

Congruity between Religion and Human Actual Behavior: Islam as a Source of Human Tolerance

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Abstract

Numerous issues ranging from the absence of justice, religious violence and dehumanization are significant in light of the illegitimate allegations of Western nations. Human quest for some identities is seen as a legitimate right, as it is imbued with religious teachings; some people believe it is a key towards their social identification and national sovereignty; while in a time it is seen by others as step towards the process of dehumanization. In this regard, it is necessary to know about the very reasons behind this bias judgment. This sense of bigotry, vis-à-vis the Islamic foundations, remains in place as long as the misunderstanding of Islam exists. Therefore, Islamic sovereignty becomes subject to misinterpretations and connotations. In reality, Islam promotes peace and justice as it preserves human essence through its teachings.

The problem is, therefore, how Islam can contribute to the explanation of human relationships within a world where human beings are classified and differentiated. This vertical conception of human beings' nature denies the specific properties that define individual identities and/or collective identities. What is prompt to discuss is the collective mental endeavour to understand how human beings behave in relation to one another.

This end would pose the question of how could Islam be read and adequately interpreted to reach a religious compromise since that people all over the world do not forcibly share the same religion. Yet to have a human society, based on human values and to have a collective horizontal human identity beyond any other non-human considerations, it would be important to infuse human mind with the idea that individuals are the spine of society and that the latter is the natural form of being of human individuals.

Key words: self, identity, Islam, dehumanization, humanization, Ideology

Introduction

Within a world full of challenges, Man is required to question certain political, economic and social structures which are susceptible to change. Yet this can never be easily dealt with since conflicts would inevitably rise. Immersed in an abstract dehumanized world which is designed by human intelligence, Man gets her/himself between two conflicting forces. On the one hand, he is intoxicated by the motion and the thunderous noise of machines, and therefore carried away in the whirl of machinery; on the other hand, he is terrified by the many-sided problems that threaten his reason and sensibility

Emptiness and loneliness are man's aspiring landscape, even in the heart of crowded cities. Man, aware of his limitations and discomfort, can hardly develop hope to reach self definition and eschew sadness, wretchedness and even despair from the faith of the one who tries to resist the threat. Integrated into natural forces that his/her genius has transformed into energy, one is forced to rethink, in a world shaken by the advent of the technology, his/her relations to the world he is relegated to and his relation with other individuals belonging to the same or even a different social constellation.

The question of social pressure exerted by different and, sometimes, similar forces might break the balance of the social order and destroy any type of harmony among the social group. Therefore, the transformation of the concept of human archetype¹ is a key in suggesting new social views and developing critical opinions vis-à-vis different individuals having miscellaneous conceptions of the self, of the other, of ideology/ confessional ideology², of gender (male/female relationships), of race, ethnicity and of geographical distribution. This man-made vertical social transcendence creates a certain tension among human beings as they are, inevitably, in permanent frequency.

Albeit the European Union laws against racism and discrimination do already exist, the prejudiced views between peoples and thus cultures have never ceased to create a sense of hatred among people. This state of fact has generated miscellaneous forms of discrimination among which *anti-Gypsyism*³, *Afrophobia*⁴, *Islamophobia*⁵, *anti-Semitism*⁶ and *xenophobia*⁷ could be given as examples.

One does not have in mind a particular society, but the different foci concern fundamentally the human being's perception of her/himself and of the other at one time. Therefore, the different conflicts taking place hither and thither are inherent in the majority of relationships among individuals, as they are, almost, difficultly understandable. This is why, sometimes, questions are asked about people's inability of being nonviolent, pacifists and egalitarian. The expectations would be, certainly, in forms of inconvincible answers. Thus, one has to ask questions which are more or less related to the understanding of certain human behaviors and attitudes which most often create a sort of structural violence that Paul Farmer considers to be "one way of describing social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm's way... The arrangements are structural because they are embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world"(2004: 449)

¹ Human archetype is a conscious representation which offers to people more than just bringing order into a diversity of particulars. The human archetype provides a sense of depth and intensity to the human experience because the *raison d'être* is to be individual and unique. The essence of being a human being is to understand the very universal nature of human being as being an embodiment of universal values despite his uniqueness.

² Religious ideology supported with confessional logic: that ideology is the conviction that a religious order should be established as a reflection of God's just and fair society. It is important to establish that religious confessional ideology is not simply a belief in whatsoever religion but a belief, for instance, in Quranic or Biblical interpretations, and that divinity which guides people is the only source of all human authority.

