

REAFFIRMING THE CONCEPT OF PLURALITY IN THE QUR'AN AND ITS PRACTICE IN THE SUNNAH

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Abstract

The main purpose of this article is to explore as well as analyse the concept of plurality in the Qur'an around four specific issues through the inductive methodology of analyzing literature. First, how does the Islamic civilization as founded on special beliefs, which differ from those that often force the ruled people to follow the beliefs of the ruling class to the greatest extent possible? Second, under the social pluralistic system of Islam, can all people, regardless of their religious background, ethnic identity, and racial color, be fully respected and protected? Third, can citizens live in Islamic countries freely survive, possess wealth, and actively contribute to society? Fourth, what is the ideology that has driven this pluralistic social governance system to continue for more than one thousand and four hundred years in Islamic countries? By discussing these issues, the conclusion drawn in this article is that the pluralistic ideology of Islamic society has been upheld and kept by the Islamic Worldview and Shari'ah, which may lead and enable readers to gain a new understanding of Islam itself and its current situation as whole and the Muslim countries are the best in the world to practice plurality from the history up to now.

Keywords: Qur'an; Shari'ah; plurality; social governance.

Khulasah

Tujuan utama makalah ini adalah mengkaji dan menganalisis konsep pluraliti dalam al-Quran dengan tumpuan kepada empat permasalahan khusus melalui pendekatan induktif berpandukan analisis kepustakaan. Pertama, bagaimana peradaban Islam yang diasaskan kepada kepercayaan yang tertentu berbeza dengan kuasa yang memaksa rakyat yang dikuasai untuk mengikut kepercayaan kelas penguasa seboleh yang mungkin? Kedua, di bawah sistem sosial Islam yang pluralistik, bolehkah semua rakyat, tanpa mengabaikan latar belakang agama, identiti etnik dan warna kulit dihormati dan dilindungi? Ketiga, bolehkan warga yang tinggal di negara Islam hidup secara bebas, mengumpul kekayaan dan menyumbang secara aktif kepada masyarakat? Keempat apakah latar pemikiran yang memandu sistem pentadbiran sosial yang pluralistik untuk kekal lebih dari 1400 tahun di dunia Islam? Melalui perbincangan tentang permasalahan ini, makalah merumuskan pemikiran pluralistik masyarakat Islam ditegakkan oleh pandangan sarwa Islam serta Syariah. Rumusan ini memandu dan memberikan kefahaman baru tentang Islam dan situasi semasa kini secara umumnya dan menunjukkan negara-negara Islam merupakan contoh terbaik di dunia dalam mengaplikasikan pluraliti sejak zaman lampau sehingga kini.

Kata kunci: Qur'an; Syariah; pluraliti; pentadbiran sosial.

Introduction

From the seventh century AD to modern times, the Islamic social governance model characterized by diverse ethnic groups, religions, and cultures has been one of the traditional models of world civilization. In this unique tradition, the fundamental rights of dignity, freedom, and privacy of every person (including special groups such as

refugees and prisoners of war) are clarified under the guidance of the Qur'an and through the practice of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him¹), regardless of his/her races, skin colors, religious beliefs, or social status².

In terms of this tradition itself, it has attracted the admiration of countless modern Western thinkers, such as the great British philosopher and political theorist John Locke (1632-1073)³. Besides, this phenomenon has also led many Eastern scholars, such as the distinguished Sri Lankan jurist and former vice president of the International Court of Justice, C. G. Weeramantry (1926-2017), to continuously explore and interpret the pluralistic model of Islamic society, in order to draw inspiration from it for social governance paths. However, to achieve this goal, it is necessary for anyone to clarify the fundamental principles of Islamic metaphysics related to it, that is, to explore the roots of plurality in the theological and Islamic worldview, and to contemplate the detailed obligations and rights stipulated by Shariah (i.e. Islamic law) for members of society.⁴

Nevertheless, to explore and analyse the concept of plurality in the Qur'an which had been practiced by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the author of this article has to start from two aspects; namely, the first is to study Islamic theology or worldview of Islam, which in fact is

¹ The following will be presented by abbreviations "PBUH".

² John Witte Jr., "Introduction," in *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspectives: Religious Perspectives*, eds. John Witte Jr. & Johan D. van der Vyuer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), xxi.

³ John L. Esposito, "Foreword", in *Muslims in the West - From Sojourners to Citizens*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), vii; John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, introd. Patrick Remanell (New York: Bob Merrill, 1955), 25; Nabil Matar, "John Locke and the 'Turbanned Nations,'" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2(1) (1991), 72.

⁴ Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, "The Islamic Tradition," in *Human Rights and the World's Major Religions*, ed. William H. Brachney, vol. 3 (London: Praeger Perspectives, 2005), 44-48.

commonly referred by Muslims as *Tawhid* (i.e. Monotheism or the Oneness and Onliness of Allah - the True Creator and the Real Lord of worlds) theory; the second is to analyse as well as to comprehend the relationship between Allah and all creations, between human-beings themselves, and between human beings and other nature in the universe. At the same time, the author also demonstrates the effectiveness of the first Islamic State established by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for practicing the pluralistic social governance model.

The Islamic Plurality is Based on the Fundamentals of Tawhid

In Islamic doctrines, the Uniqueness of Allah is at the primary and the absolute core, and any other principles or any idea must always revolve and circle around this foundation. In other words, the validity of the teachings and regulations of Islam must depend on a correct understanding and firm faith or belief in the essence and attributes of Allah the Almighty. Thus, the Qur'an bluntly and directly declares this: "Say: He is Allah the One and the Only; Allah, the Eternal, the Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is he begotten; And there is none like unto Him." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Ikhlās [112]: 1-4)⁵. Meanwhile, another Qur'anic verse manifests that: "(Allah is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth, He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs among cattle, by this means does He multiply you, there is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that Hears and Sees (all things)." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Shura [42]: 11).

