

**Kyoto Joint Symposium of
CISMOR and KIRKHS**

**“Salvation and Pluralism
in Monotheistic Religions”**

May 12, 2007

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Introduction

This report is a record of the Joint Symposium entitled “Salvation and Pluralism in Monotheistic Religions,” which was convened on May 12, 2007 by the Doshisha University Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions, and the International Islamic University Malaysia Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences.

The Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS) at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and the School of Theology, Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR) at Doshisha University entered an agreement in August 2005 regarding academic interactions between the two institutions. The first Joint Symposium between KIRKHS and CISMOR, entitled “Salvation and Messianic Movements in Monotheistic Religions: Contemporary Implications,” was held in Kuala Lumpur in March 2006. Representatives of both institutions are extremely pleased that the second Joint Symposium was held successfully in Kyoto.

Student training programs were also conducted at both institutions as part of academic interactions. Students from IIUM visited Doshisha University in November 2005 as students from both institutions participated in the “Students’ Exchange Program for Promoting Mutual Understanding Between Malaysia and Japan: Training for Exposure to Japanese Culture.” Every year since 2004, a **Summer Training Program in Malaysia** has been held at KIRKHS for Doshisha students.

We look forward to seeing even more activities involving mutual participation by the staff and students of both of these institutions in the future.

January 2008

Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions,
Doshisha University

Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences,
International Islamic University Malaysia

“Salvation and Pluralism in Monotheistic Religions”

Location: Conference room, fifth floor, Neiseikan, Doshisha University

Program

May 12, 2007

10:00-10:10

Opening Address

Hassan Ko Nakata (Deputy Director of CISMOR, Doshisha University)

10:10-12:25

1st Session

Chair: Hassan Ko Nakata

Presentations:

Hazizan Md. Noon (Dean of Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia)

“The Nucleus of Islamic Religion and its Bearing Upon the Islamic Concept of Salvation and the Practice of Multiculturalism in Contemporary Malaysia”

Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (Deputy Dean of Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia)

“Uniculturalism, Multiculturalism and Islamic Thought in the Pre-modern Era: The Cases of Shaykh Muhammad ‘Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab and Shah Wali Allah”

Ibrahimi Mohamed Zein (Deputy Dean of Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia)

“Pluralism, Unity, and the Ethics of Disagreement in Islam”

Commentators/Respondents:

Haruo Kobayashi (Tokyo Gakuji University)

Yoshitsugu Sawai (Tenri University)

Koichi Mori (Director of CISMOR, Doshisha University)

Discussion

12:25-14:15

Lunch and Salat

14:15-16:30

2nd Session

Chair: Hassan Ko Nakata

Presentations:

Michio Tokunaga (Professor Emeritus, Kyoto Women's University)

“The Concepts of ‘Salvation’ and ‘Emancipation’ in Pure Land Mahāyāna”

Isaiah Teshima (The School of Theology, Doshisha University)

“In Quest of Repentance: An Overview of Judaism and Its Basic Idea of Salvation”

Katsuhiko Kohara (Deputy Director of CISMOR, Doshisha University)

“A Critique of the Pluralist Model: ‘Exclusivism’ and ‘Inclusivism’ Revisited”

Commentators/Respondents:

Hazizan Md. Noon (International Islamic University Malaysia)

Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (International Islamic University Malaysia)

Ibrahim Mohamed Zein (International Islamic University Malaysia)

Discussion

16:30-17:00

Tea and Refreshments

17:00-18:00

3rd Session

Chair: Hassan Ko Nakata

General Discussion

18:00-18:10

Closing Address

Koichi Mori (Director of CISMOR, Doshisha University)

18:30-20:00

Reception Kyoto Garden Palace

Presenter Profiles

Hazizan Md. Noon

Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Kulliyah (Faculty) of Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Human Sciences (KIRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), and the Dean of this Faculty since 2005. He obtained his PhD in Social Change and Development from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland in 1996. He is also editor-in-chief of *Intellectual Discourse*, *Islam in Asia* and the *Kulliyah Research Bulletin*, the academic journals of the KIRKHS, as well as a contributing member of the *Journal of Muslim Unity*, an academic journal of the Institute of Muslim Unity, IIUM. His areas of interest include social change and development, social, cultural and civilizational issues, integrated theory of knowledge, modern, Islamic and comparative sociology, and Islamic religion and religiosity. One of his recent articles is “Developing An Islamic Framework for Empirical Research,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 19, No. 3 2002, co-authored by Md. Aslam Haneef, Selamah Yusof Abdullah, and Ruzita Mohd Amin.

Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim

Director, International Institute for Muslim Unity (IIMU) of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). He earned his Ph.D. in history from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, in 1970 and has since been heavily engaged in the academic world. He was the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum, Sudan from 1984 to 1990 and was founding Principal, Sudan University College for Women in 1990-1993. He has worked with universities in Africa, the Middle East and the U.S.A., and since 1994 has been Professor of history at IIUM, where he has held the positions of Head of the Department of History and Civilization and Deputy Dean, Postgraduate. He has been a visiting professor and a guest speaker at many academic and public institutions worldwide. His research interests include history and politics of the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as Islamic Tajdid (revivalism). He has published several books and many referred articles and chapters in English and Arabic. His latest major work is “Sayyid ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi: A Study of Neo-Mahdism in the Sudan, 1899-1956,” Brill, 2004.

Ibrahim Mohamed Zein

Professor, Kulliyah (Faculty) of Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Human Sciences (KIRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). He obtained his Ph.D. in Religion from Temple University in 1989 and was assistant professor at the University of Khartoum in Sudan from 1989 to 1993; he has been working for International Islamic University Malaysia since 1993. He was invited to the first International Workshop of CISMOR, entitled “War and Violence in Religion: Responses from the Monotheistic World” in 2004, and served as a commentator in one session of that conference. Some of his recent articles are: Naḥaráyāt al-Dawlah fā al-Islām: Al-Māwardá wa Thunā’áyāt al-Faqih wa al-Mutakallim. *The Journal of Human Sciences, University of Bahrain*, (Issue 6, Summer 2003); and Al-’Istiqrā’ wa Manhaj al-Naḥar fā Mudawwanātinā al-Uāāliyyah. *Islāmáyat al-Ma’rifah* (vol. 8, no. 30, Autumn 2003).

Michio Tokunaga

Professor Emeritus, Kyoto Women’s University. In 1985, 1989, 1990, and 1992 he was invited as a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University. As a visiting professor at the Harvard Divinity School in 1986, he lectured on Shinran’s thought. During his stay at Harvard, he translated Professor Gordon D. Kaufman’s *An Essay on Theological Method* along with his article “God and Emptiness” into Japanese and published it in 1994. His main area of study is the Pure Land tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, especially the Jodo Shinshu of Shinran, usually known as Shin Buddhism. The central concept of Shinran’s Pure Land thought is *shinjin*, which is often translated as “faith.” But the essence of *shinjin* cannot be transmitted correctly through the idea of “faith” in its sense within the Judeo-Christian tradition. For one thing, Shinran reveals that *shinjin* is no other than the working of the compassion of Amida Buddha, the major figure of Pure Land Buddhism, and for another, it expresses the total negation of self-assertion on the part of the believer. In other words, Shinran’s *shinjin* represents the concept of “non-self,” the realization of which is the final goal of the Mahayana Buddhist path.

Isaiah (Izaya) Teshima

Jewish Studies and Biblical Studies B. A. in Bible and Jewish Thought from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Ph. D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University. He is Professor of Biblical Studies and Jewish Thought in the School of Theology, Doshisha University, and an associate member of the Science Council of Japan in the field of philosophy. He studied the subjects of Biblical Interpretation and Jewish Thought under P. Peli, J. Dan, M. Weinfeld, and S. Japhet in Jerusalem, and under J. Kugel and I. Twersky at Harvard. Since

completing his Ph.D. thesis, “The Order of Things: Contradictions in Narrative Order in Ancient Biblical Interpretation” (1997), the history of biblical interpretation in Judaism has been his major field. In recent years his research interests extended to the Qumran treatments of Scripture, the philological aspects of Rabbinic Midrash, and medieval Jewish exegesis in the context of Spinoza’s philosophy, including medieval Hebrew grammarian theories and 19th-century Christian biblical criticism from the perspective of Jewish studies.

Katsuhiko Kohara

Currently, Professor of Systematic Theology in the School of Theology, Doshisha University as well as Deputy Director, Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR). He is also Secretary-general, Kyoto Graduate Union of Religious Studies (K-GURS). An ordained pastor of the United Church of Christ in Japan, he earned a Th.D. from Doshisha Graduate School of Theology. His area of specialization is systematic theology and comparative religious ethics, and he has been interested in the relationship between the monotheistic religions and the Japanese/Asian religions, focusing on contemporary issues such as environmental problems and religious conflicts. He has written numerous books and articles including “Discourses and Realpolitik on Monotheism and Polytheism” (*Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions* 2, 2004) and “Hiroshima and the Pacifism/ Just War Debate” (*Interface: A Forum for Theology in the World*, Vol.6, No. 2, 2003).

Kyoto Joint Symposium of
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"Salvation and Pluralism in Monotheistic Religions"

Session 1

The Nucleus of Islamic Religion and Its Bearing Upon the Islamic Concept of Salvation and the Practice of Multiculturalism in Contemporary Malaysia¹

International Islamic University Malaysia Hazizan Md. Noon²

I. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the core constituent of Islamic religion as the first level or principle of the religion and its role in defining or influencing the other layers or dimensions of Islamic religiosity, including its worldview. The phrase “core constituent” here refers to the well-known Islamic doctrine of *al-tawhid*, herein dubbed the *nucleus* of the religion for reasons that will become apparent as the discussion progresses. Specifically, the paper discusses the concept of salvation from a *tawhidic* perspective. This is done to demonstrate the centrality of this Divine doctrine in Muslim epistemology and life. Anyone familiar with Islamic studies will find this exercise to be quite customary, as *al-tawhid* in Islamic epistemology is the root and ultimate reference of everything. In this sense, all other corresponding phrases commonly used in the literature, such as religious perspective, Islamic perspective, and Qur’ānic perspective, are in essence tawhidic in nature. This conceptual discussion will then be related to a brief analysis of the latest issue in the Malaysian development strategy, which is generally referred to as the government’s *Islam Hadhari* approach. This way of approaching the topic hopes to serve two purposes: 1) to demonstrate an integrated Islamic approach to the study of religion and society/culture, and 2) to provide an overview of the influence of Islam in contemporary Malaysian society. Thus, the specific objectives of the paper can be summarized as follows:

- To demonstrate in general the central role of *al-tawhid* in Islam and its manifestations in Muslim society
- To discuss the concept of salvation from an Islamic tawhidic perspective, and
- To provide insights on the latest development strategy in contemporary multi-cultural Malaysian society in light of the Islamic concept of salvation

To achieve these objectives, the paper will first formulate an Islamic “theory” of salvation based on Islamic epistemological principles followed by a discussion of Malaysia’s development strategy under the present administration, with particular emphasis on the *Islam Hadhari* approach.³ It is expected that at the end of the paper the reader will be able to understand the defining role of *al-tawhid* as the core constituent of Islamic religion, obtain an understanding of the concept of salvation and multiculturalism in Islam, and gain some insights on Malaysia’s *Islam Hadhari* approach to development.

II. Background and Context

Religion in general is associated with goodness, harmony, peace and piety. Throughout history, it seems however to have been portraying multiple images—good as well as awful ones. Several factors, internal and external, have contributed to this state of affairs; significant among them are the behavior and acts of adherents, which in turn reflect their way of thinking and of looking at things. Other manifestations include the emergence and prevalence of religious groups/movements with their own “religious ideologies” and “approaches.” This is due mainly to the fact that the religion of a person may be one but its interpretations are many—and this applies to all religions, possibly constituting a source of rivalry or even animosity among them and/or with others in society.