³ Majority's attitudes towards, and pervasive hostility to, the presence of Roma minorities in Europe represent a factor potentially destabilizing to the European societies. the growing anti- Gypsyism in Europe--a form of racism particular to the situation of Roma in Europe and capable of adapting to changes in this situation. Taken from Nicolae, Valeriu (2006).*Towards a Definition of Anti-Gypsyism*. accessed the the 23th of February 2017

⁴ **Afrophobia** is a term used to refer to a range of negative attitudes and feelings towards black people or people of African Descent around the world. Definitions refer to irrational fear, with the implication of antipathy, contempt and aversion. The term "afrophobia" is observable in as discrimination and racist violence on the basis of a person's skin colour, ethnic origin and nationality. Afrophobia is like homophobia or Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination grounds in that it seeks to dehumanize a large group of people, to deny their humanity, their dignity and personhood. Afrophobia can also intersect with other grounds such as sex, homophobia, islamophobia, and disability creating cases of multiple discrimination grounds. A person who displays afrophobia or is thought to do so is described as being afrophobic and labeled as an afrophobe.

⁵ The term "Islamophobia" was first introduced as a concept in a 1991 Runnymede Trust Report and defined as "unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims." The term was coined in the context of Muslims in the UK in particular and Europe in general, and formulated based on the more common "xenophobia" framework. <http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/defining-islamophobia>, accessed the 23th of February 2017

⁶ Anti-Semitism: Hostility toward Jews dates to ancient times, perhaps to the beginning of Jewish history. From the days of the Bible until the Roman Empire, Jews were criticized and sometimes punished for their efforts to remain a separate social and religious group - one that refused to adopt the values and the way of life of the non-Jewish societies in which it lived. <http://archive.adl.org/hate-patrol/antisemitism.html#.WLS1fPJEDcc>, accessed the 23th of February 2017.

⁷ Xenophobia: fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/xenophobia>, accessed the 23th of February 2017.

1. Local versus Global identities: dynamic process of ideologically laden Individuals

The confessional ideologies, racial issues and cultural identities are not an exception regarding human discrimination and dehumanization for the religious conviction, cultural dimension and the racial affiliation are essentially the basis for human being's exclusion. Yet, no one can deny the fact that the different ideological confessions which are, by now, a source of large-scale intractable conflicts that may last a long time, often more than one generation, lead to the denial of the quality of humanness and the denial of legitimacy of the "adversary" who is not easily identifiable. About the process of attributing less-than-human or non-human attributes to members of a group, Chalk & Jonassohn explains that it "frequently examined in connection with genocidal conflicts" (1990). Agamben, G.; Heller-Roazen, D, in their book entitled *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (2002), have shown that, "individual traits are erased and the individual comes to be seen as the embodiment of a group that is not fully human or present, that has neither the capacity nor the desire to be human, and hence need not, indeed, cannot be taken into account as a member of one's own species" (2002). In this sense, Nick Haslam points out that:

Dehumanization is frequently examined in connection with genocidal conflicts. A primary focus is the ways in which Jews in the Holocaust, Bosnians in the Balkan wars, and Tutsis in Rwanda were dehumanized both during the violence by its perpetrators and beforehand through ideologies that likened the victims to vermin. Similar animal metaphors are common in images of immigrants, who are seen as polluting threats to the social order (2006, p.253)

Islam as a confession is always looked at as if it were the only religion in this universe, as it is considered as a religion which preaches violence and constructs a type of natural inhumanness. This fact is aimed at by many theologian activists like Amritha Venkatraman who in an article entitled *Religious Basis for Islamic Terrorism: The Quran and Its Interpretations* (2007) said that:

Extreme religious interpretations of the Quran and the movement of Islamic Revivalism influence the emergence and progression of violent Jihad in contemporary times. Islamic "terrorists" are able to legitimize their movement as an act of violent Jihad permitted by the Quran essentially because of religious sanctions that permit the use of violence as an act of defense and to preserve the will of Allah in Islamic communities (2007)

The question of humanity is, therefore, a key in this religious context for the human identity from a religious point of view is considered a universal question. The question of human being's self (real or expected/idealized), of her/his self conception as well as the question of universals, insofar as individuals are endeavoring to align themselves along vertical axis, remains overt as it invites various connotative interpretations and different rooms for social- political and religious criticism.

Some ideological orientations, apparently, constitute very important elements in the present study; they incite one to deal with certain manifestations in the light of individuals' relationships and their local identities and their possible evolution in a time of vast social, political transformation and geopolitical future projected. The individuals' expectations are not forcibly collective the reason why, may be, the different identity (local and global) perceptions are evolving differently in the world.

It is important to make clear the human being's position which makes the essence of the intrigue of his story. Man is the real author of his destiny and of his faith in this life; he chooses, sometimes, to be the embodiments of certain ideologies, and the carrier of misfortune. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask questions about the orientations, some people might have as well as the opinions and views they do develop over others sharing them the same space.

In fact, the question of national identity is very crucial, because it is not well perceived by people belonging to the same constellation. It is more than to be determined in terms of time and with reference to a given space or culture. This hypothetical connotation is contradicted by Smith's conceptions of national identities. According to him:

National identities can last for millennia. Certain elements such as language, the preservation and reproduction of certain myths, memories and traditions, as well organised religion with its rituals, liturgy organisation and hierarchy can play a powerful conserving role, 'ensuring a high degree of formal continuity between generations and from community to community' (Smith, 1991, p. 27).

