs as it was before. Unlike those of associators, foods served and meats of lawful animals slaughtered by the People of the Book are welcome to consume by Muslims.

The paradigm set by the Qur'ân and the Sunnah has been followed by Muslims throughout centuries and this paradigm of tolerance was in turn responded by non-Muslims as well, mutually saddening and collaterally rejoicing.

b. A General Wisdomization Panorama in Islamic History till the 9-11 Phenomenon

Muslims in history treated other religions and members of other religions on the basis of religion; namely, following the precepts instituted by the Qur'ân and the Sunnah of the Prophet and thus the treatment of the People of the Book was highly tolerant and constructive imitating these precepts. When the historical experiences of the three Abrahamic religions were closely scrutinized, one can easily grasp the foundations of mutuality and wisdomization within these religious traditions. In particular, Islamic civilization with its pristine core (tawhîd and its existential manifestation justice), molding pot (socio-cultural and spatial variables), and forms (the Qur'ân and its practical expression, the Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam) set a perennial paradigm for later socio-political and cultural entities in forming and interacting with the other. For instance, the Islamic Turkish states in history, in general, used to treat others in a very tolerant and positive manner, respecting their respective religions. Guided both by humanitarian reflexes and religious tenets, they made multi-culturality and multi-religiosity a kind of mode of life as strongly expressed in Muslim history and discoursed in the Islamic religious texts. Hence, non-Muslims were free to act and think according to their religious affiliations. These kinds of historical praxes were not just conjectural decisions of the rulers, sultans, or viziers; rather in these states the rights and freedoms of non-Muslims alongside Muslims were protected by Islam as divine endowment, not as a grant permitted by rulers or sultans as in the law of the Western world, which were dependent upon the whims of kings or administrators. Because of this historical context, laicism in the West emerged long after from the Muslim world as a philosophical system in order to protect the freedom of religions and of conscience.

What is more, the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence used to classify the world into *Dâr al-Harb* (Abode of War) and *Dâr al-Islâm* (Adobe of Peace); whereas in the Ottoman State the world was



regarded as *Dar al-Sulh* (Adobe of Reconciliation) aiming at preserving the rights of those who live in the state and making all the citizens of the Ottoman land. That is to say, the concept of *Dâr al-Sulh* made a very strong effect in the administrative and cultural structure of the state and hence many cultures and religions were able to live side by side throughout centuries.

Briefly then tolerance and indulgence in Muslim history were kind of handed down to upcoming generations in the scene of history, refurbished by the Qur'ân and the Sunnah throughout centuries. The Ottoman State, shaping nearly 600 years' political life of the world, gets more and more attention of especially multi-national state as a source of inspiration and admiration. Its ability to rule and to come together many nations and myriad religions peacefully on a vast geography inherited from both the East Roman Empire and Muslim polities has been studied by today's multi-national politico-economic complexes.

Today's multi-national polities are interested in the multi-national and religious character of the Ottoman State and its ability and competence to rule them for centuries. One of the reasons why the Ottoman State has been able to stay in these lands was the role of the non-Muslim population especially in the Balkans. Administrating justly and fairly, the Ottomans were able to hold sway on these lands. Just as the Jews of Spain oppressed by the Spanish kingdom were rescued from the tyranny of the kingdom, they were settled down in the Ottoman lands. This episode and fair administrative conducts made them loyal to the state.¹⁴⁹

Like the Muslim Turkish states before, the Ottomans treated, to a great extent, non-Muslims as recognized and respected entities, not tolerated minorities; respecting religious values and tenets of every group. The Ottoman State protected the rights of non-Muslims as proved by records of the court (*Şer'iyye Sicilleri*), of non-Muslim communities, and especially special archival documents of the Christian minority. As an ethnic mosaic, the Ottomans State was composed of 22 different nations and religions and able to live side by side for centuries. As such it represents the most noteworthy Muslim multi-cultural and multi-religious experience in history. With respect to today's chaotic ethos that even two ethnic entities may hardly live together, this paramount example can be fathomed in a tolerant ethos emanated from the Ottoman society in these centuries. The reason for this success was that the Ottomans, as a rule, did not interfere with the matters of different communities, leaving them free in terms of religion, language and ethnicity.¹⁵⁰