In fact, the above-mentioned Qur'anic verses clearly reflect the fundamental creed established by Islam for Muslims and the only doctrinal declaration that allows for

⁵ Note: when citing the Qur'anic scriptures in this article, the reference is made to: 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2005).

no compromise and concession, that Allah is the Sole, the Unique, the Eternal, the Absolute, All-Intelligent, and All-Encompassing Creator as well as the Provider of heavens and earth, within which all things that exist. Therefore, for those who claim to believe in Allah but at the same time also believe in the existence of other gods besides Allah, the Qur'an uses logical thinking and serious warning methods to say: "If there were in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been ruin in both! But glory to Allah the Lord of the Throne: (He is He) above what they attribute to Him!" (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Anbiya', 21: 22) And this is precisely the reason why "Allah forgiveth not that partner should be set up with Him; but He forgive anything, else to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Nisa' [4]: 48)

Accordingly, it is worthy to note that Muslim scholars strongly believe that a worldview of human beings is not limited to sensory perception of the material world of the universe, or rather not as defined by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in 1790 for his innovative term *Weltanschauung* (i.e. worldview)⁶. For instance, the renowned contemporary Malaysian scholar, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas believes in his book *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* that the Islamic worldview is an insight into reality and truth, both containing many aspects of being that can be perceived through the senses; however, more importantly, the things displayed in these aspects are before human mind reveals what "existence" is⁷. Effectively speaking, in the terminology of the Qur'an, these aspects are collectively referred to as *al-ghayb* (i.e. mystery or the

⁶ David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 58ff.

⁷ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1995), 2-5.

unseen things), which are the certain and the absolute aspects of "existence" and often go beyond the ordinary range of human beings' perception. Therefore, the Qur'an repeatedly reaffirms that a resolute belief of Muslims in *al-ghayb* is one of the main expressive characteristics of the *al-Muttaqin* (i.e. the believers those who revere, awe and fear Allah)⁸.

Specifically, to say the Islamic worldview, which revolves and circles around monotheistic ideas, does not endorse the ideas of material and spiritual separation, nor does it believe that the present life (*al-Dunya*) and the day hereafter (*al-Akhirah*) are really opposed to each other. On the contrary, the Islamic teachings as well as the Islamic regulations emphasize both realism and existentialism, which in fact means that the Islamic worldview encompasses or covers both "reality" and various aspects of "existence". At the same time and more importantly, the Islamic doctrines always emphasize that the present life of human beings is the preparation for his/her life of the day hereafter. Therefore, the Islamic worldview in fact fundamentally negates the attitude of ignoring or dismissing the present world⁹.

In addition, Islam is neither a simple culture derived from scientific experience or philosophical principles, nor a type or mode of cultural specialization, but rather a recognition of reality and existence, i.e. a valuable and meaningful system of human beings' life obtained through its sources. For Muslims, the sources of Islam are the revelation and inspiration from Allah, which should withstand rational analysis and be verified through all

⁸ See for example al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 2-3.

⁹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, "*The Islamic Worldview: An Outline*," in *Islam and the Challenges of Modernity*, ed. Sharifah Shifa al-Attas (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1996), 26; 'Abd al-Rahim, "The Roots of Revolution in the Qur'an," in *Dirasat Ifriqiyyah (Khartoum)* 3 (April 1987), 9.

effective sources of human beings' knowledge besides the Qur'an and the Sunnah, including all real intuitive cognition and true scientific research¹⁰. Therefore, as currently discussed, there are two most important aspects of "existence" that should be comprehended, one is related to human beings' nature (*al-Fitrah*) and another is the relationship between Allah, the universe, and human beings.

Furthermore, as a proprietary term for "the Real Creator and the True Lord of worlds", "Allah" is mentioned more than 2500 times in the Qur'an¹¹. Besides, the Qur'an always and definitely describes the concept of "Allah" as "the One God, God the Eternal, the Uncaused Cause of All Being. He begets not, and neither is He begotten; and there is nothing that could be compared with Him."¹² Therefore, the famous modern commentator of the Qur'an, Muhammad Asad (1900-1992), believed that due to the fact that Allah's "existence" goes far beyond the scope of human understanding, the Qur'an completely excludes any inappropriate description or limitation of the Creator, and also clarifies why any depiction and limitation of the Creator through visual representation or abstract symbolism will be seen as blasphemy and denial of truth (*al-Kufr*)¹³.

In accordance with the above-mentioned, it should be borne in mind of any person that if the ontological characteristics or attributes of Allah are as "He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Hidden and He has full knowledge of all things." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Hadid [57]: 3), then the concept of Allah cannot be directly brought into human beings understanding. Meanwhile, as for Allah's

¹⁰ Al-Attas, *The Islamic Worldview: An Outline*, 28.

¹¹ Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1989), 1.

¹² Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980), 985.