As such, one of the challenges confronting defenders of religion always has to do with demonstrating the unity and coherence of religion despite this diversity (*al-kathrah fi al-wahdah*). This is necessary because of the commonly proclaimed argument that the diversity is basically external (especially social and cultural) in nature whereas the essence and fundamental principles of religion are unchanged. These “external diversities” are considered *natural* given human nature itself, whose response to the surroundings creates new social and cultural phenomena. Of course, the demonstration is not expected to be merely by means of slogans or rhetoric as these do little to convince people of the truth of religion’s internal unity; instead, it should be more in the form of actual practices, especially at a societal level. In this context it is pertinent to understand the functions and initiatives of government and religious institutions, as they reflect to a larger extent the religious penetration into social life. Here is where our discussion finds its context—whereby our specific focus will be on both the Islamic concept of salvation and an analysis of contemporary multicultural Malaysian society in light of the former, with special emphasis on the *Islam Hadhari* approach. At this stage, it is necessary to provide a brief review of the nature of Islam as a way of life in order to appreciate its functions beyond individual and ceremonial expectations. Thus, the following part of the discussion will be dealing with the Islamic concept of religion and its implications for the way ideas, such as the “idea” of salvation, are conceptualized.

III. Islamic Concept of Religion: A Brief Review

In contrast to the dualistic secular perspective, the Islamic concept of religion is based on a purely monotheistic and integrative perspective which can only be justly represented by the Qur’anic term *al-tawhid*. This term, which has been literally and variously translated as oneness, unity, union, uniqueness, unification and the like, has very unique religious significations cover-

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ing various levels of unity and their implications. Nonetheless, all of them ultimately find their reference in the Divine unity or unity of God, which means that there is only One God and this God is Allah, and that Allah is the Only One who possesses all the perfect attributes and therefore deserves total worship from His creatures. Muslim scholars used to describe this kind of Divine unity collectively as *al-tawhid al-rubbubiyah*, *al-tawhid al-uluhiyyah* and *al-tawhid al-sifat wa al-asma'*. The author considers this level of *al-tawhid* as the “nucleus of Islamic religion” simply because the English term “nucleus” has a host of substantive meanings such as center, basis, heart, and focus which, collectively, can be quite representative of the spirit of *al-tawhid* in the Arabic. Thus, this level of *al-tawhid* as the nucleus of Islam can be understood as “the core of Islamic unity,” that is, the reference point for all other levels of unity. These other levels or types of Islamic unity include unity of creation (all existing realities, seen or unseen, other than Allah share the same status as God’s creatures), unity of humanity (in addition to being God’s creature, all humans are of the same parenthood, i.e. of Adam, and have the same human dignity and therefore deserve their “human” rights), and unity of faith/belief (among humans, Muslims form a community of single religious faith).

Since the essence of Islam is *al-tawhid* in the sense of oneness or unity and the profoundest level of unity is unity of God, Islam does not recognize metaphysical disintegration of things as may be expressed in such conceptual pairs as the sacred and the mundane, state and religion, this world and the other world, etcetera. In fact, all of these and other seemingly disjointed concepts, when viewed from an Islamic integrated perspective, present a unified and harmonized outlook as, in the final analysis, they serve directly or indirectly to fulfill a single Divine purpose—that is, the purpose of the first level of *al-tawhid*. This is why “this world,” for instance, is described as “a cultivating ground” of the other world (hereafter) in the sense that the results of our cultivation in this world (belief and works) will be truly tasted in the later permanent life (*al-akhirah*). In short, the former has direct bearing upon the latter.

Because of the uncompromising nature of Islamic monotheism, the natural contrast to *al-tawhid* is understandably *al-shirk*, or “association” in whatever form. Perhaps the single most powerful Divine indication on this point is evident in the *Surah al-Ikhlās* of the Holy Qur’ān and, in practice, it may find the best reflection in the standard phrase continuously uttered by Muslims to confirm and reinforce this commitment in their daily lives: this is none other than the *shahadah* itself—the pronouncement that “there is no god but Allah.”

In a nutshell, the nature of Islamic religion can be broadly summarized in the following (partial) group of terms:

- Divine (*rabbani*)
- tawhidic (*tawhidi*)
- comprehensive – a way of life (*shamil*)
- balanced (*tawazun*)
- realistic (*waqi'i*)
- humane (*insani*)
- permanent (*abadi*)

It is thus understandable that Muslims are expected to reflect the comprehensiveness of their religion in their individual and social lives. In short, Islamic religiosity is multidimensional in nature. In this context, Glock's dimensions of religiosity seem to be quite useful in explaining the notion of Islamic religiosity, as it goes beyond one-dimensional measures of religiousness commonly used in modern scholarship. Using this scale, one's religiousness may be measured in a number of terms such as belief in theological tenets, knowledge, spiritual experience, performance of religious rituals and behavior. Respectively, the following terms have been employed in reference to Glock's scale: ideological (faith, belief, doctrinal), intellectual (knowledge, thinking), experiential (spiritual, emotional), ritualistic (worship, rituals, ceremony), consequential (social and behavioral). In a similar way, Ilyas uses the Islamic terms *iman*, *ma'rifah*, *tazkiyah*, *'ibadah* and *akhlaq* to describe Islamic religiosity, or *taqwa*.

The above discussion also implies that Islamic epistemology recognizes both Divine and human sources of knowledge. In particular, the Divine source (or precisely, revelation) is meant especially for answering questions beyond the grasp of human capacities, whether rational, intuitive or experiential. It is particularly crucial for satisfying human curiosity about theological, normative, metaphysical, eschatological, cosmological, epistemological and other "philosophical" questions. Muhammad Abdul Rauf identifies five main domains where the role of revelation is of particular importance, namely *Ilahiyyat*, *ghaybiyyat*, *'ibadat*, *tashri'at* and *akhlaqiyyat*. Divine teachings related to these and other areas were brought to the knowledge of man through His messenger, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet's verbal, behavioral, practical and convictional demonstrations of Divine teachings during his lifetime collectively form *al-Sunnah*, or the second source of reference in Islam.

Beyond this, it takes the effort of man, assisted by his mind, intuition, senses and experience, to develop and improve knowledge guided by the Divine source and principles for the goodness of his life in this world as well as the hereafter (*hasanah fi al-dunya wa fi al-akhirah*). In short, for Muslims the sources of knowledge cover God's words (*al-Qur'an*), the Prophet's Sunnah, and human efforts (intellectual, intuitive, experiential, etc.). The latter may be in the

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form of *ijtihad* (exercise of maximum human intellectual capacity in light of Qur'ān and Sunnah in order to reach answers closest to the Divine intention, and which may be in the form of *qiyas*, *ijma'*, *maslahah* and *'urf*); objective and other sciences (natural, social, etc.); rational, logical and speculative thought (philosophy and logic), and other 'human-based' sources. What is most important in Islamic epistemology and system is the end result, that is, the protection and improvement of major human interests known as *maqasid al-shari'ah* which refers in part to the protection and improvement of the following: religion (*al-din*), mind (*'aql*), soul/self (*nafs*), lineage (*nasab*), and wealth/property (*mal/amwal*).

IV. Islamic Perspective on Salvation

Earlier, it was indicated that the first level Tawhid (Divine unity) dictates and influences Muslims in their understanding and practice of religion. In summary, *al-tawhid* defines the beginning (intention and starting), the middle (means, mode, medium, pathway, method and mechanism) and the end (ultimate goal, destiny, destination, purpose and final destination) of Muslims' thought and life. In this section, it is exemplified by the conceptualization of "salvation" from an Islamic or tawhidic perspective, whose main reference is revelation. The term "revelation" is used here to refer to the Divine words and messages derived either from *al-Qur'ān* or *al-Sunnah*.

"Salvation": A Preliminary Note

"Salvation" is an English word widely used with strong religious overtones, particularly in Judeo-Christian tradition.⁴ Even within Christianity, "there are many different understandings of what salvation is and how it can be achieved."⁵ To some, salvation in its contemporary form and presentation is "essentially a secular concept" and is therefore highly Western in nature. Due to the predominantly Western, Judeo-Christian and secular character of the contemporary "salvation" concept, it may not be fair for the author to attempt to locate a "term" in other traditions or religions—especially Islam—thought to be its "exact equivalent," and then to try to discuss it as if this other term is wholly representative of the constituent elements, notions, and spirit of the original term (i.e., Western Judeo-Christian/secular "salvation").

While some Muslims may, in the first place, even object to the employment of the term "salvation" and its being thematized from an Islamic perspective for the reason given above, the author is of the opinion that some topics often touched upon in discussions about this concept, when properly handled from the Islamic perspective, would eventually be able to provide an overall Islamic explanation of the issues concerned. Whether the collective understanding of those issues from an Islamic perspective truly represents the "Islamic notion" of salvation or not

is, to the author, merely academic. What is important is that some elements in the deliberations on “salvation” are addressed and explained using Islamic sources and terms, an Islamic approach and perspective guided by Divine revelation. It is in this spirit that the present paper is written.

Issues Related to “Salvation”

What are the main concerns and issues in the typical discussion of salvation? In order to attempt an answer to this question, it is helpful to look at some quotations and definitions and to try to highlight some issues derived from them directly or indirectly. The reader is reminded that these quotations are not exhaustive and their selection is arbitrary, based on mere convenience. Therefore, the inferences are bound to have some limitations.

Sick people need salvation. Drowning people need salvation. Besieged people need salvation.⁶

We conceive of the prevailing state of the individual adult human as being lost to his creator through the darkness of ignorance, the bondage of sin and the futility of life in the flesh and we ask “How can I be saved from this?” “How can I receive the gift of eternal life and be delivered into the eternal glory of God?” ...That is the salvation of which we speak.⁷

The problem with being saved by God’s grace and human works is that human works are never sufficient to please God. God is infinite and holy. How can we finite sinners ever hope to please God by our deeds?

In addition, salvation is defined as “the act of saving,” “the state of having been saved, from sin and its consequences.”⁸ Among a host of thesaurus terms for “salvation” are *deliverance*, *rescue*, *recovery* and *escape*.⁹ Going by formal definition, salvation may be basically defined as “...to be saved from the suffering of this life, and ultimately, from death itself. (And) the way to salvation is to live according to the laws of God.”¹⁰ In the Arabic language, the term *inqadh* is also relevant.

From the above limited quotations and definitions, it may be inferred that, in essence, the basic idea of salvation has something to do with a number of concerns which can be identified by the following expressions (among others):

- “being saved/salvaged” from physical and non-physical danger (broader connotation)
- “being saved” from God’s disapproval, anger and punishment due to sins committed by man
- the most appropriate way to achieve success in this world and in the hereafter
- man’s fate based on his performance during his worldly life
- Divine blessings, grace, consent and approval, and man’s acts and works

Thus, among the possible questions that can be asked in discussing the issue of “salvation” are these:

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- Can one know whether his deeds and life activities are Divinely-approved or not, and consequently, know his “fate” in this world and in the hereafter?
- Can man know whether he has complied with God’s expectations to qualify him to be successful in this world and in the hereafter?
- Can man know whether he is “escaped” from God’s punishment for doing evils (sins) or given Divine rewards for doing good?
- What are the implications of such a belief and/or human “assumption” for one’s thinking and one’s individual and social life?

Islamic Teachings on “Salvation”

In light of the above, we can say that the “Islamic perspective” on salvation can be formulated by addressing the aforementioned issues and questions directly or indirectly, using Islamic sources.¹¹ In this paper, our discussion primarily touches the following concerns, which in general relate only to two main sides:¹²

Divine Side

- i. God’s power, knowledge, will and rights
- ii. Divine guidance for man
- iii. God’s expectation of man’s worldly life

Human Side

- i. man’s status, ability and freedom
- ii. man’s accountability for his deeds
- iii. human deficiencies and ways to compensate for them
- iv. man’s successful life in this world and in the hereafter

Summarized Islamic Views on Selected Issues Relating to “Salvation”

Islam teaches that God exists and there is only one true God (Q14:52). God is Allah (Q112:1), the One Who Creates (*khaliq*; Q6:102) and causes all “non-god realities” (*makhluq*) including men to exist (Q16:40, 21:33, 28:68, 6:102). Nothing, seen or unseen, can exist without Allah creating it. Of all creatures, man is created by Allah in the best form (*ahsan al-taqwim*; Q95:4). This is understandable as man is expected to shoulder a special trust (*amanah*) that other creatures, including mountains, are not capable of shouldering (Q33:72).