2.3. From Chaos and Doomsday Soothsayings to Wisdomization and Cooperation (Ta 'âruf) in the "Global Village"

A. Wisdomization vs. Otherization: Some Evaluations and Suggestions

In order to achieve a new cosmos-yet-haunted with doomsday sayings the ethos of mutual communication and cooperation, or briefly wisdomization (*ta 'âruf*), it seems necessary to disassociate the politico-economic and martial encroachments from the socio-cultural and civic wholes. Besides this disassociation, one can also find the sources of chaos in tribal environment, authoritarian attitude and behaviors, literalist reading, colonial domination, the processes and

¹⁴⁹ Yusuf Halacoğlu, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Gayrimüslim Vakıf ve Dinî Teşekküllerin Statüsü", *Osmanlı'da Hoşgörü, Birlikte Yasama Sanatı*, İstanbul: Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı Yay., 2000., 127-129.

¹⁵⁰ Ziya Kazıcı, "Osmanlı Devletinde Dini Hoşgörü", *Kültürlerarası Diyalog Sempozyumu*, İstanbul 1998, 106-109.



impacts of westernization, and so on. In the aim to decipher the generic sources of dividing/excluding and integrating/including elements in religious communities necessitates mutuality an cooperation among societies and religious communities by reconstructing relations and interactions on an equal footing and level.

In order to reread correctly cultural heritages of humanity and live peacefully in inter and intra-civilizational context of the new “global village”, it would seem salient to understand the genealogy and content of exclusionary and otherization challenges. At this point, the problem is this: Why and how are these challenges the extant cases especially during the Neo-colonial era (1945-2000) and New-hegemonic “aeon” with imperial slants (2001-...). For instance, what are the historical and social causes that resuscitate, for instance, some important Islamic terms, such as *jihâd* (holy struggle), *takfir* (religious repudiation), *irtidâd* (apostasy), *sabb* (blasphemy) especially after the post-September 11 catastrophic event? At this juncture, the following question can be asked: do the upholders of power really consent with the revocation of the processes that “force God’s Hand to the Doomsday”? Are the policies of new hegemonic-yet-imperial agendas embedded into this “economy of war” based on an either-or mentality? To which end are the “pupil and vicegerent” of the Divine led? To give an example: in such a context that relates the Muslim world, though there are several modern Islamic attitudes are being voiced in multi-cultural mode, there are also exclusivist trends reinserting themselves in the face of “theorizing and actualizing terror”. Especially in the post -September 11 era, intellectual efforts in the Muslim world are, by and large, headed towards to find concrete solutions in order to prevent possible conflicts and otherings. On the other hand, the invasions and encroachments of the following the 9-11 phenomenon became intensified and globalized; thus, the solution for this globally oriented case may be also a globally extended one.

All answers to these questions are always to be “collateral” in nature. Thence, humanity needs firstly to get back the moral, egalitarian, and fraternal quintessence and manifestation; secondly, or more aptly, concomitantly, it needs to form a new cosmos through and with the mutually communicative-communicative objectification of religious determinant. Hence, instead of applying historically bound and existentially reappropriated phantasmic concepts of Post/modern “mini”-narratives ontologically and categorically, these concepts can be postulated as attributive modes applicable to situations, persons, etc. regardless of nominal creedal affiliations. Briefly, in the aim to reach a global peace, it is necessary to have peace among cultures and religions of the world. The way leading to this objective passes through both a new hermeneutics realigning these erstwhile *epistêmic* concepts, drastically connected to the yesterday’s conflictual war ethos, and a new existence and behavior that obstructs the processes of otherizations working with the ritual return of the *diabolos* to the temporal existence of humanity.

The epistemological and methodological path for this *telos* can be as follows: Firstly, consecrated archetypal interpretation of the other that forms overall *epistême* in each culture is to be deconstructed. These interpretations bear, to a great extent, the imprints of the era in which they were formed. Thence, (a) these interpretations can be directly related to the theological, denominational, and politico-economic affinities of the exegete/ interpreting subject; hence, they can be disassociated from the pure religious/sacred domain in order to make them less durable; (b) new *epistêmic* prototypes may not be collective and whole-sale labeling in nature applied in educational and politico-diplomatic policies; (c) in the aim to avoid the phenomenon of “theorizing terror”, a new *epistême* that creates a new existential cosmos can be harbored. Namely, rather than trumpeting the so-called “the war on terror” and dividing human existence into two polar sides (the good vs. the evil), it would be more humanly and civilized manner to discourse the herald of love, passion, mutual respect, and



most importantly globally mutual sharing. Since reaction breeds drastic reactions, the praxes of “terrorizing terror” are to be avoided, lest the “othering” archetypal repetitions revisited by the “terrorized other”.