¹³ *Ibid.*

other ontological characteristics or attributes, including the concepts of His Noumenon is the Creator, Provider, Nurturer, and Protector of all beings, it should not be difficult for human beings to understand. Because in the sense of the question "were things created out of nothing?" perhaps they produce someone or something, such as "giving birth to offspring" or "creating machines", but the Qur'an logically asks: "Were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators?" (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Tur [52]: 35) Consequentially, the Qur'an expresses in an affirmative tone that: "To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth; when He decreeth a matter, He saith to it: 'Be' and it is." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 117) and "Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is 'Be' and it is." (Al-Qur'an, Surah Yasin [36]: 82)

Therefore, according to the Qur'an, Muslims firmly believe that one of the purposes for which all things in the universe are created is to stimulate one's intelligence, awaken his or her soul, and ultimately discover the significance of metaphysics and ethical morality in human life, in order to gain a proper and better understanding of Allah. For this reason, the Qur'an thoroughly encourages men and women to observe, think, and contemplate the "signs" (*ayat*) that prove the existence of Allah; for example, the heavens and the earth, countless other species inhabit the earth, the life cycle of all things, changes in the four seasons, rain, clouds, winds, stars, the Milky Way, and all other existence outside the galaxy. Therefore, the Qur'an clearly states that: "Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of Night and Day, - there are indeed Signs for men of understanding." (Al-Qur'an, Surah Ali 'Imran [3]: 190) And thus, Allah says in the Qur'an that: "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may worship Me." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Dhariyat [51]: 56)

It is worth noting that the Qur'an does not specifically prove the existence of Allah through technological means

and philosophical reasoning, but rather awakens people's nature or instinct (*fiṭrah*) in various ways, that is the remembrance (*dhikr*) and further realization of the primitive or innate nature of humanity. Accordingly, the Qur'an continually states that: "Men who remember (or celebrate the praises of) Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with thought): 'Our Lord! Not for naught hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire. Our Lord! Any whom Thou dost admit to the Fire truly Thou coverest with shame, and never will wrong-doers find any helpers! Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith: 'Believe ye in the Lord', and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous.'" (Al-Qur'an, Surah Al 'Imran [3]: 191-193)

Moreover, the Arabic term *ayat* (its singular is *ayah*, i.e. signs) refers to the Qur'an and the *ayat* of all things in the universe complement and perfect each other, because the *ayat* revealed by Allah and the *ayat* of all things in the universe both express the same truth, that Allah is the Creator, Provider, and Sole Ruler of the heavens, the earth, and everything else in between. The combination of the two can effectively awaken humanity to remember, and return to the primitive state of faith and reverence for Allah. Thus, the descriptions of all things in the universe (whether they are living, inanimate, human beings, or plant or animal) in the Qur'an are diverse and mutually exclusive apart from *Tawhid*, which is the uncompromising doctrine of Islam, the Qur'an says: "Seest thou not that Allah sends down rain from the sky? With it, We then bring out produce of various colours. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of colour, and black intense in hue. And so amongst men and crawling creatures and cattle, are they of various colours. Those truly fear Allah, among His servants

who have knowledge: for Allah is exalted in might, Oft-Forgiving." (Al-Qur'an, Surah Fatir [35]: 27-28) Therefore, all things in the universe serve to embody Allah's unique ontological attributes, in order to enlighten human rational thinking, as stated in the Qur'an: "And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Rum [30]: 22)

From this, it can be seen that the main and core teachings of Islam have always emphasized that all things in the universe have diverse and ever-changing characteristics, with the ultimate goal of reflecting the unique ontological attributes of Allah. However, these diverse and ever-changing characteristics are not limited to the diversity of mountains, animals and plants, human skin colors, and the richness and diversity of their languages, but rather all macro and micro worlds except Allah the Almighty. Besides, more importantly and directly related to this article, Allah explains in several verses of the Qur'an that these different types and variations of characteristics also apply to many other religious affairs, such as: "It is He Who has created you; and of you are some that are unbelievers, and some that are believers; and Allah sees well all that ye do." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Taghabun [64]: 2) Furthermore, Allah has even emphasized in a clearer way: "To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety; so, judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that hath come to thee. To each among you, We have prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you, so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the Truth of matters in which ye dispute." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Ma'idah [5]: 48)

In summary, the Uniqueness, the Onliness, and the Unparalleled are the exclusive attributes of Allah's ontology, while variability, diversity, and plurality are inherent characteristics that accompany living and inanimate entities, human beings and non-human-beings, as well as all things in the universe. Hitherto, as far as humanity itself is concerned, its variability, diversity and plurality are not only constrained by substantive characteristics such as language, skin color, and race but also demonstrate the will of Allah in religious beliefs, that is, whether someone believes or not is determined by Allah. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has no right to compel people to accept Islam, the Qur'an states that: "If it had been the Lord's Will they would all have believed all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind against their will to believe!" (Al-Qur'an, Surah Yunus [10]: 99)¹⁴ and even the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has no right to interfere in the beliefs of others, as stated in the Qur'an: "It is true thou wilt not be able to guide everyone whom thou lovest, but Allah guides those whom He will and He knows best those who receive guidance." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Qasas [28]: 56)

Therefore, the Uniqueness of Allah and plurality of human beings are the clear and profound inherent essence of the Islamic worldview. In fact, under this worldview, everyone is given and guaranteed equal rights in a society guided and governed by Islamic teachings and regulations, so that they can not only survive, but also participate in developments in their country and society to which they belong, and prosper economically, socially, culturally even in fields such as politics. This kind of plurality is precisely the work currently being carried out in many countries for social governance, so that the people living within can not

¹⁴ For more details, see Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Athar al-Harb fi al-Fiqh al-Islami: Dirasah Muqaranah*, 3rd ed. (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1419AH/1998), 69-70.

only participate in social construction, but also strive and contribute to their societies to the greatest extent possible.

The Islamic Social Plurality is Guided by the Principle of 'Adl (Justice)

In the social-pluralistic philosophy of Islam, everyone, regardless of race, skin color, religion, or other background, can be guaranteed equal rights and should correspondingly contribute to society. In the process of social governance, the key to success is how to closely integrate rights and obligations. Not only that, but also the practical experience of human beings in religion, ethics, aesthetics, culture, especially justice, politics, and economy should be integrated. This is the justice among the people, which the Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes because it is the command of Allah¹⁵.