Thus, man is equipped with necessary features, skills, abilities and strengths—physical, mental and intellectual—to enable him to perform his duties as a servant of Allah (*‘abd*; Q51:56) and, at the same time, to act as His vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth (Q2:30). It is this “master status,” to borrow the sociologist’s term, assigned to man by God that qualifies him to be socially

functional in a certain religious manner and, at the same time, accountable for what he does. To further facilitate man in carrying out his duties, Allah has made all other beings/creatures subservient (*taskhir*) to him (Q40:64, 40:79) such that man can utilize them in a legitimate (*shar'i*) way in the course of discharging these duties. In this sense, *development* both as a condition of progress and a process of creatively manipulating God's human and natural resources to ease man in the performance of his broadest religious duties is naturally inevitable.

Two important points deserve to be mentioned with regard to man's roles in society. First, freedom is purposely given by God to man to enable him to make choices in his life based on his sound thinking and spiritual capacities. Secondly, Divine guidance that teaches man what is right and wrong, good and bad, proper and improper is also made available by God for the same purpose (Q6:153).

When all of these necessary *abilities, capacities and facilities* are sufficiently provided by God to enable man to function as servant and vicegerent, it is only logical for God to expect man to be accountable (*mas'ul*) for what he does on earth as he goes about his personal and social life. Thus, any conscious, committed and serious Muslim should naturally try his best to ensure that each and everything he does will comply with God's expectations, teachings and rules as enshrined in revelation (Q21:108). In line with God's promise, Muslims must believe that they will be salvaged by God if everything is adequately performed to the best of their knowledge and ability. Allah does not burden man unnecessarily beyond his human capacity (Q23:62, 6:152), so that once done in such a manner the rest should be left to God to determine, with the conviction that God's justice is beyond what man can conceive. Allah will never ever be unjust (*zalim*) to His creatures in the minutest possible degree imaginable by man. Thus, the proper question that each man has to ask is whether he has, from the very beginning, a sincere intention in doing something and/or is really serious and committed when doing it.

To the present author, it is in this way that the concept of "being salvaged and being successful" in Islam should be seen. There is no way for man to know *absolutely* about his fate in the hereafter as this is entirely God's decision based on His Absolute Divine justice (Q18:45). As such, any speculation about man's *actual* fate based on human assumptions would be unnecessary, to say the least. In short, there is no need for man to speculate about his "fate" if he really has full confidence in God's justice and has submitted his life to the will of God fully and devotedly. In fact, God's command that man do good and avoid evils (Q3:110, 3:114) should trigger him to perform excellently in whatever he does. This is the best motivating factor as it pushes man to work hard and right at all times throughout his life in order to obtain the promised success (*al-falah*) in this world as well as in the hereafter. Man's consciousness of God's "presence" dur-

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ing each and every performance of his worldly acts constitutes the Islamic concept of excellence, or *ihsan*. Thus, a more proper question to ask is how one can always be consistent in doing things according to God's teachings.

Despite man's best creation, special status, and specific duties, man is still one of the many non-god creatures. As such, man, like all other creatures, is not perfect. Only Allah is incomparably and absolutely Perfect (*kamil*). Man's deficiencies and imperfection, however, are not the reason for him to not perform his duties as God's servant and vicegerent. His imperfection is only natural because he is not God. Furthermore, satanic persuasions are always there trying to cause man to go astray (Q58:19). But, among the imperfect creatures, man is the least imperfect on various scores. And with mind (*'aql*) man is able to be "above angels"—or worse than animals—depending on the type and quality of his acts and works.

With human deficiencies and man's imperfectness in the face of Divine expectations, there are ways provided by God for man to compensate this imperfectness and make him humanly "perfect." Briefly listed below are among the ways and opportunities taught by revelation on how Allah helps man to "pay off" the mistakes and sins resulting from his imperfections:

- Man can cleanse and refine his "soul" through sincere repentance or *taubah al-nasuha* (Q11:61, 2:222) and continuous remembrance of God (*dhikr*; Q13:28, 3:191)
- God rewards man for his intention to do good deeds (Q23:61) although the act may not take place for some unintentional reasons
- God multiplies rewards for good deeds done by man according to his deserved merits and Divine grace
- God forgives any unintentional act, like oaths uttered without thought (Q2:225, 33:5)
- God suspends any intention of man to do an evil thing until it is committed
- When an evil deed is committed, God does not multiply the punishment for its performance
- God promises special and extraordinary rewards and return for effort or good deeds done during special periods of time, such as during *layl al-qadr* of the fasting month (Ramadan)
- God rewards those who are knowledgeable and consistent in faith (4:162)
- Man's sincere good deeds (*a'mal salihad*) and performances (Q3:114) would compensate the punishments imposed on him for doing evil things
- Man is encouraged to always make *du'a* and ask Allah to guide and help him in his life (Q2:186, 7:179)
- During the Day of judgment, when every human effort is futile, Prophetic *shafa'ah* will always be there to assist man in the fairest manner
- God will never let man's good deeds go to waste (47:35)
- Finally and most importantly, Allah's infinite grace, blessings and mercies determine the "fates" of men, which are endowed by His absolute discretion (Q1:3, 2:225, 17:1, 2:163, 28:68)

For an illustration, we take the example of man's *repentance* for the mistakes, sins or wrongdoings that he might have committed during his lifetime. Muslims are taught that, Being Most-forgiving (Q2:225), Allah will accept whatever sincere and serious repentance (*taubah nasuha*) from man as long as he does not associate Him with others—seen or unseen. With *taubah nasuha*, i.e., by fulfilling necessary conditions for such repentance, man does not have to worry about his fate before God. What man has to do is just to perform what he is expected to do as best as possible and leave everything else to God. With this conviction and belief, he would be able to develop religious confidence and obtain peace of mind and spiritual stability despite continuously changing life conditions and circumstances. All this, to the author, collectively defines the substance and essence of “Islamic salvation.”

Summarized Islamic Teachings on Salvation

- On the one hand, provision of salvation is the absolute power and prerogative of Allah as He is the only One Who can bestow mercy and reward to people, as well as salvage them from punishment, as He wishes.
- Man on the other hand has to live in this world in accordance with the Divine rules and regulations in order to qualify to receive Divine salvation. Generally, man is called upon to do good and avoid evils. Divine salvation upon man takes various forms: during his lifetime and after his death, including his life in the hereafter; direct or indirect; tangible or intangible, and so on.
- The general Islamic principle on salvation teaches that those who perform good will be rewarded and those who do evils will be punished.
- As an imperfect being, man also commits mistakes during his life which include what is prohibited by Allah. But God also provides ways for man to compensate this deficiency, such as through repentance and the performance of good works (*'amal salih*), besides God's absolute prerogative in granting salvation as He likes.
- In short, salvation in Islam involves both Divine absolute power as well as human good works, with the final 'decision' going to the Divine.

V. Practice of Multiculturalism in Contemporary Malaysia: The Role of the *Islam Hadhari* Approach

Malaysia is a multicultural, multi-religious, and multi-racial society with the population of about 26 million. The main ethnic groups in Malaysian society are Malay, Chinese and Indian besides other smaller ethnic groups. Malaysia was colonized by a number powers—Portuguese, Dutch, British and Japanese—for nearly half a millennium (from 1511 to 1957). It is a member of ASEAN and the Commonwealth, OIC, UN and NAM, among others. Prior to the coming of the colonial powers, the country was part of a larger Malay archipelago. After independence in 1957, Malaysia has been governed based on a Federal Constitution which itself has undergone a

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series of amendments and changes. The Constitution defines some crucial aspects for Malaysian society, including the status of Islam as the official religion of the country and freedom of other religions. Another important constitutional element is the *Rukunegara*, which literally means “pillars of the nation” and consists of five main pillars. Other than Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity are also practiced. Atheism and animism are subscribed to mainly by the aborigines. Malaysia practices an open market economy and its political system is based on a constitutional monarchy, whereby the King is the head of the government with the prime minister as the chief of administration. Both federal and state representatives are elected through a general election, held every five years.

With the above brief background of the country one can imagine the unique situation that all Malaysians have to live with. And only with a high level of tolerance, wisdom and understanding is such a society able to succeed. This is especially so when it comes to issues related to religious and ethnic interests. Despite such challenges, Malaysia has been able to beat all the odds so far and thus become relatively successful on various scores.

As mentioned, Islam is the official religion of the country but other religions can be practiced in peace and harmony. This special constitutional status of Islam has given the government rights to carry out “Islamic” programs and activities. Some of the typical “Islamic” programs carried out by the government include: holding Qur’ānic reading competitions (local and international), broadcasting *azan* over television and radio channels, inculcating Islamic values in public administration, constructing mosques, establishing Islamic departments and courts to deal with Shari’ah-related issues, reading *du’a* during official government ceremonies, establishing Islamic institutions like the Islamic University, the Islamic Bank and the Institute for Islamic Understanding, and introducing Islamic transactions and products in the banking sector, among others. When the present prime minister took over the premiership in 2004, among the policies he introduced was an idea that soon became a national agenda—namely, the *Islam Hadhari* approach, here simply referred to as *Islam Hadhari*.

Islam Hadhari can be regarded as another “Islamic initiative” on the part of the government to try to inject or give “religious soul” to the prevailing development process. The ten principles of *Islam Hadhari* are:

- faith in Allah
- just and trustworthy government
- free and independent people
- mastery of knowledge
- balanced and comprehensive economic development

- quality life
- protection of the rights of minority groups and women
- cultural and moral integrity
- safeguarding the environment
- strong defense

From the existing literature on *Islam Hadhari*, one may identify the following as some of its features. *Islam Hadhari*:

- focuses on the broader aspect of life—namely, civilization—which is more comprehensive, all-embracing and overarching
- intends to eventually lead to the construction of a just human civilization for all
- reflects the emphasis on high culture and shared values
- stresses human capital development to produce towering personalities
- aims at improving and sustaining stability, peace and development
- reflects a creative integration of religious values in social life and culture
- is based it on religious faith
- is an approach and strategy, rather than a new teaching
- functions as a comprehensive national framework for development
- is based on the above ten principles

Given the fact that the concept/idea of *Islam Hadhari* is quite new and that the responses seem, as usual, to be both encouraging and critical, the idea, in the author's humble opinion, needs to be allowed to prevail for some reasonable time before anything fair can be said about it. And since it is a long-term agenda, then like any other agenda it can be assumed to undergo some improvement and refinement in terms of conception as well as implementation. As everybody knows, in most cases, the question about new ideas is not so much on what and why but more on how. As such, people's perception of any such new idea will normally be more favorable when the mechanism for and monitoring of the idea are taken care of. After all, critics' views are usually silenced by actual results following from effective and serious implementation of the idea. It is in this context that the government's current rigorous efforts at strategically transforming the idea into specific plans and development programs, within various sectors and levels of the society, seem to have gained a favorable responses.

The *Islam Hadhari* Approach Vis-à-Vis the Spirit of Salvation

No one can be absolutely certain whether his life is blessed or not or whether he is salvaged or not, but one thing a person can be sure of is that good works will be rewarded and evil acts will be punished. This same Divine principle applies to both personal and social lives. As such, one is

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normally motivated to do good and avoid evil in order to gain God's favor. This has direct implications for society as a whole, as the good citizen dare not harm others in whatever way because of his observance of this principle. Similarly, good government will try its best to do good works especially through development programs in order to attain the same result. Thus, good ideas initiated with good intentions, meant for good purposes and implemented in a good way, can be expected to fulfill the requirement for salvation. People can judge merely from the outside. Only God knows the actual. For this reason, appreciation of any good effort initiated especially for the benefit of human beings at large and in the name of broader religious understanding should be a matter of natural conscience. The *Islam Hadhari* approach deserves such appreciation.