In a society where there is freedom and tolerance of belief, mutation is fundamentally important for the continuity of national identities which are as well unfixed. To be acquainted with the transformations, to know the extent to which they are very effective, it is prerequisite to measure the different forces a society is exposed to. The internal forces consist of the different minds and the different opinions in addition to, the mosaic of

cultural and linguistic specificities. The external factors are rather related to the geopolitical situation in which a given nation finds itself. Therefore the openness on the world usually challenges the sense of national basic identity of each member of the social constellation, because there are elements like the language a person learns to speak and to discover the world surrounding him with, or the religion he is indoctrinated into, which contribute to basic identity, and which generate a sense of phobia among the members of a given society. In this sense, we ask if an individual can preserve his national identity and tries to be more open and adopt the global one, and if the basics of his national identity make of him a rigid man, an extremist and revolutionary. These are legitimate questions that could be asked with reference to Islam, which we believe deals with all these issues.

2. The Acceptance of the other: a Religious theory of self – awareness

If social identity theories assume that group members have an elemental need for positive social identity and that conflict between groups arises from the inevitable comparison between them, then Islam and normally all the other religions do not preach violence. In the introduction of his article *entitled Towards Conflict Transformation and a Just Peace (2004)*, Kevin Clements states that:

Peace, justice, truth and compassion are central to most utopian and religious visions. For example, the concepts of Paradise and Nirvana both have strong connotations of justice, harmony, non-violence and union. These aspirations are religious ways of saying that most people in most communities and cultures, confronted with choices between order and chaos, peace and war, harmony and disharmony, structural stability and instability, equality and inequality, inclusion and exclusion, justice and injustice, tolerance and intolerance or abundance and poverty will wherever possible choose the former over the latter.

It is assumed that group members have a basic need for positive social identity and that conflict between groups arises from the inevitable comparison between them. Group identity consists of a variety of dimensions, such as religious, geographical and class (Chris E. Stout, 2002: 229), and that individuals have common destiny. This seems logical for Jean Paul Sartre argues, in *Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960)*, that:

In so far as they have the same objective reality in the future (a minute later, the same for everyone, and the bus will come round the corner of the boulevard), the unjustified separation of these organisms (in so far as it arises from other conditions and another region of being) determines itself as identity. There is identity when the common interest (as the determination of generality by the unity of an object in the context of particular practices) is made manifest, and when the plurality is defined just in relation to this interest. (Alan Sheridan-Smith, 1991, p.260)

The religious perception of the *self* and of the *other* leads to what could be called religion or belief discrimination, and it is when people are treated differently owing to their religious tendency or belief. It is essentially dialectical to reach a new understanding of the self and of the other in relation to the conflict especially if the latter is the resultant of mistreatment of individuals sharing the psychological field, the cognitive representations of themselves, the social values and the religious belief. In this context, John C. Turner and Penelope J. Oakes, in an article entitled *the significance of the social identity concept for social psychology with reference to individualism, interactionism and social influence (1983)*, argue that:

the functioning of social identity provides group members with a shared psychological field, shared cognitive representations of themselves, their own identity, and the objective world in the form of shared social norms of fact and value and hence makes meaningful the simplest communications and emotions of a public intersubjective life (1983, p. 250)

The in-group/out-group bias allows conscious justification of violence, as it urges people to commit acts of destruction outside their moral code. Therefore people rate aggressive acts by others as more violent than similar acts with by members of their own group (Duncan, 1976)

This in-group/out-group conflict is a form of suffering which is not unfortunately redressed. As a response, terrorism emerges. Pearlman suggests that “terrorism could also be the result of envy and humiliation, and it might be linked to a traumatic reenactment; reenactment through projective identification; intersubjectivity, role reversal, and perverse empathy” (Randy Borum, 2004). But what gives the legitimacy to such terrorist acts? Goertzel, Kressel and Meloy et al. suggest that many terrorists are violent true believers (Ibid), they are not only making allusion to something inside the group or outside it, but they are pushing forward; they are likely to allude to an ideology. This is confirmed by what Hoffner (1951) when he pointed the finger directly to “true believer”. He said that

The “true believer” is a man who is ready to sacrifice his life for a “holy” cause. Violent “true believers” are characterized by stereotype thinking, belief in the superiority of their belief system, indifferent attitude to people with other belief systems, arrogance and

disdain, fanaticism, hostility, justification of their violent behavior and lack of critical self-reflection and rigidity (Ibid).