Specifically, it is not difficult for anyone to discover when studying the Qur'an that the Arabic word *haqq* in different contexts can express both the meaning of enjoying rights and the meaning of fulfilling obligations¹⁶. In the context of the Qur'an, the word *haqq* has no ambiguous or confusing meaning, especially when the word has a prefix with two Arabic letters "al" which indicates the definite meaning and which refers to the ontological essence of Allah or can be interpreted as the absolute truth. Therefore, the complementary nature of rights and obligations is fully reflected through the word *haqq*.

As it is well known, in any society, the rights enjoyed by anyone will depend on whether they have fulfilled their obligations towards society and other members, and vice versa. Therefore, the crisscrossing network of rights and obligations complements each other, not only connecting all members of the entire society, but also forming a huge social governance system. The legal and political

¹⁵ See al-Qur'an, Surah al-Nahl [16]: 90.

¹⁶ Abu al-Fadl Jamal al-Din Muhammad bin Mukrim bin Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, vol. 10, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dar al Sadir, 1414H/1994), 49-58.

components within it are also constantly enriching and strengthening people's moral, ethical, and aesthetic concepts, and the structure of the entire system is derived from beliefs or ideologies and is supported by them. From the perspective of Islam, any right can only be effectively guaranteed when the corresponding obligations, duties and responsibilities are effectively respected in the system.

Therefore, as a system of faith, law, values and practice, the ultimate goal of Islam is to encourage and promote the continuous growth and development of individuals and societies around the world. This not only allows people to free themselves from and eliminate various forms of oppression and exploitation, but more importantly, it enables them to possess good morals and noble sentiments and thus to live in harmony with each other anywhere else and maintain harmony with nature and the surrounding environment, to the point of being consistent with the orders of Allah - the Creator of all beings.

According to the teachings and rules of Islam, in Muslim society, non-Muslims should be treated reasonably, fairly, and justly. Therefore, regarding the words and deeds of any Muslim, the Qur'an requires that: "O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety and fear Allah for Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Ma'idah [5]: 8) and the verse: "Whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned; and fulfill the covenant of Allah, thus doth He command you, that ye may remember." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-An'am [6]: 152)

Given this, one of the fundamental principles enshrined in the Qur'an is that: "Let there be no compulsion in religion." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 256) This verse in fact fully reflects another principle and core value

of Islam - justice, which explicitly prohibits any Muslim (whether individual, group, or state) from imposing his own beliefs on any other person through any means. Because in the eyes of Islam, forcing and compelling others to practice any religion is a serious criminal act that violates Shariah. Therefore, during the Ottoman Empire, the severe punishment for this criminal act was capital punishment, based on the commandments of the Qur'an: "For tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 191) In addition, other relevant texts of the Qur'an further elaborate and firmly uphold the fundamental principle of not allowing others to be forced and compelled to believe in religion.

It is worth noting that according to the principle of "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 256), Allah has used a dynamic Arabic form *ud'u* (i.e. invite) in the Qur'an to help others knowing and understanding Islam, namely: "Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious, for thy Lord knoweth, best who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Nahl [16]: 125) Thus, it obviously can be seen that the claim that Islam is spread by force has no basis in doctrine or law, and is completely different from imperialism's use of religion to conquer and invade other nations and countries. Of course, the use of force to defend Islam and its followers in the face of persecution by hostile forces is a different matter and another issue, because in this situation, engaging in armed confrontation is a legitimate self-defense that must be taken as a last resort¹⁷.

In fact, all Muslims on the earth, they are both holistic and diverse, and these two characteristics are not

¹⁷ See Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (US: North American Trust Publications, 1976), 76, 115, 131, 173-200, 216-242, 253-395.

contradictory in any case. This is indeed a characteristic of Islam and its believers may be compared to a mosaic or symphony, where each component or tonal element, while distinguishing and perfecting itself, is also integrated with other components or elements, forming a coordinated pattern and harmonious music. So, the question is: what pattern is the extraordinary harmony that manifests in change arranged? How was it formed? This issue is indeed worth considering. Thus, first of all, it should be acknowledged that there is no church or similar organization in Islam, and there are no missionaries or missionary associations in Muslim tradition, such as those used by different Christian factions to this day. To convey Islamic information and messages, which has traditionally been carried out through personal actions by Muslim businessmen, teachers, and doctors, etc. in their daily lives.

In recent years, regional and international *da'wah* (i.e. inviting people to know and understand Islam) organizations founded around the world have only been established to coordinate and supplement traditional messages and information dissemination models.¹⁸ In addition, both modern and traditional models are attempting to embody Islam's monotheism and its plurality in the social governance of the country concerned with, and actively advocating for various aspects of human beings' nature, namely material and spiritual, rational and emotional, individual and collective.¹⁹ Accordingly, even in adversity, Islam can easily survive and thrive; at the same time, it also confirms the extraordinary ability of Islam to continuously integrate many different types of individuals and groups under the guidance of group spirit. In this regard, Islam is different from Judaism and Hinduism in

¹⁸ Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Express, 1992), 5ff.

¹⁹ Please see, for example: Jorgen Nielsen, *Muslims in Western Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992 & 1995).

that the message conveyed by the former is not limited to a specific group or part of human-beings, but is aimed at all human-beings. Therefore, the recipients of message of Islam are not divided into race, cultural background, gender, or social class.