Concluding Remarks

Islam agrees with the general contention regarding "salvation" that, "(t)he way to salvation is to live according to the laws of God." However, Islam has its own unique teachings on how to live according to the guidance and laws of Allah. The discussion above has provided, in a very sketchy manner, an Islamic perspective on some issues relating to salvation and its "perceived" implications for development in multicultural Malaysia. Essentially, Islam means *peace*. It also means *submission*. Thus, real peace according to Islam can only be expected when one fully and sincerely submits his life in a positive and active manner to the will of God, i.e. by doing what He commands and avoiding what He prohibits (Q4:125). There is no way for man to know absolutely about his "fate," whether in this world or in the hereafter. But God has provided Divine guidance for man's knowledge and guidelines on the proper way of conducting life. Once all these teachings and Divine expectations are sincerely and devotedly observed, man can expect the *promised successful life* bearing in mind that God is The Most Just, The Most Forgiving, and so on (Q64:16). Repentance, multiple rewards given to man for doing good deeds, and other Divine ways of "saving" man as mentioned above are only some examples and reflections of God's unlimited blessings and mercies upon mankind. Implementing and practicing religion at the social level is much more challenging. In the context of a multicultural and multi-religious society like Malaysia, it demands a lot of wisdom, creativity and good judgment. One practical strategy is through a development process whereby good development results will benefit all regardless of their ethnicity and religious affiliations. The *Islam Hadhari* approach is the latest development strategy along this line, thought to be realistic and practical by the current administration for the multicultural reality of Malaysian society. Its relative success or failure from the human perspective remains to be seen. In the sight of God nobody knows, and therefore nobody can pass any judgment—positive or negative—on behalf of God.

NOTES

- 1 A paper presented at the symposium on “Salvation and Pluralism in Monotheistic Religions” jointly organized by the Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR), Doshisha University, Kyoto Japan, and Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) on 12 May, 2007 at Doshisha University.
- 2 The author is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and Dean of KIRKHS, IIUM.
- 3 It is quite apparent that the word ‘theory’ is used here simply in the sense of ‘concept’
- 4 Diane Dowgiert, “What We Believe About Salvation”, <http://www.fuism.org/srm020922.htm>
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 <http://homecomers.org/weblog/index.php/salvation-is-a-secular-concept/>
- 7 (Part II, “The Salvation of the Penitents’ By Edgar Jones) http://www.carm.org/islam/salvation_by_works.htm
- 8 A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 752
- 9 As derived from Microsoft Word’s ‘synonym and thesaurus’
- 10 If I live a righteous life, God will reward me in this life. And upon death, I will go to Heaven. If I live a sinful life, God will punish me in this life and upon death, I will go to Hell. Heaven is a physical place, somewhere above the clouds. Hell is a physical place, somewhere beneath the earth.
- 11 In other words, the Islamic view on ‘salvation’ refers to a collective understanding of a host of terms derived from the primary sources of Islam, namely *al-Qur’ān* and *al-Sunnah* or simply revelation (*wahy*), and are thought to be relevant to the issues normally touched when discussing ‘salvation’. Preference for this kind of approach is due partly to the fact that there is no direct ‘equivalent’ from Islamic terminologies to be an alternative to the English ‘salvation’. However, Islam, to the author, has its own ‘insights’, teachings and general principles on ‘being saved/salvaged and being successful’, if this is what is meant to be ‘the essence of salvation’. On this premise, it can be said that relevant Qur’ānic and Prophetic terms, concepts and verses/traditions, when understood collectively, are hoped to be able to give an overview of ‘salvation’ from an Islamic perspective. The reader is reminded once again, however, that this preliminary discussion is not exhaustive. More thorough research needs to be undertaken for a better deliberation of the issue.
- 12 For a more comprehensive understanding of the concept, a host of relevant ‘Islamic terms’ need to be treated thoroughly so as to signify and reflect the principles and spirit of Islamic teachings on the matters under discussion. Among them are *‘ibadah*, *iman*, *ihsan*, *al-falah*, *al-shafa’ah*, *al-kayr wa al-birr*, *al-taqwa*, *al-tawbah*, *‘amal salih* and *hijrah*. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt such a comprehensive deliberation.

Uniculturalism, Multiculturalism and Islamic Thought in the Pre-Modern Era: The Cases of Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd Al-Wahhāb and Shāh Walī Allāh*

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The 18th century is dismissed by many Arab writers as *‘ahd al-inḥiṭāt* (the era of retrogression), and some orientalist designated it as the “Dark Age” of Islam. While the latter nomenclature is inappropriate and objectionable because it confuses Islam with the history of Muslims,¹ three major Muslim political entities—the Ottoman Sultanate / Caliphate (1289-1923), and the Mughul (1526-1858) and Safavid (1500-1776) “gunpowder” empires—had, nonetheless, experienced widespread decay during and since this century. Their political and socio-economic institutions disintegrated, and extensive moral degeneration spread throughout their territories. While the Ottoman Empire was appropriately called the “sick man of Europe,” the descendents of the outstanding Mughul emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) squandered the wealth amassed by their forefathers on entertainment, dance and music, and the Shi’ite scholars exercised complete authority over them. The Islamic *‘aqīdah* (faith) and way of life were gradually adulterated by the rising cultural and physical westernization, and, more importantly, by the entrenched local customs and religions, notably Hinduism and traditional (“pagan”) religions. As had been the case throughout Muslim history, a *mujaddid*,² or *mujaddids*, were bound to emerge to address this *takhlīf* (eclecticism or associationism) and laxness. The first reactions by Muslim thinkers to this decay and weakness were religious in origin and expression, and not national.

We have credible evidence to contend that Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, popularly known by the pseudonym Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlāwī,³ were the two most important *mujaddids* in the entire 18th-century Muslim world. This paper does not, and cannot, aspire to study the rich and complex legacies of these two monumental *mujaddids*; it is merely an attempt to argue that their largely dissimilar systems and schools of thought were triggered by the respective homogenous and heterogenous societies that they lived in and interacted with.

The Shaykh and the Shāh were contemporaries, perhaps born in the same year (1703), though the former (died 1791) lived much longer than the latter (died 1762). They shared the same mission, namely disassociating Islam from *al-bida’* (heresies or un-Islamic practices) through rejecting *al-taqlīd* (blind imitation) and advocating *al-ijtihād* (creative reasoning in

* This article is based on a preliminary comparative study on the legacies of the two men that was published in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 34, no. 1 (2006), pp. 103-117.

jurisprudence), and to return with it to its original pristine purity. Both men were thus basically concerned more with the problems of faith than with the fact that their countries were overrun by foreigners. They were scholars qualified to claim the job, and, like almost all previous and subsequent Islamic reformists, belonged to *buyūt ‘ilm* (houses of learning). The Shaykh’s family excelled in the field of the Shari’ah law, and monopolized the position of *qaḍī* (judge) in their hometown, al-‘Uwayynah, in Najd, Arabia. The Shāh’s ancestors were distinguished experts in Islamic education. His father, Shāh ‘Abd al-Raḥīm (died 1719), founded the famous *Raḥīmiyyah* school, named after him, in Delhi,⁴ and was one of the compilers of *Fatāwī-ī-‘Alamgīrī*,⁵ an encyclopedic work on Islamic law (essentially a collection of *fatāwa* or religious edicts) commissioned by the Mughul Emperor Aurangzeb, nicknamed “the saviour of Islam” for his role in fighting syncretism and consolidating the rule of Islam in India.

Nonetheless, the Shaykh and the Shāh had markedly different backgrounds, and experienced different climatic and social environments. The former was born in an extremely tough region in the heart of the Arabian peninsula, *Arabia Deserta* as the Romans called it⁶, and lived the simple and harsh Bedouin life where people had often to survive on *al-aswadayyn* (dates and water). He adhered to the rigorous *Hanbalī madhhab*,⁷ and had all his education, including his years in *al-Ḥaramayyn al-Sharīfayyn* (the two holy shrines, Mecca and Medina), under traditional and conservative teachers who concentrated on the Qur’ān and Sunnah (tradition of the Prophet (S.A.W.) to the marginalization, perhaps total neglect, of other Islamic disciplines such as Sufism (mysticism) and *‘ilm al-kalām* (theology). ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s prototype was the famous ultra-*salafī* Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1327) who seemed to have a profound impact on his attitude and thought. Al-Shaykh spent all his life in the isolated Arabian peninsula that had hardly any contact with the West. Its society was, and still is, largely homogeneous in the sense that nearly all the population is ethnically Arab, speaks the same language (Arabic), and practices Sunni Islam, though a minority adheres to Shi’ism.

The Shāh, on the other hand, was born, grew up, and lived most of his life in the relatively mild climate of India. He did not plead for one or another of the four *madhhabs*, or accept, so to speak, the absolute finality of any of them. Rather, with his reconciliatory approach to differences of opinion among Muslim scholars, he advocated that it is within the right of any Muslim to opt for one *madhhab* on a particular or a number of issues, though the Shāh appeared to have personally favoured the Mālikī and Ḥanafī *madhhabs*. The Shāh had a comparatively diversified educational experience, including his fruitful twelve years in his father’s school, *al-Raḥīmiyyah*, and his fourteen months of study (1731-32) in *Ḥadīth* and *Mālikī* law in *al-Ḥaramayyn al-Sharīfayyn* under Arab teachers.⁸ Besides the Qur’ān and Sunnah, he was exposed to other Islamic disci-

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plines, notably Sufism and *'ilm al-kalam*, and was encouraged to read the works of early Muslim thinkers and philosophers such as Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) and Muḥyi al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240). While the Shaykh was monolingual (Arabic only), the Shāh was well versed in at least three major languages, Persian, Arabic and Urdu, which he used to articulate his thought in numerous works. Contrary to Arabia, India was predominantly diversified—religiously, ethnically, linguistically and politically. Islam was a minority religion *vis-a-vis* the popular Buddhism and Hinduism. The Shāh's model and inspirer was *mujaddid al-alf al-thānī* (the *mujaddid* of the second millennium) Aḥmad Sirhindī (1564-1624) who conducted an original "intellectual renaissance" in the Indian context as reflected in his magnum opus *Maktūbāt* (epistles or letters).⁹

Ahl al-Ḥadīth (adherents to the tradition), who played a major role in the early Muslim struggle against the presumably deviant *Shi'ah*, *Mu'tazilah*,¹⁰ and *Khawārij*,¹¹ had once more taken the job of purifying Islam, this time against deviant Sufism that had challenged, since the thirteenth century, mainstream Sunni Islam. The remarkable Ibn Taymiyyah had distinguished between two Sufi paths. The first, *'alā wajh shar'ī*, was legitimate (Sunni Sufism), and the second, *'alā wajh bida'ī*, was illegitimate and un-Islamic (deviant Sufism). The latter adulterated "puritan" Sufism by certain alien beliefs and practices, such as *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of existence or being), worship of saints and veneration of tombs, that were acquired from various regions of the gradually Islamized world. These *bida'* transgressed Ibn Taymiyyah's three-dimensional understanding of the doctrine of *al-tawḥīd* (divine unity) that had been literally adopted by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb: *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyyah* (belief in the creator), *tawḥīd al-ulūhiyyah* (unity of *'ibādah*, or worship) solely of Allah (S.W.T.), and *tawḥīd al-asmā' wa al-sifāt* that rejected the anthropomorphism which treated God as human in form and personality. Ibn Taymiyyah may have tolerated some forms of Sufism, but his extremist student, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, exaggerated its danger. He rigorously and outrightly rejected Sufism as a whole, and led an all-out campaign against all its beliefs and practices, including the presumed *baraka* (blessing) of its *walis* (saints) and the holiness of their *qibāb* (tombs), which he dismissed as outright *shirk* (polytheism). The Wahabists¹² seemed to have occasionally crossed the line by allegedly committing such acts as dismantling the grave of the Prophet, and ordering the burning of the famous Sufi work *Kitāb Dalā'il al-Kayyirāt*. Though the Shaykh and his students denied all these charges,¹³ they admitted that some of their followers may have committed some excesses for which, they protested, they should not be held responsible. Nonetheless, the Shaykh's opponents condemned his "dogmatism," and accused him of preaching a "new religion." They argued that a measure of Sufism, that preaches *tazkiat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) is essential in Sunni Islam, as had been emphasized a long time ago by al-Ghazālī in *Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (Deliverer from Ignorance).