Hoffner juxtaposed some concepts which, he believes, take on one significant connotative meaning which is Terrorism. He linked the true believer to the holiness of the cause. And the holy is the sacred. The latter is untouchable. As he linked true believer to violence as if all what is holy invites fanaticism, extremism, zealotism, rigidity and preaches hostility. Hoffner seems to have attributed all the extremist features to the holiness of a given belief. In this stance I dare talk about Islam, which is put under this label especially after September 11, 2001. In reality, September 11 has a negative connotation for the Americans and the Muslims in America. For this date has become a synonym to all what is Muhametant, or simply to what is Muslim. In fact some western countries have discovered Islam, but, alas, this awareness derives from distorted, negative and eroded versions, stereotypes and misconceptions. This perception is not necessarily "veridical" because, the Muslim's system of values and creeds are so important elements which provide a kind of psychological immunity against any external allegation. It is, therefore, needless to ask if Islam is able catch up with the moral progress, as if it were inferior or archaic and promotes Terrorism in comparison to other monotheistic and/or non-monotheistic religions such as Christianity Judaism, or even Hinduism⁸, which, allegedly, have definitely made moral progress. But it would be much wiser to understand how Islam works and how Muslim people behave

3. Human Needs and Rights: between Religious Promotion and Denial

To allude to the religious bias, it is tantamount to refer to the unconscious justification of human actions vis-à-vis others such as violence. In reality the understanding of Islam and its principle are the sine qua non of the basic human needs and human rights. The mid 20th Century witnessed the declaration of human rights for *the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was inaugurated by the article which starts by the freedom of human beings since their birth and their equality birth: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood". (Article 1, December, 10th 1948)

From an Islamic perspective, human rights have been dealt with since the revelation in 610 CE. In fact, Islam provides and preserves many human beings rights regardless of their religion, skin pigmentation, or social positions. Islam has sanctified both the life the properties of all the citizens, defended and protected the honor of man. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH)⁹ says: "Try your blood, your property, and your honor are inviolable" (In *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*¹⁰, and *Musnad Ahmad*¹¹). Therefore, there is no lieu for vertical views; the

⁸ Ghurye: He [Hutton] considers modern Hinduism to be the result of an amalgam between pre-Aryan Indian beliefs of Mediterranean inspiration and the religion of the Rigveda. "The Tribal religions present, as it were, surplus material not yet built into the temple of Hinduism". (Ghurye, 1980 : 04)

⁹ The acronym **PDUH** stands for (*Peace Be Upon Him*; it is read in Arabic as follows: *Sal'la Allah U'Aleihi Wa Salam*, ﷺ)

¹⁰ Bukhari (full name Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim bin al-Mughira al-Ja'fai) was born in 194 A.H. and died in 256 A.H. His collection of hadeeth is considered second to none. He spent sixteen years compiling it, and ended up with 2,602 hadeeth (9,082 with repetition). His criteria for acceptance into the collection were amongst the most stringent of all the scholars of ahadeeth.

Sahih al-Bukhari is a collection of hadith compiled by Imam Muhammad al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH/870 AD) (rahimahullah). His collection is recognized by the overwhelming majority of the Muslim world to be the most authentic collection of reports of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (). It contains over 7500 hadith (with repetitions) in 97 books. The translation provided here is by Dr. M. Muhsin Khan. <https://sunnah.com/bukhari>, accessed the 23rd of April, 2017

¹¹ Abu 'Abdullah Ahmad ibn Hanbal ash-Shaybani, was born in the city of Baghdad in the year 780CE (164H). He studied various subjects in his hometown and traveled extensively in quest of knowledge. He was chiefly interested in acquiring knowledge of *ahadith* and traveled extensively through Iraq, Syria, Arabia and other places in the Middle East studying religion and collecting the *ahadith* of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In his great book, *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala*, Imam Adh-Dhahabi described Ibn Hanbal as, "The true *Shaykh* of Islam and leader of the Muslims in his time, the master of *hadith* and proof of the religion. <http://sunnahonline.com/library/biographies/364-ahmad-ibn-hanbal>, accessed the 23rd of April, 2017.

The Musnad of Ibn Hanbal is probably the first of the six books of hadith considered authentic by Sunni Muslims, since its author died 15 years before the death of the senior-most of the six hadith compilers, Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH), and 62 years before the last of them, Ahmad bin Shu'ayb al-Nasa'i, passed away (303 AH). This book focuses on the hadith of the Prophet. There are very few hadith not included (in this collection) whose authenticity has been confirmed...One of the fortunate things about the Musnad is that we find very few hadith which are considered inauthentic. <https://www.al-islam.org/message->

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did never transcend his society vertically. On the contrary, he preached equality and horizontality of the human relations because he abides Allah's instruction. Allah says:

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes for you to know one another. Truly, the noblest of you with Allah is the most pious. Truly, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Quran, al-Hujurat 49:13)

The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as it is narrated in *Saheeh Muslim*¹² and *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*, used to prohibit the Muslim soldiers from killing women and children; It is narrated as well in *Saheeh Muslim*, and *Al-Tirmithi* that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would advise the Muslim soldiers: "Do not betray, do not be excessive, do not kill a newborn child". The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also said: "Whoever has killed a person having a treaty with the Muslims shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise, though its fragrance is found for a span of forty years". (Narrated in *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*, and *Ibn Madjah*¹³).

Islam does not stop at the level of the human ground, but goes further to give other creatures their rights. It has given the rights to animals. It is strictly prohibited to hurt animals. Once the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

A woman was punished because she imprisoned a cat until it died. On account of this, she was doomed to Hell. While she imprisoned it, she did not give the cat food or drink, nor did she free it to eat the insects of the earth (Narrated in *Saheeh Muslim* and *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*.)