Essentially speaking, Islam is inviting upon the human-beings of this world to fully perceive and worship Allah, who is the Creator of the earth, human-beings, and all other living and inanimate beings in the universe. Strictly speaking, Islam is described in the Qur'an as "*Din al-Fitrah*", which certainly means a religion of human-beings, "primordial nature and instinct" or "innate inclination", namely the Qur'an clearly requires mankind that: "So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind, no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah, that is the Standard Religion, but most among mankind understand not." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Rum [30]: 30) Its meaning implies that human-beings are born with the ability to discern and distinguish the right and the wrong, the true and the false intuitively, and thus perceive the existence of Allah and His unique attributes. Therefore, observing and comprehending the existence of the Supreme Ruler of the universe and His unique attributes is an inherent characteristic of human-beings' nature or instinct, but this characteristic may be obscured (or not influenced) by acquired self-indulgence (or adversity) and become blurred²⁰.

Furthermore, fundamentally speaking, the messages described in the Qur'an are consistent with the messages conveyed by all previous prophets and messengers (including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, etc.), but the messages conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is at its peak and thus directly and straightforwardly point to human-beings' reason, senses, and emotions, which is why

²⁰ Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, 230, 621.

it is so, and which forced to be openly and explicitly excluded by Islam. Therefore, the Qur'an clearly and firmly declares to all mankind: "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 256), because making decisions and taking responsibilities for one's own actions are the essence of Islam.

In addition, regarding the Arabic term *da'wah* currently used by various sectors both domestically and internationally for the dissemination of Islam²¹, the meaning itself refers to "prayer", but when the term is related to and associated with Islam, it is usually simply translated as "inviting" and "preaching", which simply cannot reflect the harmonious values of Islamic plurality and can easily create the illusion of violent propaganda of Islam for people, because according to the aforementioned Qur'anic scriptures, inviting others to know and understand Islam must target his/her intelligence, consciousness and emotions, regardless of his/her beliefs and backgrounds; thus, respect for his/her dignity and personality is the most fundamental moral and legal value of Islam in any situation. Because only by adhering to the moral principles of humility and courtesy, complying with laws and regulations, and showing compassion can others see the truth, goodness, and beauty of Islam, which is not what extremism, terrorism, and violent behavior can do.

In view of this, it should be noted that the correct understanding of this core point also depends on the analysis of another fundamental principle of Islam, namely how to treat ethnic minorities or non-Muslims. In Chapter 60 of the Qur'an, it is stated that: "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 loved those who are just. Allah only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) Faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others)

²¹ Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, vol. 14, 257-262.

in driving you out, form turning to them (for friendship and protection). it is such as turn to them (in these circumstances) that do wrong. (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Mumtahinah [60]: 8-9)

Accordingly, Muslims not only need to always suppress themselves from oppressing or forcing others to convert to a religious belief that they may not be willing to accept at all, even if the belief is truly extremely important, because forcing a certain religion on people is a meaningless means of governance for those who are forced. Besides, Islam also definitely expects and strictly demands that all Muslims should treat those who have not persecuted or engaged in acts of aggression against them, as well as all citizens of the country who love peace and abide by the laws and regulations, with sincerity, kindness, fairness, and justice. This is precisely the political ideology emphasized and reflected in the core social values and truth, which have been pursued by the modern Western and Eastern countries.

The Practicing Social-Pluralistic Governance is Upheld as the Sunnah (Model)

As a founder and a supreme leader of the first Islamic State, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) practiced, elaborated and strengthened the principle of fairness and justice repeatedly which has been emphasized in the Qur'an. For the adherence and implementation of this principle, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not simply seek to treat non-Muslims verbally and in writing, but followed this sacred principle through his sayings, actions and practices, including his demands for personal life and management of public affairs. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not hesitate to engage in commercial activities together with non-Muslims, such as pawning his armor to a Jewish for meeting the daily needs of his family²², and even more

²² See, Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad bin Isma'il bin Ibrahim al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 3rd ed. (Damascus and Beirut: Risalah Publishers, 1436H/2015), hadith no. 2508-2509, 689.

affectionately, he married two non-Muslims women (one of whom was mostly Jewish - Saffiyah and the other was Christian - Mariyah, although some Muslim scholars insist that these two women had already believed in Islam before marrying with the Prophet Muhammad - PBUH)²³. However, in politics, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also achieved unprecedented success in establishing the first Islamic State with diverse racial, cultural, and religious characteristics.

According to authentic and reliable literature, under the call of the Qur'an and the continuous efforts of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Ansar (helpers) and Muhjirun (immigrants) abandoned their past grievances and feuds and merged into a strong entirety²⁴; therefore, in the famous *Charter of Medina*, it is referred to as *ummah* (i.e. people) that is different from all other people or nation in the world. In addition, the Jewish tribes allied with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are also referred to in the *Charter of Medina* as the *ummah* that lives and dies together with believers of Islam.²⁵

Accordingly, in this social environment, all non-Muslims are free to engage in and perform their own religious beliefs. As for the development of non-Muslims in the field of justice in Islamic country, as well as their real life experiences in the Muslim world to this day, the famous German orientalist Adam Mez (1869-1917) pointed out that the primary and the most striking feature of traditional Islamic country that distinguishes it from medieval Christian European countries is that it is very different from the latter. In the former's territory, apart from the Muslims themselves, there are also people of various ethnic groups

²³ See al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, hadith no. 2235, 632; See also al-Sayyid al-Jamili, *Nisa' al-Nabi Salla Allah 'alayh wa Sallam* (Beirut: Dar wa Maktabah al-Hilal, 1416H), 115 & 135.

²⁴ Al-Quran, Surah al-Imran, 103.