Secondly, this deconstruction process is to be made with the guise of “reconstruction” poised to actualize a new cosmos and epistème. To do this, it would be necessary to relegate the geneses of othering interpretations to various variables in history, such as political, economic, personal, etc.; and the reconstruction of new epistemic modalities can be objectified in line with the “creational fraternity” (*ukhuwwah khalqî*) of human beings, a “perennial epistème,” which is the main tenet of all classical religious traditions.

B. From Diabolic Encoding to Dialogue and Wisdomization

In other words, in our globalized village, everyone is aware of the fact that human being can no longer live in an isolated island; thus, all should learn how to live, communicate, and interact with each other in this new global village. Nowadays, compared to the past, humans are more in commercial, political, martial, religious and cultural relations and interactions. In the aim to expedite these relations, mutual tolerance and indulgence are direly needed. In the 21. century Muslims live under the non-Muslim government or administration, and vice versa. This historical necessity leads humans in constructive relations.¹⁵¹

This context explains why dialogue and cooperation are salient for the respect of human rights in the same degree and manner for all humanity. Based on sincerity and good intention of each side, dialogue is to be initiated in the aim to preserve other’s rights, honor, and dignity. In the search for a dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, it seem salient not to bring forth repeatedly the unfortunate happenings of the past; rather the future perspective may be overemphasized. This kind of ethos is firstly dependent upon us; namely it is closely bound up with our sincerity in human rights, ethical precepts, world peace. It is obvious that the world peace cannot be attained just by one or two nations or groups, rather its is a world-wide initiative through the process of dialogue realizing mutual understanding, fundamental human rights, and universal moral values. Only through these means, the most-wanted world peace would, to a great extent, be reached.¹⁵²

With the constructive help of dialogue, the following malaises can be cured: things threatening life; terrors, wars, imperialism, poverty, unjust allocation of world resources, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, suicide, tortures, oppressions, enslaving, exile, adultery, prostitution, human trade, hard work conditions, etc.

For the sake of brevity, the need for dialogue among members of religions and/or civilizations cannot be underestimated and overlooked. Through an ethos created by these kinds of dialogical activities, s/he can “understand” those who are different from her/him. In another word, as Küng clearly articulates, in the following manner:

¹⁵¹ Abdurrahman Küçük, “Müslüman-Hıristiyan Diyaloguna Genel Bir Bakış”, *Asrımızda Müslüman-Hıristiyan Münasebetleri, Tartışmalı İlmi Toplantılar Dizisi*, İSAV, İstanbul 1993, 45-59.

¹⁵² Xavier Jakob, “Ahlak, İnsan Hakları ve Diyalog”, *Kültürlerarası Diyalog Sempozyumu*, İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 7-8 Mart 1998, İstanbul, 185-191.



1. Only if we seek to understand others'—our neighbors'—beliefs and values, rites and symbols, can we truly understand people.
2. Only if we seek to understand others' faith can we really understand our own: its strengths and weaknesses, its constants and variables.
3. Only if we seek to understand others' faith can we discover that common ground which, despite all differences, can become the basis for a peaceful life in this world together.¹⁵³

C. A Case Approach: Why Wisdomization and Dialogue are “Necessary” in the Post-9/11 Phenomenon

In this part of the study, a case approach will be accentuated and evaluated. In the book, *entitled M. Fethullah Gülen: Bir Portre Denemisi* (“A Biographical Assay”), Gülen’s dialogue and latitudinarian view is evaluated within two categories: (a) latitudinarian ethos both to the Turkish society and to the whole world; (b) dialogue and wisdomization among members of religions both in Türkiye and the whole world.¹⁵⁴ By redefining the will to dialogue and latitudinarianism with the aim to reconstruct “broken crystal”, i.e. disjointed national and cultural bounds in the Turkish society, in particular; the whole humanity in general, he accentuates this task in the following manner:

The enlightened and happy worlds of the future will be constructed by the gallants of love flying into passion with affection...(These gallants) spread love and affection to everybody and everything; from the rising and setting suns, from glaring and fading stars receive always the message of affection.¹⁵⁵