Conversely, Sufism was accepted and acknowledged in the Indian sub-continent where four main Sufi *ṭarīqas* (orders) flourished: the Naqshabandiyyah, the Qādiriyyah, Chistī, and Sahrawardī.¹⁴ Aḥmad Sirhindī was himself a Naqshabandī, and his disciple Shāh Walī Allāh was profoundly influenced by Sufism, though he may not have been a practicing Sufi. Rather than obliterating Sufism altogether, the Indian reformists tried to reform it, and had specifically reacted against the superstition and abuses into which it had fallen in the realms of both theory and practice. While Sirhindī gave an alternative, *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd* (unity of manifestation or appearance), to Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (unity of existence),¹⁵ the Shāh tried to reconcile the two concepts by arguing that they were basically the same, the difference being in terminology only. The Shāh had, in fact, avoided the Shaykh’s extremism over this issue by suggesting “a process of sublimation”¹⁶ to condone such acts as visiting saints’ tombs or believing in the intercession of the Prophet (S.A.W.). Besides, again unlike ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, the Shāh was very careful not to outrightly dismiss any of the Sufis as apostate because, in his words in *al-Taḥfīmāt al-Ilāhiyyah*, “We do not possess any authority from the Legislator to do so in a case such as theirs.” But, he mildly added, “as a matter of principle, any person who prays to a dead one for the fulfillment of his desires, thinking that he is alive, corrupts his heart with sin” (Mawdūdī, 1979: 81-82).

The Intellectual Legacy of the Shaykh and the Shāh

At the outset of this part of my discourse, it may be appropriate to record some of the major works of each of the two *mujaddids*, as this may help to give, at a glance, a quick idea about their scope and major themes.

The following are some of the titles of the works—all in Arabic—written by Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb:¹⁷

Kitāb al-Tawḥīd (A Book on Unitarianism)

Kitāb al-Kabā’ir (A Book on Major Sins)

Masā’il al-Jāhilliyyah (Issues on the Age of Ignorance)

Naṣīhat al-Muslimīn (Advice to Muslims)

Kashf al-Shubuhāt (Uncovering the Doubtful)

Al-Hudā al-Nabawī (Prophetic Guidance)

Below are a few major titles of the over fifty works of Shāh Walī Allāh, written in Arabic, Persian and Urdu:

Hujah Allāh al-Bālighah (Conclusive Argument from God). This was the Shāh’s *magnum opus*, which he wrote between 1732 and 1738, and claimed to have received divine inspiration in Makkah to write it.

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Tafhīmāt-ī-Ilāhīya (Instructions on Clear Understanding). This work is divided into sections each called *tafhīm*. It includes the Shāh's metaphysical and theological views.

Al-Budūr al-Bazighah (Full Moons Rising in the Horizon). This is a continuation of the *Hujah* that gives the Shāh's comprehensive views on theology and Sufism. Its introduction deals with basic cosmological issues such as *al-wūjud* (existence) in general, the essence of the existence of God and the relationship between God and the Universe.

Altāf al-Quds fī Ma'rifat Laṭā'if al-Nafs (Blessing of the Sacred in the Knowledge of the Subtleties of the Self). This work is concerned with the inner dimension of human personality. Here the Shāh deals with the Sufi issues of *kashf* (institution) and *ilhām* (inspiration).

Izālat al-Khafā' 'an Khilāfat al-Khulafā' (Ending the Mystery about the Caliphate of the Caliphs). Though incomplete, this book deals with the institution of the caliphate.

Al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah (The Rightly-Guided Caliphate)

Qurat al-'Aynayn fī Tafḍīl al-Shaykhayn (In Defense of the Two Shaykhs). Essentially, this book enumerates the many merits of the first and second guided caliphs, Abū Bakr and 'Umar (R.A.).

Al-Khilāfah al-Zāhirah (The External Caliphate)

Al-Khilāfah al-Bā'īnah (The Internal Caliphate)

Muqadimah fī Tarjamat al-Qur'ān al-Karīm (An Introduction on the Translation of the Qur'ān), which gives the Shāh's rationale for the necessity of translating the Qur'ān into other languages.

Al-Fawz al-Kabīr fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr (The Fundamentals of Exegesis)

Al-Juz' al-Laṭīf fī Tarjamat al-'Abd al-Ḍa'īf. This is an autobiography of the Shāh.

By the 18th century, Muslims in some parts of the world, especially in the Ottoman Caliphate and in India, were already acquainted with the West and Western civilization. But this did not seem to have been the case in the desert and isolated regions of central Arabia where Wahabism started and flourished. Being presumably unaware of an immediate or prospective Western challenge or threat, the Shaykh did not respond in his scholarship to this external factor. Surprisingly, however, the Shāh also did not appear to have taken due notice of the fast-emerging Europe, even after the English seizure of Bengal during his own time, and the expansion of their influence as far as Allahabad (Mawdūdī, 1979: 98).¹⁸ Like his teacher Sirhindī, the Shāh was concerned with bringing "new unity and vigour to the faith at a time of division and discouragement" (Lewis, 1968: 97), rather than with any infidel threat.

The Shaykh's scholarship had concentrated on what he considered to be the main challenge to Islam, namely innovation in the realm of religious doctrine and practice. As may be noticed

at a glance from his titles above, he focused on the perfection of the *‘aqidah* (faith) as he understood it, and on the sole basis of the Qur’ān and Sunnah. To him the first and foremost duty of the state is to uphold the divine law, and to see to it that all Muslims strictly observe all the *‘ibādāt* (rituals and religious duties). If they do not, or even departed from the dogmatic manner that he dictated for their fulfillment, the state should compel them to do so. To perform this and other functions, King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. 1953), the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, founded in 1910-1912 a special institution, *al-Ikhwān* (The Brothers), who, following their revolt in 1929,¹⁹ were superseded by *al-Muṭṭawi‘aūwn*, singular *muṭṭawi‘* or enforcer of religious morality. Anybody who rejected Wahabism, or any of its austere doctrines, such as the strict prohibition of *al-sama‘wa al-raqs* (music and dance) would be declared an apostate, and a jihād would be waged against him. In short, the original Wahhābi theological position had apparently been extremely limited in scope, literal and dry, and tended to reduce religion to a set of rules.²⁰

Conversely, the Shāh’s scholarship focused on two major scholarly themes that were hardly addressed by his contemporary. First is what Professor Zafar Anṣārī called “Islamic intellectual emphasis or orientation” (Anṣārī, 1973:12). In many of his works, like the *Hujah* and *al-Budūr*, the Shāh urged Muslims—particularly their leaders—to profoundly comprehend and reflect on the meaning of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah to discover what he called *Asrār al-Dīn* (the “secrets” of the Shari’ah), i.e. the philosophy behind the divine injunctions. This would help them to understand not only God’s *aḥkām* (injunctions and ordinances) but, more importantly, their wisdom and noble objectives (Walī Allāh, n.d.: 9 and 31).

Having this principle in mind, the Shāh was one of the early Muslim scholars who departed from the dogmatic position of the traditional *ulamā’* that prohibited the translation of the Qur’ān into other languages on the grounds that the Arabic text is the only true text, and its translation would thus be a grave sin and a violation of its sanctity. In his book *Muqadimah fī Tarjamat al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, the Shāh firmly argued that the *I’jāz* (miraculous nature) of the Qur’ān is not only in its literary beauty and perfection, but, more importantly, in its teachings. It was meant to be read and its fundamentals understood and practiced. Notwithstanding the *ulamā’*’s charge of apostasy against him, in 1738 the Shāh translated the Qur’ān into simple Persian, then the literary language of India, under the title *Fath al-Rahmān fī Tarjamat al-Qur’ān* which was published in 1743. His objective “was primarily to convey the word of God in translation to the average educated Muslim, and secondarily to break the monopoly of the *ulamā’*’, who had become petty-minded, far too occupied with the externalities of the rituals” (Chapter IX: 205).²¹ Later, his son, Rāfi‘ al-Dīn, translated the Qur’ān into Urdu for the first time. However, this was a “literal rendering” that was followed by “a more idiomatic” one done by his other son, ‘Abd al-Qādir (Chapter IX: 205).

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The other major theme of the Shāh's intellectual legacy, of which we find no trace whatsoever in his contemporaries' works, deals with some interesting metaphysical theological issues as well as socio-political issues. This discourse demonstrates the Shāh's deep insight and intellect, and his distinguished role in the reconstruction of Islamic religious thought in the pre-modern age. While his style, in term of interpretation, was *salafī*, "his goal was reconciliation, not condemnation" (Voll, 1982: 65). Indeed, he rightfully deserves the metaphorical accolade of having formed a bridge between *salafī* and modern Islamic thought in the Indian sub-continent.

There is no place in this brief paper, and neither any need, for an exhaustive narrative on this aspect of the Shāh's scholarship, which has been sufficiently studied in many works, particularly Muḥammad al-Ghazālī's scholarly book *The Socio-Political Thought of Shāh Walī Allāh* (Islamabad 2001).²² Suffice for our purposes here to give a bird's-eye view of the Shāh's input on those issues. He articulated the distinguished status that Allāh (S.W.T.) gave to man in this universe, and his empowerment, vis-a-vis the *baheimah* (animal), by what the Shāh called *al-ra'i al-kullī* (universality of vision or purpose) and *al-ẓarāfah* (Walī Allāh, n.d.: 90 and 91) which means "Perfect signs," "moral excellence," "social temptation" or "aesthetic sense." In some of his works, such as *al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah* and *Izālat al-Khafā'*, the Shāh wrote extensively on politics, particularly on the caliphate and its development as the supreme political institution of Muslim polity. Unlike many of the early Muslim thinkers, including Ibn Khaldūn, the Shāh distinguished between *al-Kilāfah al-Zāhirah* and *al-Kilāfah al-Bāṭinah*. The first, the external caliphate, was succession to the Prophet (S.A.W.) in mundane matters, and should thus occupy itself with the duties of the administration and defense of religious law, while the second, the internal caliphate, would be entrusted with spiritual concerns, particularly guidance to the *ulamā'*. Besides, the Shāh gave his input on the qualifications and duties of the caliph as well as the methods and procedure for his selection and deposition.

But most interesting is the Shāh's socio-anthropological basis for the emergence and development of societies until they reach perfection. According to him, in the *Hujah* and *al-Būdūr*, this process takes place through the four-stage doctrine of "*al-irtifāqāt*" that concerned itself with the problems of virtue and vice or progress and decline. In the first of these four *irtifāqāt*, which he called "*al-madhab al-ṭabī'i*," the natural or primitive stage, man strived to ensure the continuation of his existence. After the first stage, five *ḥikam* (singular *ḥikmah* which literally means "wisdom," but better in this context "skill") are needed to complete the second *irtifāq*, namely *al-ḥikmah al-ma'āshiyah* (economic skill), *al-iktisābiyyah* (earning), *al-manziliyyah* (household), *al-ta'āmulliyah* (business) and *al-ta'āwunīyyah* (cooperation). The interaction between these *ḥikam* would lead to the third *irtifāq*, the formation of the *madinah* (city or state). Finally there

is the fourth *irtifāq*, the formation of *al-khilāfah al-kubrā* (the great caliphate), the ideal Islamic state that can only be realized in a perfect and developed society.²³

Incidentally, one is intrigued by the word *irtifāq* which, to the best of my knowledge, does not literally mean “stage” in the Arabic language.²⁴ Perhaps the Shāh derived it from the Arabic word *rifq*, gentleness, and then used it metaphorically to mean smooth transfer from one stage to the other. It is quite likely that in his discourse of *al-irtifāqāt* the Shāh was somehow influenced by Ibn Khaldūn’s (1332-1406) famous theory “*‘Ilm al-‘Umrān*” (science of social organization) which articulates the rise and development of civilizations from *al-badāwah* (primitive stage) through *al-tamadun* until they reach their nadir, *al-‘imrān*, after which they would fall due to the weakness of the *‘aṣabiyyah* (ruling elite) and the spread of *al-ẓulm* (oppression and injustice) (Ibn Khaldūn, n.d.: 172-4).