In this perspective, it is necessary to account for the sense in which Islam meets the basic human needs and preserves human rights, and see whether Islam does promote or deny them for their promotion implies peace building and their denial implies agitation and thus violence.

Islam builds peace and preaches justice through the treatment of the basics of human needs and rights which are put under three major headings:

- ✓ Social grievances
- ✓ Cultural requirements
- ✓ Material needs, The following diagram shows the three divisions

thaqalayn/general-message-thaqalayn/glimpses-shiism-musnad-ibn-hanbal-dr-sayyid-kazim-1, accessed the 23rd of April, 2017.

¹² Ab al- usayn 'As kir ad-D n Muslim ibn al- ajj j ibn Muslim ibn Ward ibn Kawsh dh al-Qushayr an-Nays b r ; (after 815 – May 875) or Muslim N sh p r (Persian), commonly known as Imam Muslim, was a Persian' a Islamic scholar, particularly known as a *muhaddith* (scholar of hadith). His hadith collection, known as *Sahih Muslim*, is one of the six major hadith collections in Sunni Islam and is regarded as one of the two most authentic (*sahih*) collections, alongside *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

Sahih Muslim is a collection of hadith compiled by Imam Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Naysaburi (rahimahullah). His collection is considered to be one of the most authentic collections of the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), and along with *Sahih al-Bukhari* forms the "Sahihain," or the "Two Sahih's." It contains roughly 7500 hadith (with repetitions) in 57 books. The translation provided here is by Abdul Hamid Siddiqui. <https://sunnah.com/muslim>, accessed the 23rd of April, 2017

¹³ Sunan Ibn Majah is a collection of hadith compiled by Imam Muhammad bin Yazid Ibn Majah al-Qazvini (rahimahullah). It is widely considered to be the sixth of the six canonical collection of hadith (Kutub as-Sittah) of the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). It consists of 4341 ahadith in 37 books. <https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah>. accessed the 23rd of April, 2017

Social grievances

Cultural requirements



;

Material needs

Basic Human Needs and Human Rights¹⁴

¹⁴ Diagram inspired of the diagram, inspired of the Summer Peace building Program: Contact Program 2012. A diagram related about: *Building Peace & Justice through Meeting Human Needs and Rights*, Page 8 It shows the three basic human needs in this life. If they are endorsed and promoted, people would avoid any type of violence

So The question that could be asked is whether Islam solves social problems, preserves the cultural identities and defends all what is educational or not. It is significant to make sure if Islam opens rooms for debates and criticism or not. In this case, a clear reference to the sacred text would be essential to discuss the queries over religious promotion or denial of the basic human needs.

3.1. The social grievances

Among the social requirements, the **respect** of the self and of the other is at the origin of successful communication among individuals. About **respect**, Allah says :

O you who believe, no men should ever scoff at other men. May be, the latter are better than the former. Nor should women (ever scoff) at other women. May be, the latter women are better than the former ones. And do not find fault with one another, nor call one another with bad nicknames. Bad is the name of sinfulness after embracing Faith. If anyone does not repent, then such people are the wrongdoers [**Al-Hujuraa, 49: 11**]

Security is a blessing and the capital need for every human being in this universe; it is a vital element for the preservation of the human constellation. About **security**, Allah says:

who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear” [**Qureysh: 106:4**]

Islam gives a great importance to **security**; it is important because without it human life becomes absurd and chaotic. Allahs says:

Allah gives an example: There was a town, secure and content with its sustenance coming in plenty from every place. Then, it turned ungrateful to the bounties of Allah; so, Allah made it to taste hunger and terror (that covered it) like a garment, as recompense of what its people used to do. [**Nahl, 16:112**]

The respect of the human beings to themselves leads to a very rational society. Human beings ‘s physical en mental endeavors should go in concomitance with and serve the **community** life style which should normally be characterized by a sense of intimacy, of emotional earnestness, and of social and moral commitment. In Islam, the **community** is called “**El Ummah**”. And “**El Ummah**” is horizontal. In the within community, in Islam, people are obliged to think in complementary terms. There is no lieu for out-group/in-group bias. They have to forget about what they think they are, such as their racial and ethnic differences, ideological confessional differences, social classes, sexual particularities, geographical distributions, to mention just few for Allah looks at the heart of people and not at their faces: Allah says:

The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children (88) But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.” (89) [**Ash-Shu’araa , 26: 88-89**]

The nation (El Ummah) in Islam is transcends human universal humanism and praises unification, the embodiment of the virtuous for the whole community is an entity with every single member. Allah says:

And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment [**Aal-i-Imraan , 03: 105**]

Abu Hurairah narrated: Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) (PBUH) said that:

Allah does not look at your figures, nor at your attire but He looks at your hearts [and deeds]. [**Muslim**]¹⁵

This saying leads and refers to what the Almighty Allah says in the verse

O mankind! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware [**al-Hujurat, 49:13**]