And the extent and caliber of dialogue and wisdomization are determined by him as follows:

Open up your heart as possible as you can; be it like oceans! Stretch up with faith and love humans; lest nobody ousted from your care and passion. Applaud the righteous with their good works, be affectionate to the believing hearts; accost the rejecters with such an easiness and softness, let their rancor and hate go; and be the Messiah in their breath.¹⁵⁶

For him, the cosmos is a “cradle of fraternity” (*mahd-i ukhuwwah*); hence:

As a believer, one should look at the cosmos as a cradler of fraternity; thus, s/he should search for a relation bond with beings and s/he must be always lenient and open to diffusion with the people of faith.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Excerpt from Kurt Rudolph, “The Foundations of the History of Religions and Its Future Task”, in M. Kitagawa (editor), *The History of Religions*, 115. See on this W. G. Oxtoby, *The Meaning of Other Faiths* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983).

¹⁵⁴ Ali Ünal, *M. Fethullah Gülen: Bir Portre Denemisi* (İstanbul: Nil Yayınları, 2002), 344.

¹⁵⁵ Ünal, 350. Excerpt from M. Fethullah Gülen, *Ölçü veya Yoldaki Işıklar 2* (İzmir: Nil Yayınları, 2001; yeni baskı: 208, 192).

¹⁵⁶ Ünal, 351.

¹⁵⁷ Ünal, 367.



The uptrend of religious values in the last quarter of the previous century set the stage for a new kind of reconstructions and reconciliations. In another word, religion takes its “revenge” by returning to history from the front door: In accord with the Modernization claims religion was to be ousted from the processes of Modernization, public sphere and nation state; yet public sphere is now at the crossroad of religious, political, and social life and as such it forms civil society in the Muslim world.

¹⁵⁸

Thence, at the “destiny-equilibrated” (*kaderdenk*) point, dialogue and wisdomization process came to the fore due to two traits: (a) the uptrend of religious values, or the return of “religion” to history, and thence these values can be called for reconstructing a better and just world order; (b) the soothsayings of war and terror through the discourses and praxes of a new secular theory, namely “terrorology”; by extension diabolizing Islam and severely debunking its ability to adapt itself to the values and codes of the Modern world.¹⁵⁹

Due to constant retreat and losses both politically and topographically, such as colonial encroachments by the West (it was read for centuries as Christians), Herodian and Zeolatian modes of Modernization processes, and the like, the Muslim world has created defensive collective ethos; thus everything coming from the West (read also from the Church / Christianity) is dubious, or more aptly dangerous; hence one should avoid from such incursions. Protective and defensive modes impede the ability to take risks and to take part of changes and evolutions.¹⁶⁰

According to Gülen, dialogue, mutuality, and wisdomization are necessary in our global village, or more aptly, our “class without walls”, because:

1. Politically, economically, martially, and practically, Islamic civilization has for more than two centuries in the inertial phase; thus by now Islam cannot manifest itself without a problem in such a conjuncture.
2. Diabolized and otherized Islamic image cannot be eradicated without a wisdomization ethos; war and conflictual modes of our world cannot give a space for listening to the otherized person, religion, or civilization.
3. Ever-becoming global village through mass-communication and interactions via technological breakthroughs can no longer tolerate isolations and living at bays; rather it enforces human beings more and more come into contact with each other;
4. Wisdomization and living together are tenets of Islamic civilization wrought throughout centuries; yet the West recently came to the point of “tolerating” Islam with other religious affiliations.
5. Humanity came to the point that no religion, or civilization can annihilated others’ religion or civilization; thus, there is a necessity to live together and side by side.

¹⁵⁸ Dale Eickelman, “Islam and the Languages of Modernity,” *Daedalus*, Winter: 2000.

¹⁵⁹ Ünal, 376-7.

¹⁶⁰ Ünal, 377.



6. Most importantly, dialogue and wisdomization processes of today is a reencapsulation of the Qur'anic precepts fourteen centuries before.¹⁶¹ Hence, in the Islamic *epistème*, wisdomization (*ta'âruf*) is not a nascent enterprise; but a perennial functions of all peace-loving persons and groups.