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, for his part, assumed for himself a universal mission—to reform Islam everywhere, even, if necessary, at the edge of the sword. This universality may be seen in his decision to start his *da‘wah* (call) during the early 1740s in Basra, which is not only outside Najd but the Arabian peninsula altogether, and in the challenge that he and his movement posed to the Ottoman Caliphate. With the support of the local *Amīr* of the house of Sa‘ūd, Muḥammad, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb launched in 1744 a militant campaign that founded a puritanical Wahhābi rule in the Emirate of al-Dar‘aiyyah. From this base, his followers entered, just a decade after his demise, into a long and bloody confrontation with the Ottomans that achieved the political outcome of their taking control, in 1803, of *al-Haramayn al-Sharīfayn*, and subsequently the formation of three independent Wahhābī states: the first 1803-1818, the second 1823-1891 and the third, the present Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, since 1902. In the current terminology, the Shaykh was radical and uncompromising with all the existing institutions of his society, which he strove to destroy and replace by new ones. In short, he wanted to achieve change revolutionarily and speedily.

The death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1706, just four years after the birth of the Shāh, was a serious blow to Islam in India. It marked the collapse of Muslim power, disintegration of Muslim morale and the rise of anti-Muslim forces in the sub-continent. Being well aware of this dangerous change in the political situation and its consequential inherent threats, Shāh Walī Allāh advocated a reform-oriented approach. Anybody who professed Islam should be encouraged to remain so whatever his sins or failing were. Use of force to compel people to accept Islam and abide by its rituals and doctrines would be counter-productive, as they would revert to their ancestors’ faith once they had an opportunity to do so. The best strategy would therefore be to persuade them into the acceptance of Islam by precept and example. To overcome this critical situation,

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the Shāh maintained that Islam had to be liberal, resilient, composite and tolerant towards both Muslims and non-Muslims. Unlike the Shaykh, the Shāh realized that constructive change in the complex Indian setting could only come in inches rather than feet, and that wisdom could not be achieved overnight, but over years.

Interestingly, the Shāh was strongly drawn to the Arabs and Arabia, the source of authentic Islam “undefiled by Persian and Indian accretions.” He wrote:

“We are strangers in this land (of India). Our fathers and grandfathers came to live here from abroad. For us Arab descent and the Arabic language are causes of pride, these two things bring us nearer to the Lord of the First and the Last, the noblest of Prophets and Apostles.... We must give thanks to God for this grace by holding on as much as possible to the customs and traditions of the ancient Arabs, from whom the Prophet came and to whom he addressed himself, and by safeguarding ourselves from the penetration of Persian traditions and Indian habits” (Lewis, 1968: 97-98).²⁵

He deliberately wrote several of his important works, notably his magnum opus *Hujat Allāh al-Bālighah*, in Arabic, instead of the more customary Persian, presumably to address himself to a larger audience in the Arab Islamic world. His book *Anfās al-‘Arīfīn* consists of several *rasā’il* (messages) of which the third, *al-Imdād fī Māthir al-Ajdād*, proudly enumerates the glorious achievements of his Arab ancestors (A. Islam, forthcoming). His son, Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, and two of his students, al-Shaykh Muḥammed Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī of Bilgram (1732-1791) and the Kurdish Shaykh Khālid Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn (1775-1826) continued the Shāh’s idealization of the Arabs. The latter visited India in 1809, and Al-Zabīdī traveled to Arabia and Egypt where he made a tangible contribution in the revival of Arab culture towards the end of 18th century. Like some earlier 17th-century Indian Muslim thinkers, the Shāh had, indeed, exercised important, but little known, influence on his co-religionists in the Arab world (Lewis, 1968: 96-97, and Voll, 1982: 59).

We do not have credible evidence to suggest that ‘Abd al-Wahhāb had followed the established tradition of many of the prominent Muslim scholars and *mujaddids* to communicate with their students, disciples and the notables.²⁶ But the Shāh did follow this practice, and his addressees were from within and outside India, e.g. Emperor Shāh Abdāle of Afghanistan to whom the Shāh appealed for direct physical intervention to suppress the anarchy and corruption of the Hindu forces of the Jats and Marathas. Many of these letters have been compiled for easy reference by some of the Shāh’s relatives, students and friends, notably his cousin and brother-in-law Shāh Muḥammed ‘Āshiq who collected two hundred and eighty-two of these epistles in two volumes, subsequently further enlarged to three hundred and fifty-two and edited by his son Shāh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, himself a student of the Shāh. Indeed, these epistles constitute a primary source for the Shāh’s socio-political thought and his vision of the Muslim world.²⁷ Interestingly also,

the Shāh, unlike the Shaykh, wrote his autobiography under the title *Al-Juz’ al-Laṭīf fī Tarjamat al-‘Abd al-Ḍa’īf* (The Best Part of the Autobiography of the Weak Slave of God).

The Impact of the Shaykh and the Shāh

Both the Shaykh and the Shāh had profound and deep impact on subsequent Muslim thought and activism not only in their localities, the Arabian peninsula and the Indian sub-continent, but throughout the Muslim world.

Though the full Wahhābī doctrine found few die-hard adherents in the Muslim world, the tremendous religious awakening that it brought influenced Muslims in many lands—the Arab world, central and southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa—and infused them with a new militancy against eclecticism and the impending struggle against the European invaders. Moreover, the Wahhābī condemnation of Sufi beliefs and practices provoked a vigorous Sufi revival that was spearheaded by such renowned Sufi leaders as Aḥmad ibn Idrīs al-Fasī (died 1837) and *ṭarīqas* like al-Khalwatiyyah and al-Tijāniyyah. For centuries, but particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, some African students sought study in the Arab East: al-Azhar in Egypt and Mecca and Medina in Arabia. They had contact with the Salafī tradition there, and, on their return home, advocated its ideas and teaching, including opposition to the prevalent practice of “saint-worship” in Africa. Moreover, though strongly inclined towards Sufism, the 19th-century leaders of the *jihād* in *Bilād al-Sūdān*,²⁸ notably Shaykh ‘Uthmān Dān Fodio (1754-1817) Shaykh Aḥmad Lobbo (born about 1773), Ḥāji ‘Umar (died 1864), the Sudanese Mahdi Muhammed Ahmed ibn ‘Abdullah (1840-1885), and Muḥammed Abdille (‘Abdullāh) Ḥasan (1864-1920) of Somaliland, were all influenced by the Wahhābī puritanical revivalism.²⁹ Later, the elitist West African Muslim association *Subannu al-Muslimīn*, which was transformed in 1953 into a larger cultural organization called the Muslim Cultural Union, was committed to the Wahhābī doctrine, particularly in the field of education (Fisher, 1970: 403-4). The Muslim Brotherhood of Ḥasan al-Bana (1906-1949) and the *Jamāt-e-Islāmī* of Abū ‘Alā Mawdūdī (1903-1977), as well as many other Salafī movements worldwide were, and still are, influenced in one way or another by Wahhābī radicalism. The original Wahhābist doctrine has provided, though in a much diluted form, the ideological basis for the present Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Al-Qā’idah* of Usāmah bin Laden and other contemporary “jihadist” (often dubbed “terrorist” or *takfirist*) groups, notably *al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah*³⁰ of Egypt, are grounded on the extreme Wahabist form of Islam, which, incidentally, the West is currently striving to substitute with the Kemalist version that has largely contributed to the secularization and de-Islamization of the Post-Ottoman Turkey.

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For its part, by the beginning of the 19th century, India was in turmoil. The Mughul Empire was no longer effective, the Indian sub-continent was divided into hostile states, the Sikhs strengthened their grip, and, most importantly, the English expanded their influence and control. In the face of these dangerous developments, the Shāh's tradition constituted the most important intellectual force for the series of *jihād* movements that his students waged during, and since, the 19th century against Sikh dominance and British imperialism.

Following the British occupation of Delhi in 1803, the Shāh's son, Shah 'Abd al- 'Azīz, declared India *Dār Ḥarb* (an abode of war) and organized *Taḥrīkh al-Mujāhidīn* (The Movement of the Holy Warriors) in central and northwest India, which had become particularly dynamic under the leadership of his student Ahmed Brelwi who was supported by some members of Walī Allāh's family, including his son Shāh Ismā'īl. Inspired by the ideas of Walī Allāh, Brelwi united all Sufi *ṭarīqas* under *Al-Ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadiyyah*, and waged a vigorous *jihād* to restore Muslim rule in India. He achieved initial success by controlling Peshawar in 1830 and declaring the caliphate. But he was soon overpowered by the Sikhs who killed him in battle in 1831. Mawdūdī attributed the drastic failure of this massive *jihād* to what he called an "overdose of Sufism," poor preparation and the inability of the leadership to comprehend and give due attention to the rising power of the British, who (not the Sikhs) had then constituted the real and immediate threat to Islam in India (Mawdūdī, 1979: 91-99). However, the era of large-scale militant Muslim uprisings reached its climax in the 1857 all-out Indian revolt, which was mercilessly crushed by the British who killed its leader, Imdād Allāh, and occupied India in 1858.

Some Western writers and politicians categorized the 19th-century Indian Islamic reformism as "Indian Wahhabism." But the parallelism of this movement with the numerous Wahabi revolts in Arabia may not fully justify the juxtaposition. For the Indian *jihād* was essentially an indigenous religious revival that was based on the authentic teaching of Shāh Walī Allāh, and focused on the fight with "infidels," be they the British or the Sikhs, while the Wahhabis strove to free Arab lands from the authority of the Ottoman Sultan whom they denounced as heretic and usurper. The Wahhābī revolution had, in fact, marked "a first withdrawal of consent from Ottoman Turkish supremacy" (Lewis, 1968: 99). Thus the nomenclature "Indian Wahhabism" is rather inappropriate, and appears to be politically loaded and designed to condemn the struggle of the Indian Muslims against British imperialism by the customary and stereotypical charges of dogmatism and xenophobia.

The failure of the 1857 *jihād* marked a watershed in the history of Islam in India. Though radical movements continued to appear from time to time, many Muslim leaders accepted, perhaps reluctantly, the reality of British military dominance, and, like Muhammed 'Abduh

(1849-1905) of Egypt, they set out to reform within the context of foreign domination. Interestingly, these Indian “modernists” had also claimed to have based their “reorientation of Islam” on the inspiration and thought of Shāh Walī Allāh. Chief among them is Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-1898), the founder of the “Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College” at Aligarh, which subsequently developed into a full-fledged university that has become a major center of Islamic modernist education in India.³¹ The Shāh’s concept of *ijtihad* had seemingly also influenced ‘Allāma Muḥammad Iqbāl (d.1938).

The Shāh has also left his fingerprints in the Malay world. The Malay of Malaysia, for example, have been acquainted with his teachings through Haj Nik Abdullah bin Haj Wan Musa (1900-1935), a Kelantanese ‘*ālim* (jurist) who had the opportunity to study the Shāh’s scholarship, particularly his Sufi vision, during his study in Mecca in 1926 (Dali, 25 April 2003: 10).

Conclusion

The Shaykh and the Shāh shouldered the same mission, namely to purify Islam and realize its basic teachings as they understood them. But the different backgrounds and social settings that they experienced, as well as the dissimilar challenges that they faced, triggered different visions, approaches and responses. While the Shaykh was largely a literalist and a “hair splitter,” the Shāh was significantly tolerant and accommodative. Compared to the Shaykh, he possessed a many-sided versatile personality, and produced a substantial and substantive intellectual legacy. Mawdūdī commended the Shāh by suggesting that he was “the first scholar who ever understood the real and fine difference between the history of Islam and the history of Muslims” (Mawdūdī, 1979: 74). Mawdūdī also commended the Shāh for being the first to give a bird’s-eye view of the historical conflict between Islam and un-Islam (Mawdūdī, 1979:88).