¹⁵ Chapter 1 – Hadith 7: Sincerity and Significance of Intentions and all Actions, Apparent and Hidden, <http://muslimmatters.org/2011/01/31/riyadh-as-saliheen-series-hadith-2he-looks-at-your-hearts/>, retrieved February the 6th 2017

The righteousness is in fact self-determined. For the man exists first then after comes his essence. Jean Paul Sartre's *Existence precedes Essence*, shows the extent to which man is responsible for what he is. Sartre's conception of existence and essence is at the very core version of Existentialism. He shows that for a human being there is no predefined pattern that s/he we must fit into. S/he lives his own life, and that in turn defines what s/he truly is, not any idealized set of characteristics (Sartre, 1946). The philosopher shows that the implications are that a human being must create his/her own meaning, place his/her own value on his/her acts and that his/her individual freedom is absolute and unbounded (Ibid).

Allah does not want to make of us criminals, but he created us and let us for ourselves determine our own essence on the basis of what we believe is correct in life. It is Allah the creator as the "Union of Existence and Essence", which means full Existential realization of every perfect, ideal or essential attribute of Allah, and to see his prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH) as the unique model of human conduct in this universe. Yet, If we are unconscious and/or irrational, then we learn just what is not appropriate to human conduct and behavior.

3.2. Cultural Requirements

Islam promotes human culture. Allah has provided humanity with a divine constitution which incites man to abide the religious teaching in order not to get lost in the maze of the life of this world, because Allah says:

Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion. **[Aal-i-Imraan , 03: 185]**

Allah wants from his servants to respect other's religions and cultures, and to respect individual choices. Allah says:

Say, O mankind, the truth has come to you from your Lord, so whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul, and whoever goes astray only goes astray [in violation] against it. And I am not over you a manager **[Yunus, 10:108]**

Allah ordered also his servant not to oblige someone to believe in Allah, not against their will. Allah says to the prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH) also:

And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed - all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers? **[Yunus, 10:99]**

To preach Muslims the co-habitation with and the acceptance of the other regardless of his religious difference, Allah says:

- (1) Say, "O disbelievers,
- (2) I do not worship what you worship.
- (3) Nor are you worshippers of what I worship.
- (4) Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship.
- (5) Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship.
- (6) For you is your religion, and for me is my religion. **[Al-Kaafiroon, 109 : 1-6]**

There many verses in Quran which show the extent to which human being's cultural requirements are preserved and dignity protected. Like in the following verse:

Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. **[Al-Mumtahana,60: 08]**

3.3. The Material needs

Islam has dealt with the question of food, shelter, health care and employment in different verses.

✓ **Food**

Who has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made them safe, [saving them] from fear. [**Quraish, 106: 04**]

✓ **Shelter**

And Allah has made for you from your homes a place of rest and made for you from the hides of the animals tents which you find light on your day of travel and your day of encampment; and from their wool, fur and hair is furnishing and enjoyment for a time.[**An-Nahl, 16: 80**]

✓ **Healthcare**

And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good.[**Al-Baqara, 02 : 195**]

O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful.[**An-Nisaa, 04: 29**]

And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law].[**Al-Isra, 17: 33**]