²⁵ Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, 177-184.

and believers of various religions who believe in other religions and which have a large population. In Mez's words, everyone lived in Islamic country "side by side in an atmosphere of toleration absolutely unknown to Medieval Europe."²⁶

When readers understand the attitudes and positions of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) towards other ethnic groups and their beliefs, they should not be surprised by Mez's views as in the seventh century AD, because his views in fact had already been thoroughly understood and recognized by people before him, especially those who have lived within the borders of the Arab East and West Peninsula, which is the heart of the Muslim world. Accordingly, in historical Egypt and Syria, the vast majority of Christians who were discriminated against and persecuted by Byzantine Orthodox Rulers due to their adherence to the Eastern Orthodox Church warmly welcomed the Arab Muslim conquerors to liberate them from oppressors who believed in the same religion; meanwhile, the Iraq people, who were oppressed by Zoroastrians, also responded in the same way. Even in the distant Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish Roman Catholic Church approved its policies of suppression and forced conversion based on the Bible, which led Jews to lean towards, welcome, and aid the Muslim conquerors of freedom²⁷.

Given this, there are actually two points worthy to note. First, in various fields, the term 'tolerance' usually refers to an easy, easygoing, and accommodating attitude towards others. However, as far as this vocabulary is concerned, it does not accurately reflect the essence of

²⁶ Adam Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam* (London: Luzac & Co., 1937), 32.

²⁷ Adam Mez, "Jews and the Muslim Conquerors of Spain," in *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book*, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1979), 54.

Muslims' attitudes and positions towards non-Muslims. This is not only because the term 'tolerance' often implies the meaning of reluctantly coexisting with others. In this regard, it is completely different from the attitudes and positions we are currently discussing. Second, there is also an important fact that has been overlooked, which is to respect and protect all the rights of non-Muslims who are willing to live in peace with Muslims. This neglected or forgotten fact is another characteristic that distinguishes Islam from other religions.²⁸

Indeed, for Muslims, respecting and protecting the beliefs, lives, and property of non-Muslims is not only an obligation, but also a manifestation of reverence for Allah and religious piety, because as a Muslim, both individuals and groups hope to receive Allah's pleasure and the reward of entering paradise through the performance of respecting the Lord and loving others. In fact, this is the psychological bedrock on which the entire Islamic doctrine system can be solidly and steadily established. Therefore, the Qur'an clearly commands: "If one amongst the polytheists ask thee for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of Allah; and then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men without knowledge." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Tawbah [9]: 6) It is worthy to note that Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (the famous commentator and interpreter of the Qur'an) believes in his classic annotation of the Qur'an: "The essential significance of this verse is that anyone who seeks protection from enemy forces from Muslims should have their personal and property safety fully protected by Muslims, and they should also be escorted into places where they feel safe and reliable."²⁹

²⁸ 'Abd al-Rahim, "The Islamic Tradition," 52-53.

²⁹ Fakhr al-Din Muhammad bin 'Umar bin al-Husayn al-Razi, *al-Tafsir al-Kabir (Mafatih al-Ghayb)* vol. 15 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1401H/1981), 235-237; 'Abd al-Rahim, "al-Islam wa Qadhaya al-Luju' wa al-Laj'in," in *al-Islam wa Qadhaya al-'Asr al-Ijtima'iyyah*

Even in a state of self-defense and retaliatory war, the Shariah stipulates that Muslims must abide by clear rules and uphold certain rights of the enemy, and must not arbitrarily destroy the lives and properties of others. According to an authoritative Hadith has been reported that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said to Muslim soldiers: "Do not embezzle the spoils; do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (the dead) bodies; do not kill the children. When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action....³⁰" In another Hadith, which is reported that: "Whenever the Apostle of God [PBUH] sent forth an army or a detachment, he charged its commander personally to fear God, the Most High, and he enjoined the Muslims who were with him to do good [i.e., to conduct themselves properly]... Do not cheat or commit treachery nor should you mutilate any one or kill children.³¹"

Thus, the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), especially the first Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq and the second Caliph, 'Umar bin al-Khattab (May Allah's pleasure on them), who had followed the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a model and issued orders against the commanders and soldiers fighting against the enemies³². For instance, Abu Bakr gave to his army while sending it on the expedition to the Syrian borders is permeated with the noble spirit with which the war in Islam is permitted. He said: "Stop, O people, that I may give you

(Amman: Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Studies, 1997), 292-308.

³⁰ Muslim, Abu al-Husayn bin al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, 2nd ed. (Damascus and Beirut: Risalah Publishers, 1436H/2015), hadith no. 4522, 739-740.

³¹ Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad bin al-Hasan bin Farqad al-Shaybani, *Kitab al-Siyar (The Islamic Law of Nations)*, trans., Majid Khadduri (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 75-76.

³² Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Shihab al-Din Abu 'Umar Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Andalusi, *al-'Iqd al-Farid*, ed. Mufid Muhammad Qumayyah vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1404H/1983), 115-116.

ten rules for your guidance in the battlefield. Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies. Neither kill a child, nor a woman, nor an aged man. Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are fruitful. Slay not ray of the enemy's flock. save for your food. You are likely to pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services; leave them alone.³³

Similarly, Islam also grants prisoners of war the rights they should have, so the Shariah prohibits the killing or torture of prisoners of war, physical and mental torture, or insult and harm to their dignity and personality. At the same time, the Shariah requires Muslims to treat prisoners of war well and ensure their personal and property safety until the hostile conflict is finally resolved. In this regard, while instructing Muslims to bravely stand up and fight against injustice or enemy aggression to the greatest extent possible, the Qur'an also demands Muslims that: "But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah, for He is the one that heareth and knoweth (all things)." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Anfal [8]: 61)³⁴.