In short, the Shaykh and the Shāh were the custodians of two distinct, and most important, schools of thought in the pre-modern Muslim world. In this sense, they were not competitors, but partners in a world that was dominated by rising challenges to Islam.

NOTES

- 1 In an attempt to universalize the European historical pathway, Westerners periodize world history into three major periods: ancient, medieval—often called the “dark age,” which extends from the fifth to the fifteenth century—and modern. But this classification completely ignores the experience of other societies, particularly that of the Muslims where the so-called “dark age” was, in reality, the golden age of Islam (Arif, 2001: 206).
- 2 The synonym of the Qur’ānic term *iṣlah* (Islamic reformism) is the Hadīth term *tajdīd* (revivalism). Literally a *mujaddid* is a “renewer,” but in this jurisprudential context, he is a revitalizer of Islam. However, a *mujaddid* is not a unique or an eschatological figure, nor a guardian of esoteric knowledge.
- 3 Shāh (the great) is an Indian title, Walī Allāh is a Sufī term which literally means “friend of Allāh,” and Dihlāwī is

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- derived from his birth place Dehli, an ancient Indian town and capital of the Mughul Empire whose pronunciation was later changed by the British to read “Delhi”; it is the present-day capital of India.
- 4 The British destroyed the *al-Raḥīmīyyah* school in 1857, but the Shāh’s students founded *Dār al-‘Ulūm* in Deobond on its model.
 - 5 *Alamgīrī* is a Persian word which means “king of kings” or “ruler of the world,” and the reference here is to Sultan Aurangzeb (d. 1706).
 - 6 The other two parts were Arabia *Putra* (mountainous northern Arabia) and *Arabicus Felix* (happy Yemen).
 - 7 *Mathhab* (plural *mathāhib*) is a school of Islamic jurisprudence.
 - 8 The Shaykh and the Shāh studied in Medina at about the same time, and probably under the same teachers. But there is no direct evidence that they had contact with each other.
 - 9 See below, p. 5.
 - 10 *Al-Mu’tazilah* was a name given to a theological school that flourished in the ninth century. It stressed human free will and introduced speculative dogmatism in Islam. Its opponents dismissed it as an infidel sect, mainly because of its presumed unacceptable limitation on the power of God.
 - 11 *Al-Khawārij*, i.e. those who had gone out of the community of the faithful, was the name given to the first deviant sect in Islam, which played a violent and destructive role during the last two years of the caliphate of ‘Alī ibn Abī Tātib and the Ummayyad period.
 - 12 The followers of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb are more commonly known as Wahhabis, but they insist on calling themselves *al-Muwaḥḥidūn* (believers in *al-tawḥīd*), and their movement *Ḥarakat al-Tawḥīd* (Unitarian Movement), not Wahhabism.
 - 13 For a detailed account of these charges and the Wahhābī responses to them, see Ministry of High Education, vol. 2, 1983: 5-288.
 - 14 The Naqshabandīyyah, a Sufi order founded by Shaykh Aḥmad Bahā’ al-Dein in the town of Naqshaband, Bukhara, Central Asia, had spearheaded Islamic revivalism in the Indian sub-continent. The other three major Sufi orders, the Chisti (named after its Asian birthplace the town of Chist in Northern Afghanistan), the Sahrawardī and the Qādiriyya, had all come to the Indian Sub-continent around the thirteenth century. Their founders were respectively Khawājah Abū Ishāq Shīāmī (d. 941), Shaykh Shihāb al-Dein Shahrawardī (d. 1231) and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gaylānī (d. 1166).
 - 15 Besides reforming Sufism, Sirhindī should be commended for suppressing the movement of *Dīn Ilāhī* of Sultan Akbar (1542-1605) that had gravely threatened Islam in India.
 - 16 The “process of sublimation” had in essence emphasized the necessity of combining a measure of Sufi faith with orthodox (*salafī*) theology, leading to what may be called neo-sufism or positive Sufism. (Fazlur Raḥmān, 1970: 639-40).
 - 17 The university of Imam Muḥammad ibn Sa‘ūd, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, compiled the works of Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in twelve volumes published under the title *Mu’alafāt* (Works) *al-Shaykh al-Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb*.
 - 18 Europeans arrived in India as early as the 16th century, first the Portuguese who were followed by the Dutch, English, French and others. Dogmatic Catholicism was another threat to Islam in India.
 - 19 The *Ikhwān* revolted against King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s modernizing policies and his alliance with the British “infidels.” But the King refused to compromise and slaughtered them in the battle of al-Sablah (Rawḍat al-Sablah) in 1929 (‘Abd al-‘Azīz, 1992: 176-183, and Wilson and Graham, 1994: 44-46). Interestingly, an analogy is nowadays made between *al-Ikhwān* and *al-Qā’idah*, and some Saudi intellectuals have reportedly warned the Saudi family that the only way to save their shaky regime would be through a Sabla-type operation against the militant Islamists (Zakariya, June 2004: 15)
 - 20 Subsequently, however, the Wahhābīs relaxed this dogmatism, and removed many of the restrictions imposed by

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- the Shaykh and his immediate successors. Hence was the gradual shift, since the time of the second Wahhabi state, (1823-1891), from the so-called “fundamental” Wahabism to “pragmatic” Wahabism (Voll, 1982: 128-30).
- 21 An Indian scholar, Qāzī Shihāb al-Dīn Dawlatābadi, undertook an earlier Persian translation of the Qur’ān, “but it was more in the nature of a commentary” (Chapter IX: 205).
- 22 I wrote a review of al-Ghazālī’s book which was published in *Intellectual Discourse* (9, 1, 2001: 103-6).
- 23 For the Shāh’s complete text on the *Irtifāqāt*, see Walī Allāh, n.d.: 38-49. Dr. Abdul Azim Islahi wrote an article on this issue in the *Journal of Objective Studies* (1, January 1990: 46-59).
- 24 An author translated an *irtifāq* as a device, and added that from the context the term may also mean a whole period of history (Enstitoso, *Iqbal*, 2, 3, 1963: 1).
- 25 Lewis took this quotation from Bansansi, A., “Note Sir Shāh Walī Allāh di Delhi (1703-1762)” *Anualidell Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, n.s.x (1961), p. 99.
- 26 This tradition seemed to have been well established in India. The *maktūbāt* (letters) of Sirhindī and Sayyid Aḥmad Shāhid (d. 1831), and the letters of Maulānā ‘Alī Thānwī (d. 1943) to Qaid A’zam Muḥammad ‘Alī Jinnah (d. 1948), the founder of Pakistan, are among the prominent examples in this regard.
- 27 For more information about the Shāh’s letters and their significance, see Al-Ghazali, 2001: 127-29, and Islam (forthcoming).
- 28 The Arabs coined the term *Bilād al-Sūdān* (the land of the blacks) for the huge belt that is sandwiched between the Great Sahara in the North and the forest zone in the South, and which extends from the Atlantic in the west to the Red Sea in the east. Earlier they gave the nomenclature *Bilād al-Bīḍān* (the land of the whites) to Africa north of the great desert.
- 29 For a good summary of the career of these *mujāhidīn* (holy warriors for the cause of Islam), see UNESCO, 1989: 537-635 and Knut, 1999: 80-98.
- 30 The three elements of *al-takfīr* (declaration of an unjust ruler as infidel), *al-hijra* (withdrawal of the *mujāhidūn* beyond his domain) and *al-jihād* (launching an external attack on him) were historically inextricably linked, and has been widely used since the time of Almoravids (al-Murābiṭūn) of North Africa. Another modern example is Amīr ‘Abd al-Qādir (1808-1883) of Algeria. (Knut, 1999: 80-93)
- 31 While highly praised in the West, Sir Sayyid is very controversial in the Muslim World. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1837-1897), for example, condemned him as an agent of British imperialism and as the ringleader of *al-Dahriūwn* (the atheists), but Abu al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Nadwī (d. 1999) commended his realistic and pragmatic role in promoting the interests of the Muslims. For Afghānī’s arguments, see his book in Persian that had been translated by Muḥammad Abdu in Arabic under the title *Al-Rad ‘alā al-Dahriyyān* (The Refutation of the Materialists), Cairo 1960. Al-Nadawī’s views on Aḥmad Khan were summarized in Islam, *Hamdard Islamicus*, 25, 1, January-March 2002: 47.

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Pluralism, Unity, and the Ethics of Disagreement in Islam

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I. Introduction

This is a topic of monumental scope, encompassing a wide range of sub-topics. The theme of this paper is that unity is an aspiration. However, there is no one way of establishing it. Most importantly, the unity and continuity of the *Ummah* are always there, and even though unity is not fully recognized by Muslims, it is constantly the point at which all the important achievements are made. Therefore, despite the obvious passion of Muslim critics who always ask the question, “Why we are not united?,” throughout the history of Muslims the answer will point to one or two factors. But the simple fact is that the unity of the *Ummah*, always and foremost, is achieved through the realization of diversity. Since the beginning of the message of Islam, universalism meant the possibility of both diversity and pluralism as existential facts of humanity. One might go further to say that while diversity reflects the existential aspects of the human predicament, pluralism refers to the way of organizing it within the ethos of Islam. Moreover, the advent of Islam meant among other things that both pluralism and diversity within the Islamic framework are the most important, the most meaningful doctrines through which Islam was communicated to Muslims and others. Perhaps to illustrate this, one must have a deep look into the basic concepts of the Qur’ān that define the essence of religious experience, its ritual forms, and its place in the history of religions.

The Qur’ānic discourse develops a set of principles that govern our understanding of the religious phenomenon in both its historical formation and its archetypal ideals. This discourse evolves around three main concepts: *Dīn*, *Millah* and *Ummah*. Though the Qur’ān links the essence of religious experience in the concept of *Dīn* to the human disposition (*fiṭrah*), it equally emphasizes the historical and socio-political dimensions. This wholesome relationship between the essence of religion and its historical manifestation in a living tradition that takes the shape of a socio-political entity reflects the subtle interplay between *Dīn*, *Millah* and *Ummah*. The main assertion of this paper revolves around the idea that these three Qur’ānic concepts generate and reshape the deep images of both Muslim intellectuals and the masses. Their presence is felt in both the creation of new Islamic sciences and the development of the existing sciences of textual interpretation.

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The creative interplay between *Dīn* (religion), *Millah* (religious tradition) and *Ummah* (political community) in the Qur'ānic terminology allowed for three levels of interaction. The first is at the level of *Dīn*, where a sharp distinction is made between *Dīn* as such and different forms of religion. While *Dīn* as such is associated with *al-Hāqq* (the truth), the different forms of religion capture one aspect of religiosity and miss the essence of the eternal covenant with the transcendental. The second level is *Millah*, which is defined as the historical manifestation of *Dīn*. This means *Dīn* is essentially an historical relationship between the transcendental and the immanent, whereas *Millah* is the historical experience of religion. While it is appropriate in the Qur'ānic terminology to relate *Dīn* to God, *Millah* is never associated with God. Thus, in the Qur'ān it is said, *Millat Ibrahim* and *Dinullah*. This means *Millah* is the human experience of *Dīn*. Both *Millah* and *Dīn* are adjectives that could be attributed to positive and truthful as well as negative and false forms of religiosity. Perhaps one can say that they are, in this regard, essentially neutral terms. The third level is the level of *Ummah*, where both *Dīn* and *Millah* will be represented in socio-political communities. As a result, the Qur'ān identified two major *Ummahs*: first, the *Ummatan Wāḥida*, which encompasses all the religious communities that accepted Islam throughout the history of humanity; second, the *Ummatan Wasaṭan*, representing the final form of Islam which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Thus *Ummatan Wasaṭan* is part of the *Ummatan Wāḥida*, and represents both a continuation and culmination of it. Moreover, the *Ummatan Wasaṭan* is divided into *Ummat al-Da'wah* and the rest. Subject to this, *Ummat al-Da'wah* is said to be the vital force within the *Ummatan Wasaṭan*. Obviously, within the framework of the three concepts *Ummah*, *Dīn* and *Millah* and the interplay between them, the dynamics of diversity from within and pluralism from without will all be clearly seen. However, the way in which the Qur'ān mapped the reality of Islam and the process of identification that took place in Islamic history showed how the ideals of Islam regarding unity, diversity, and pluralism manifested themselves in the socio-historical context.