✓ **Employment**

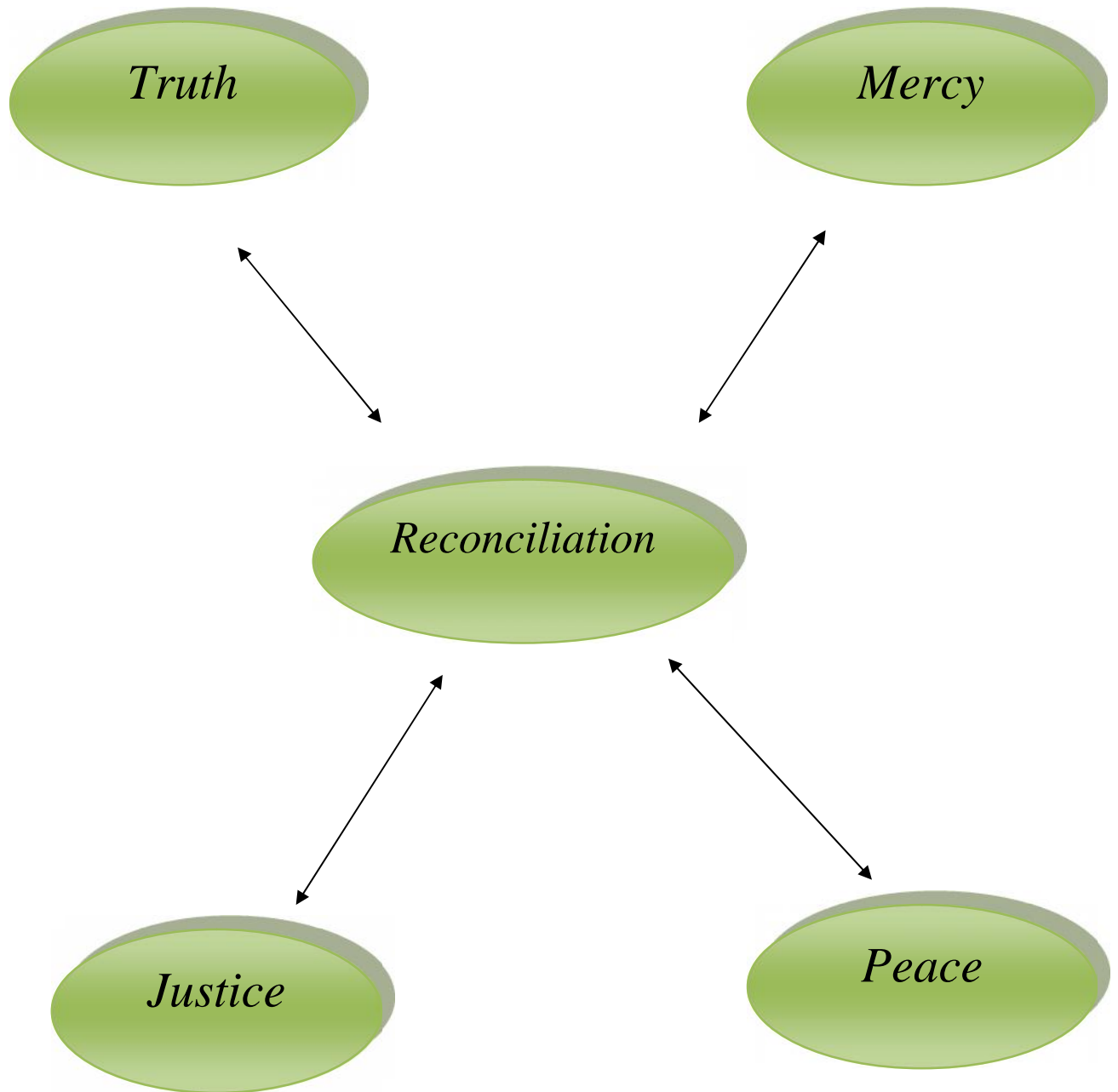
And say, "Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so, will] His Messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do."[**At-Tawba, 17:105**]

These different verses dealing with the different situations make a sound argument to confirm or hypothesis that Islam promotes peace through meeting the basic human needs and rights. Islam does not preach violence, on the contrary it is a universal human divine constitution which regulates the human conduct and behavior not only vis-à-vis the self but also vis-à-vis the other selves. Islam is a religion of reconciliation, in a time many Muslim and Arab countries whose religion is Islam are killing one another on the name of "Islam" which, we believe different from the Islam we are dealing with now, in a time there is only one Religion in this universe called ISLAM.

The same, like Jewish orthodoxy, or extreme Protestantism, radicalism in Islam is not founded on principal of Muhametant beliefs. Muhametant practice is what is called Moderate Islamism and not Muslim extremism. The experiences some Arabs or Muslim communities have gone through, since two decades now, and which are rather a confusion of in-group and/ out-group conflicts, are due to the non-understanding of the religious teachings and principles.

We can mention, briefly, the example of Egypt where the conflict is between the Christians and the Muslims, while they could live together as they had long been doing before the revolution. Another example is the Yemen where two groups are fighting each for the sake of power. The unjustifiable acts of murder are the immediate result of an egocentric Person looking for power. Yet this state generates a sense of meaninglessness and total chaos.

Al most two decades ago, precisely during the 1990's, Algeria had also felt prey to acts of terrorism between brethren. It was between the brothers and the cousins owing to an ardent belief in an ideology which could not be accepted by the majority of the Algerian people in that epoch. How can we convert into Islam in a time we were born Muslim in a Muslim country. It was that difficult to understand what is meant to be Muslim. And even to understand how Islam and Muslim teaching are approached by this extremist group, it is by itself considered a sort of disrespect for the sacred: "blasphemous". Reconciliation, did come from those who were accused of blasphemousness, when they decided to make concession and accept that those who once killed their relatives, a killed other innocent people to live with and among them. Mercy is there! Yes indeed, to forgive their acts remain possible, but to let them pass into oblivion, it is almost impossible. But Islam advices man to forgive and forget because reconciliation requires four major elements which are: Mercy, truth Justice and peace. These elements make the matrix of the Reconciliation and Islam has accounted for the four elements as follows:



This diagram is adapted from John Paul Lederach: *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. United States Institute of Peace Press. W.D.C. 1997.