Therefore, Islam orders Muslims to choose peace without hesitation when the enemy express the desire to establish peace, even if they risk being deceived by the enemy. As for the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims outside the jurisdiction of the Islamic regime, the Qur'an states that peaceful and friendly relations should be maintained with non-Muslims. However, except for those who invade or persecute Muslims, thus the Qur'an requires

³³ Al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Yazid bin Kathir bin Ghalib al-Amuli, *Tarikh al-Tabari (Tarikh al-Rusul wal-Muluk)*, vol. 3, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1387H/1967), 226-227; Muhammad Rida, *Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Awwal al-Khulafa' al-Rashidin* 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1369H / 1950), 38.

³⁴ See also Ayatullah al-Shaykh 'Ali al-Ahmadi, *al-Asir fi al-Islam* (Qum, Iran: Mu'ssasah al-Nashr al-Islami, 1991), 210ff.

Muslims that: "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors." (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 190) It is worth noting that this verse proves that even in a state of war, Islam continues to emphasize humanitarianism.

Accordingly, John Locke (1632-1703), one of the chief designers of modern Western liberal thought, a great British philosopher and political theorist, and a Christian of the Orthodox Church, often encouraged his fellow countrymen and followers to appreciate and emulate the tolerant attitude of Muslims towards Christians and Jews, allowing all denominations to freely worship in the way they deemed appropriate³⁵. Not only that, John Locke also pointed out the absurdity of Calvinists and Armenians, such as being able to freely pursue their religious beliefs in Constantinople under Muslim rule, but not in Europe under Christian rule?! He seriously warned Christian authorities in his classic work *Letter Concerning Toleration*, which he completed in 1689 that: "the Turks [would] meanwhile silently stand by and laugh to see with what inhuman cruelty Christians thus rage against Christians."³⁶

Again, it is worth noting that among the major Western thinkers, John Locke was not only aware of the many fundamental principles that have long been established in Islamic tradition, as well as the vast carrier of philosophy and social thought practice with infinite charm and educational significance - the Shariah. In this regard, the renowned jurist, Count Leon Ostrolog (1867-1932) emphasized in three lectures held at the University of London in the latter half of 1927:

"Considered from the point of view of its structure, the system is one of rare perfection, and to this day it commands the admiration of

³⁵ Nabil Matar, "John Locke and the 'Turbanned Nations'," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2(1) (1991), 72.

³⁶ Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 25.

the student.... If the contents of that logical fabric are examined, some theories command not only admiration but surprise. Those Eastern thinkers of IXth century laid down, on the basis of their theology, the principles of the Rights of Man, in those very terms, comprehending the rights of individual liberty, and of inviolability of person and property; described the supreme power in Islam, or Caliphate, as based on a contract, implying conditions under the contract were not fulfilled; elaborated a Law of War of which the humane, chivalrous prescriptions would have put to the blush certain belligerents in the Great War; expounded a doctrine of toleration of non-Muslim creeds so liberal that our West had to wait a thousand years before seeing equivalent principles adopted.³⁷

In addition, the outstanding contemporary Sri Lankan jurist and the former Vice President of the International Court of Justice, Christopher Gregory Weeramantry, also pointed out that there is an important factual evidence that can associate us with many other famous figures, such as Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274), Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), and Charlie Louis Montesquieu (1689-1755), and great thinkers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) have benefited from the academic and practical achievements of Muslim sages in various forms. However, due to various reasons, the overall truth of this fact is still in a state of being ignored, so for many modern people, of course, it is also unknown.³⁸

³⁷ Ostorrog, Leon LLD, *The Angora Reform* (London: University of London Press, 1927), 30.

³⁸ Christopher Gregory Weeramantry, *Islamic Jurisprudence: An International Perspective* (New York: Macmillan, London: St. Martin's Press, 1988, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: The Other Press, 2001), 94ff.

As it is well known, from the 7th century to the 13th or 14th century AD, Islam went from its early stages of development to prosperity in various fields. Against the backdrop of this golden age, in terms of the prominent Islamic social-pluralistic governance system, the diversity of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, a worldview and outlook on life with universal values, and the encouragement of open dialogue with other ancient and modern religious beliefs and civilizations. As a result, Islamic civilization has creatively made tremendous and indelible contributions to humanity in an extremely wide range of humanities and applied sciences, which includes various fields such as philosophical thoughts, scientific research, engineering technology, economic system, legal system, and a comfortable and happy life, etc.³⁹ The Islamic civilization can be said to have contributed immensely! However, after this, the Islamic classical civilization and all its brilliant and colorful achievements began to decline and gradually lost their former charm, to the point where they not only lost their ability to protect themselves, but also completely lost their immunity to the human civilization advocated by the increasingly powerful European countries, their aggressors, and colonialists after the Renaissance. It is thought-provoking that the latter has worked hard to learn and benefited from the former⁴⁰ !

In fact, after the rise of Islam in the seventh century, the decline of its diverse social system can be largely attributed to the introduction of Western political and religious separation ideas in the terms of secularism by the Muslim world during the long and catastrophic process of

³⁹ Weeramantry, *Islamic Jurisprudence*, 94ff.

⁴⁰ W. M. Watt & Pierre Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), 5ff; Aziz Ahmad, *A History of Islamic Sicily* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975), 3ff.

colonialism⁴¹. Since the 16th and 17th centuries, this factor has led to various Western forces occupying and conquering the entire Muslim world through military force. In the deteriorating situation, traditional higher education institutions and academic authority centers in most parts of the Muslim world have been almost completely destroyed, which not only has a serious impact on Muslims, but also causes irreparable losses to their neighbors.

The Treaty of Carlowitz (1699) signed between the Ottoman Empire and Europe can be said to be the beginning of the decline of the modern Muslim world as a whole. Because since the signing of the treaty, from the early 18th century to the first half of the 20th century, the entire Muslim world has actually been under the rule of one Western colonial power after another. Even in the decades after gaining formal independence, the vast majority of Muslim countries experienced extremely thorough and comprehensive changes in their economic, political, judicial, administrative, educational, and cultural systems and systems influenced by the West.