3. Conclusions and suggestions

Today humanity is at the crossroad of doom and freedom; doom and doomsday fantasies became extant discourse with their practical manifestations in the oppressed and repressed lands of the "Third World" on the one hand; freedom from hate, rancor, enmity and inequity, though not as extent as the former, is also echoed through discourses and praxes on the other. To reach a contented state of being happy and felicitous, or *eudaimonia/khayr*, in the actual realm (and in the Hereafter of the Abrahamic traditions), is made possible by acting, reacting, and reenacting "rightness" (*'amal salih*) through wisdomization ethos.

In the aim to make human civilization perennial, mutuality and cooperation through wisdomization and dialogue humanity can form a free and peaceful world, by instilling universal human values built-in all religions in various degrees in nascent generations (*nasl*). It seems that wisdomization among humankind of various religious and civic traditions are the backbone of our existence in the war-torn world. Without wisdomization, civilization and humanity is destined to perdition and doom.

Interactions and relations among humans shaped and wrought with love, respect, equity, and probity form accordingly loving, respecting, equity and probity-probing individual and societies (*nasl*), material and spiritual outputs (culture/ *harth*). Any cultural traits whose nature is hegemonic, othering, degrading, and exclusionary brings about authoritarian and oppressive personalities and societies. Wisdomization, as in its reciprocal form, is a collateral responsibility. Wisdom of one civilization whose scope is not expanded by other set of the values and wisdoms of another civilization does not value and respect other wisdoms, but only imperializes and encroaches, then becomes devaluing and degrading "tool kits" at the hands of the oppressing and subjugating subject. Wisdom of one society or civilization works always with others; thus, in this article it is called reciprocally, namely wisdomization (*ta'âruf*). The processes and actualities of wisdomization are to be wrought with love, respect, and fraternity. Wisdom-sharing and interaction practices blockade all hedonistic, utilitarian, pragmatic, and other types of egocentric expressions; thus, it reproduces always "goodness", *khayr*, or ultimate bliss. Briefly, wisdomization and cooperation through dialogue is to give the proper place to the "pupil of the universe".

For the sake of conclusion, on the threshold of the "universal Armageddon" planned by those who devaluing the value of wisdomization and cooperation for the sake of profit and war economy based on "terrorology", human being needs a "theology of peace" seeking to establish a communicative-cooperative (*ta'âruf*), and competitive in the path of "goodness" or *khayr* without demonizing, othering, demeaning, and "destroying" the "pupil of the universes". When is humanity going to resuscitate the valuing *epistème* again as expressed in the following:

One day Francis crying said to Jesus:

¹⁶¹ Ünal, 374-92.



"I love the sun, I love the stars,
 I love Clara and the Sisters
 I love human hearts,
 I love all beautiful things.
 Oh my Lord, I must excuse myself,
 For I should love you alone.¹⁶²

Loving "human hearts" and just "all beautiful things" are "good" but in fact not enough. Hence, imbibing the discourse of the Word Civilization encompassing all creation within the sphere of value as expressed by Yunus Emre:

If you want to efface the rust of the sâwol /inner soul
 Discourse that word that is the gist of all words.
 "Discourse the Truth," Çalab (God) ordered every soul
 The liar of this world in the Next will embarrass
 Anyone who does not look at every creation with equity
 Even if saint in appearance, wayward (towards God) in essence.¹⁶³

Briefly, in the nascent "globalized village", especially after the "apocalyptic" event of 9-11 and its subsequent developments, human being needs more and more a "theology of peace" modulated on the perennial values that are product of universal human heritage and on the mutual love, respect and probity. Values as the soul of human civilizations are to be reproduced within the core (culture / the Qur'anic *harth*) of each civilization and transmitted and thus made perennial by and through the anthropological and social subjects (*nasl*) for the absolute *eudaimonia* or *mutlaq khayr* in this world (and the next world of the Abrahamic quintessence [*Urquelle*]). Tersely then, as expressed in a French proverb: "to understand all, is to forgive all".

¹⁶² Song by Bernardino Greco, OFM, at the Institut für ökumenische Forschung, Tübingen, June 22, 1985 in Leonard Swidler, *After the Absolute: The Dialogical Future of Religious Reflection* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 19..

¹⁶³ Yunus Emre, *Risâlat al-Nushiyya ve Dîvân*, edited by Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı (İstanbul: Sulhi Garan Matbaası Koll. Şti, 1965), 49, 107.