Islam always teaches that individuals in a society are brothers to each other; they must observe peace and reconciliation among themselves. Believers should not be aggressive but merciful, honest and correct. They have to stand by each other to grant help and assistance to each other. Islam breaks the might be existing cycle of revenge moving towards the center (reconciliation)

✓ Mercy

About *mercy*, Allah says:

And We have not created the heavens and earth and that between them except in truth. And indeed, the Hour is coming; so forgive with gracious forgiveness. [Al-Hijr, 15 : 85]

✓ Truth

About *truth*, Allah says:

O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true. [At-Tawba, 9: 119]

✓ Peace

About *peace*, Allah says:

And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing. [Al-Anfal, 8: 61]

O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. [Al-Baqara, 2: 208]

✓ Justice

About *Justice*, Allah says:

And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. [Al-Hujuraat, 49: 09]

Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded. [An-Nahl, 19: 90]

These are not the only verses which encourage reconciliation; there other many verses. This proves that Islam is a religion which preaches peace, justice, mercy and truth. How, thereafter, can a Prophet like Muhammad (ﷺ) (PBUH), who is known for his decent behavior, preach discrimination and/or violence? His entire life is plenty of limitless images that attribute to him the status of "Model of Universal Human Conduct". I said universal, because the Prophet was not sent just to the Muslim community but to all the humanity. Allah said: "And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a Warner. But most of the people do not know" [Saba, 34: 28]. His life was a human reference for it was an absolute morality and decency. Allah said to the believer: "There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often" [Al-Ahzaab, 33: 21]. In this case, it is rightful and even crystal-clear to say that Islam does not only teach human beings divine matters, but regulates human conduct in life.

4. towards the construction of a social schema: Religious Conception of the multiple identities preservation

The fact in point is that the individual's challenge is not that new in Islam, because, before this time and for centuries, many Muslim scholars, since the revelation, have been struggling to find answers to human beings' queries over their very nature as creators, as human beings and as participants in this life. The religious reading of the situation and the Muslim scholars' ambition is, certainly, not to create another society parallel to the existing one; yet their enthusiasm is legitimate and even logic for it is translated by the religious philosophy of man towards his brethren. The substitutions of the current individuals' positions which are at the origin of conflict, as well as the requalification of the pre-existing rapport between the members of the human constellation are principal.

The matter, in this scope, is not an effortless question of religious endeavor because the sacred text does not perpetuate the gender-imbalance, a myth that typically portrays Vertical human societies, in general. Undeniably, this myth does exist, yet genuine alternatives remain one of the prerogatives of any given Muslim scholar. The Vertical society, where gender-imbalance, ideological/confessional difference and racial discrimination are substantial, should be substituted by another society where the nature of relationship between individuals is not based on gender difference or skin pigmentation, or even religious conviction. The vertical view of an individual, undoubtedly, generates a sort of phobia. The latter mutates into hatred which most of the time leads to violence.

Beyond the religious context, to exemplify, literature and literary studies have provided many model in-group situations, particularly, in America. In ethnic American Literature and/or "the literature of minority groups", the question of the self is seen to be essentially linked to a world of shoddiness, a world of despair, a world of paradox. The problem of identity and of individual's self-identity is seen as a sort of self-confirmation, and it is, therefore, related to his questioning of the concrete contradiction of the real world to his own contempt with the place he is relegated to by his own existence. The quest for the self is, undoubtedly, a quest for recognition and Re-consideration.

In fact the experience of the minority group character in America does play a part in creating and sustaining its paradox, and therefore, the writers' optimistic view and their willing endeavour are to substitute a horizontally transcended idealized self for a vertically transcended real self. We take for instance, African American writers such (*Richard Wrights*), Black Women writers such as (*Toni Morrison*), Jewish American writer (*Saul Bellow*) and Jewish woman writer (*Mary Antin*).

The situation is almost the same albeit the laws which regulate human conduct and human relationships. The problem of discrimination still exists because the president of the USA Donald Trump, recently, and shortly after being elected as a president of the United States of American, signed the 'First Amendment Defense Act' discriminating, blacks and Muslims, focusing on individual bigotry, and had become the legal face of American racism.

Conclusion

Islam exists to stand against anti-religious bigotry. It preaches a sense of universal humanism which is likely to be an attempt to go beyond the predefined set category of norms and rules. This is true because the self-concept is not instinctive, but rather a social product developed through experience. Man can, thereafter, perceive himself in a way different from the way others may see him. The change at the level of the perceptive *self* is the supremacy of the new identity over the socio-cultural barriers which have long been established by the *other*. The ego development and self-interpretation (Anna Freud, 1946)¹⁶ are, certainly, what preoccupy Muslim scholars.

The newly-set religious Muslim discourse is likely to be framed to advocate a *peculiar* universalism in that it is an unusual articulated religious discourse and which is certainly qualified as a global discourse. A Muslim is not supposed to be interested in what differentiates the local from the global, for the simple reason that he is developing more vertical paradigmatic thinking and view than horizontal one.

Muslims seem to have operated with new assumptions that are judged appropriate because the international opinion, during the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, has been imbued with new negative judgmental assumptions about Islam and Muslims, especially after September, 11. To align oneself to some degree along with a horizontal axis, one has not underestimated the social awareness and sense of reality which grows in line with his/her perception of the other.

¹⁶ Anna Freud (Sigmund Freud's daughter) gave central importance to ego development and self-interpretation, while Freud (1900), who provided new understanding of the importance of internal mental processes, and many other of his followers hesitated to make the *self* concept a primary psychological unit in their theories.

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