Moreover, many leaders and powerful individuals in these Muslim countries, like their counterparts in former colonies around the world, still remain in extremely severe psychological slavery and cultural barriers. For them, it is only through the eyes of their own masters - former colonial democrats (and modern neocolonial democrats) - that they can understand the world, including their own selves and cultural traditions; otherwise, they will often feel extremely difficult or even impossible to make any decision for doing anything. In the eyes of these people and many narrow-minded 'mentors' in their 'homeland', any suggestion - such as Confucianism, Islam, India, and other indigenous cultural traditions - is almost self-evident, as if it is absurd

⁴¹ See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1993).

and difficult to believe, or at least far-fetched, unreliable, and wrong, and certainly untenable!?

However, the traditional social-pluralistic system of Islam is completely different from the modern Western system, which can be understood as a result of resistance to the 'old system' of the West. Because the latter gradually evolved from the 18th century Europe (mainly in France and the United States of America) in the context of significant philosophical and political developments. In this regard, the dominant ones were on the one hand the Enlightenment and its core doctrines, and on the other hand the epoch-making French Revolution of 1789.

As is well known, the French Revolution overthrew the 'old system' and its two pillars, namely Church power and monarchy, and established a completely secular and revolutionary republican regime. Indeed, after enduring a long and extremely difficult struggle, the birth of the French Republic holds special and important significance for the French people. Because the French Revolutionary, as well as the Armed Forces were not only used for a long time to confront the monarchical dictatorship with which they held extreme hatred, but more importantly, in opposing the doctrine of the Catholic Church's so-called "Divine Grant of Monarchy" and defending the extremely unpopular monarchy faithfully, the Catholic Church not only played a passionate role, but also suffered extreme hatred due to its own foolish policies, narrow mindedness, and religious fanaticism. In this context, the ideology of the "Revolutionary Republican Regime" was officially passed and recognized by the French National Assembly on August 26, 1789. However, the ideological system of this kind of regime exhibited a radical sign of extreme fanaticism towards secularism that was difficult to eliminate. For those with clear minds, such as Alexis de

Tocqueville (1805-1859), this was clearly a memory of religious fanaticism⁴².

It is worth noting that from former French Presidents, Jacques René Chirac and François Gérard Georges Nicolas Hollande to many ordinary French people, they passionately believe that France has opposed young Muslim women wearing headscarves, simply because they pose a threat to the country. Eventually, France has issued a ban on headscarves and a ban on robes in 2004 and 2010 respectively; to the extent that on March 30, 2016, French Minister of Family, Children, and Women's Rights, Laurence Rossignol, has said in an interview with a French television - BEM that "Of course there are women who choose (to wear the veil). There were African Negroes, American Negroes who were for slavery. I believe that these women, a lot of them, are militants for political Islam, and I confront them as militants..." It seems that the religious enthusiasm used by French is consistent with the secularism defended by France today, at least as intense as the passion of the Alexis de Tocqueville's era⁴³. However, can it be said that extreme secularism itself has actually become a new religion, a religion that opposes the Islamic beliefs which emphasize the plurality, in response to this surprising and even shocking crazy phenomenon?

Conclusion

The pluralistic ideology of Islamic society has always been upheld and supported by Shariah and the Islamic worldview. For example, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 256), as a

⁴² Norberto Bobbio, *The Age of Rights* (Oxford: Polity Press, Cambridge, and Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 87.

⁴³ Eliane Sciolino, "Guarding Secularism Religiously in France," *International Herald Tribune*, February 9, 2004; Melanie Adrian, "La'cit Unveiled: A Case Study in Human Rights, Religion, and Culture in France," *Human Rights Review* 8(1) (2006) 1, 102-114, http://www.guancha.cn/europe/2016_03_31_355688.shtml

principle enshrined in the Qur'an, is not seen and found in the scriptures of other religious beliefs. Under the legal system based on Shariah, non-Muslims living in Islamic society are fully protected in terms of their right to survival and other basic rights. Because safeguarding the rights of non-Muslims is a commendable act, all devout and pious Muslims, both individually and collectively, will seek the pleasure of Allah and aspire to receive rewards in this world as well as the day hereafter.

On the other hand, any act that violates or damages the above-mentioned rights is considered as a sin. Criminals are not only responsible for their actions on the Day of Judgment, but they will also be punished accordingly for the crimes conducted by people in this world. Accordingly, compared to the situation of Jews and Muslim minorities in Western society, researchers will find that non-Muslims groups living in Islamic society, even during the most difficult times in history, are not only able to survive freely, but also can participate in politics, especially economic, social, and cultural life, and contribute to it frequently in the Islamic society they live in. Until the modern times, this unique inclusive policy deeply moved John Locke, Leon Ostrolog, and many people before and after them. Therefore, it should be concluded that the more pluralistic a society is, the more prosperous it is; meanwhile, we as human-beings also should consider incorporating religious values into the elements of social diversity in any country.

In fact, the Islamic countries, since the first Islamic State established by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH, 622-632), maintained by the Rashidun (i.e. Orthodox or Legitimate) Caliphates' Period (632-660), continued by the Umayyad (661-750), the Abbasid (750-1258), the Ottoman Empire (1250 or 1290-1922), even the Muslim Nation-States after gaining independence from the colonial domination up to now, the ideology that has driven the social-pluralistic governance system to continue for more

than one thousand and four hundred years, and so far, as the author believes that Muslim countries are the best in the world for practicing plurality from the history up to now.

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