In this regard it will be useful to take both al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī and his book entitled *al-Risāla* as a representative, on the one hand, of the meaning of unity, diversity and pluralism in Islamic jurisprudence. On the other, al-Imām Abu al-Ḥassan al-Asha'ri and his books *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* and *al-Ibāna* will represent the ethos of unity, diversity and pluralism at the level of *'aqīdah*. The choice of these two *imāms* is based both on their stunning and definitive achievements in terms of identifying the issues, and their ability to direct the course of events. Thus, their intellectual abilities and moral influences had a great impact on Islamic history, and consequently allow us to investigate the meaning of unity, pluralism and the ethics of disagreement in Islamic history.

II. Al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī and the Ethics of Disagreement in Islamic Jurisprudence

In his exposition of Islamic legal history, Coulson noted the importance of al-Shāfi‘ī as the architect of Islamic jurisprudential theory. Most importantly, Coulson was aware of the fact that unity in legal practice, in Islamic history, was largely due to the concept of *ijmā‘*. This mutual tolerance among the schools of jurisprudence that dominated the scene was much less a product of historical arrangement than it was due to the nature of Islamic culture and its deep images. Although Coulson was aware of a set of important Qur’ānic metaphors and other figures that shaped the deep images of Muslim scholars with regard to unity and diversity, throughout his book he showed little interest in developing his argument along these lines. At the beginning of his chapter entitled “Unity and Diversity in Shari‘a Law,” which is jam-packed with information and perspective, he stated: “A Tree, whose network of branches and twigs stems from the same trunk and roots; a sea, formed by the merging waters of different rivers; a variety of threads woven into a single garment; even the interlaced holes of a fishing net...” Then Coulson concluded: “These are some metaphors used by Muslim authors to explain the phenomenon of *ikhtilāf*, or diversity of doctrine in Shari‘ah Law.”¹ He went on to argue that the concept of *ijmā‘* played a significant role in shaping the realities of Muslim legal practices, but it was equally shaped by these realities. While Coulson’s narrative is admirably rich in both information and perspective, it suffers from an outsider syndrome which consistently fails to see the essence of the internal unity amid the manifest diversity. One can say that the essence of this unity and its continuation in history is largely due to the Qur’ānic teaching and the wealth of metaphors and rituals it provides in shaping the deep images of Muslims. Consequently, these vivid metaphors and meaningful rituals are the driving forces behind this unity. Most importantly, discord and disunity were uniformly depicted in the Qur’ānic discourse as the essential attributes of the non-believers among the people of the Book.

The history of urbanization, the creative exchange of ideas, and the competitive hostility between different schools of theology and law were behind the writing of al-Imām Shāfi‘ī’s book. Thus, the book was both influenced by these factors and was equally a direct response by a Muslim scholar who was duty bound to reflect the ethos of Islam regarding unity and diversity. However, the history of the Abbasid Khilāfa at that time was a tragic one, when, for the first time, the Khilāfa institution decided to force Muslims to follow a specific interpretation of Islam. Whatever might be the justification of the Miḥnah (inquisition) of al-Imām Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal, it would be very difficult to justify a forced unity on Muslims. Although that forced unity ultimately led to a serious rift among Muslim theologians, yet the collective wisdom of the mainstream

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Muslim scholars felt the need to articulate principles for maintaining unity within diversity.

Al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, a high-minded scholar, took the lead in this regard both before the Miḥnah and after it when he addressed the issue of Sunnah and the sources of Islamic law and the means of their interpretation. Although the Iraqi version of his book *al-Risāla* was lost, yet the gist of his argument was maintained in the Egyptian version. It could have been quite valuable to see what changes al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī made in his argument to address the issue of Miḥnah. Perhaps one can see it in his interpretation of Ayat Al-Nisā’: “‘O you who believe, Obey God and Obey the Apostle and those in authority among you. If you should quarrel about anything, refer it to God and the Apostle, if you believe in God and the Last Day. That is better and fairer in the issue’ (Q.iv, 59); some scholars have held that ‘those in authority’ [means] the commanders of the Apostle’s army. That is what more than one commentator has told us.”² Evidently, the restriction of the meaning of “those in authority among you” to the commanders of the Apostle’s army indicates that al-Shāfi‘ī was very reluctant to give power to those who carried out the Miḥnah. Thus for him, unlike other scholars, obedience is restricted only to Allah’s book and the Apostle’s tradition. Certainly the commanders of the Prophet (PBUH) were no longer there at the time of al-Shāfi‘ī, whereas the tradition which explains this Qur’ānic verse made it very clear that “those in authority among you” is a general term signifying political and intellectual leaders of the community, as it said the *‘ulamā’* (scholars) and *umarā’* (political leaders).

Then, al-Shāfi‘ī went on to justify his selection of the tradition that restricted “those in authority among you” to the commanders of the Apostle’s army by saying that “this is in accord with what [God] said, for the Arabs who had been around Makka knew nothing about the command, and [the idea of] some submitting to the command of others was repugnant to them.”³ Clearly, al-Shāfi‘ī’s explanation would make no sense if it were not to be read within the context of the Miḥnah. This is because this selection, as well as his explanation, was never repeated again. On the contrary, some scholars⁴ based their whole political theory on this Qur’ānic verse that stipulated the principles of obedience and disagreement, and the Qur’ānic verse prior to it which stipulated the principles of righteous governance. It should be remembered that this selection of al-Shāfi‘ī had a considerable effect on the development of Islamic jurisprudence. To the extent that some scholars understood the meaning of “those in authority among you” as *ijmā’*, this might be a far-fetched interpretation. And yet, it fits very well within the essence of al-Shāfi‘ī’s selection, which meant essentially to restrict the sources of guidance and law to the Qur’ān and Sunnah alone. Even the conditional obedience which was granted by the Qur’ānic verse to “those in authority among you” was completely neglected by al-Shāfi‘ī and the scholars after him. This was evidently done without explicitly adopting the al-Shāfi‘ī selection of the tra-

dition and his restriction of the meaning, but rather by following the implication of his argument. Indeed, al-Shāfi'ī's chapter of the *Risāla* which dealt with the sources of law and obedience in Islam was meant to give the '*ulama*' a special place and to strip the politician of any religious power given to them. Admittedly, al-Shāfi'ī did not directly suggest that the target of his argument would be those who ran the show in Baghdad. But a careful reading of that chapter within the context of the Miḥnah would certainly furnish us with a plausible interpretation of al-Shāfi'ī Egyptian version of the *Risāla*. Therefore, al-Shāfi'ī's argument was outlined immediately after his interpretation of the meaning of "those in authority among you," when he stated:

If you do not know what God's commands are, you should ask the Apostle, if you are able to reach him, or any one of you who is able to do so. For this is an obligation concerning which there should be no disagreement, in accordance with God's saying: "When God and His Apostle have decreed a certain matter, it is not for a believing man or woman to have a choice in a matter affecting him" (Q.xxxiii, 36).⁵

Soon after this statement, al-Shāfi'ī articulated his position on the *uṣūl* which constituted the major postulates of the *uṣūlī* theory of jurisprudence. Al-Shāfi'ī stated: "As to the disputes that happened after the Apostle's [death], the matter was decided in accordance with God's judgment [as laid down in the Qur'ān] and then that of His Apostle [as laid down in the Sunnah]. But if a text were not applicable, the matter was decided by analogy on the strength of a precedent sought [either in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah]."⁶ Evidently, al-Shāfi'ī secured for the '*ulama*' a significant position and consequently played down the role of the political leaders. Nevertheless, al-Shāfi'ī's articulation of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence was widely accepted by scholars after him. Even those who disagreed with him felt a need to use the same legal discourse to substantiate their position. Thus, what constituted a valid legal argument or not was essentially governed by al-Shāfi'ī work. It is equally significant to emphasize the fact that al-Shāfi'ī intellectual background reflected a learned experience and meaningful interaction with all the legal schools of his time. Thus when it comes to diversity or unity, it might be appropriate to see how he managed to work out a formula in Islamic jurisprudence which was accepted by the major jurisprudential schools, most importantly, how his intellectual activities led to the emergence of a "new science." Evidently, that "new science" was meant to bring together the major schools of jurisprudence. It goes without saying that the principles of this "new science" were much less focused on negating the differences than on acknowledging them within a meaningful framework. As a result, the "new science" served as both a safeguard against disunity and a creative interplay between *Dīn*, *Millah* and *Ummah*. Thus the unity which was achieved by al-Shāfi'ī's articulation of the principles of jurisprudence reminded the scholars of their responsibility not to degenerate into discord and futile activities. Most importantly, perhaps, it mapped the reality for diversity from within that

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directed the attention of the *mutakalimun* (theologians) toward how to draw the boundaries of pluralism from without.

Although al-Shāfi‘ī concluded his book with a chapter on *ikhtilāf* (disagreement), yet he pointed out his difference and disagreement with the two major schools of jurisprudence in two chapters prior to this final one. Obviously, for the uninitiated it might not be clear where he disagreed with al-Imām Abu Ḥanifa and with his teacher al-Imām Mālik. The way he argued against them was based on how what was being attributed to them as a legal doctrine might have been against a well-established Islamic legal principle. Thus, either they or their associates give a new interpretation to that doctrine or rehabilitate it to be in conformity with the established principle.

It should be noted that throughout his argument with regard to *Istiḥsān* (legal preference) and *‘Amal Ahl al-Madinah* (the authority of the practice of the people of Madinah), al-Shāfi‘ī exhibited a hallmark of knowledge and a great sense of moral responsibility. Since the chapter on *ikhtilāf* seems to be acknowledging disagreement, and it is equally true that the same chapter pointed out the limits of this disagreement, al-Shāfi‘ī seems to emphasize here the frame of reference and the principle that should govern the processes of disagreement. Al-Shāfi‘ī opened the chapter with an observation on the issue of *ikhtilāf*: "...[H]e asked: I have found the scholars, in former and present times, to disagree on certain [legal] matters. Is it permissible for them to do so?"⁷ Then, al-Shāfi‘ī gave a definitive answer by saying, "disagreement is of two kinds: one of them is prohibited, but I would not say the same regarding the other."⁸ When he was asked about the prohibited disagreement, his answer outlined the framework within which diversity would be achieved: "On all matters concerning which God provided clear textual evidence in His book or [a Sunnah] uttered by the Prophet's tongue, disagreement among those to whom these [texts] are known is unlawful."⁹ Then, he noted the area in which disagreement could be acceptable: "As to matters that are liable to different interpretations or derived from analogy, so that he who interprets or applies analogy arrives at a decision different from that arrived at by another, I do not hold that [disagreement] of this kind constitutes such strictness as that arising from textual [evidence]."¹⁰ Al-Shāfi‘ī equated *ijtihād* with analogical deduction; this meant that whatever is based on *ijtihād* is susceptible to disagreement, and obviously that type of disagreement is acceptable by al-Shāfi‘ī. Thus a distinction is made by him between a permissible disagreement which is, by and large, based on *ijtihād*, and an unacceptable or prohibited disagreement which goes against textual evidence.

Undoubtedly, al-Shāfi‘ī's *Risāla* showed how he practiced *ikhtilāf* with the leading jurists of his time. In the chapter entitled "On Single-Individual Traditions,"¹¹ al-Shāfi‘ī meant to argue for the validity of this type of tradition and pointed to the consequences of how one regards the prac-

tices of the people of Madinah. It should be remarked that in the Māliki doctrine of jurisprudence, when this type of tradition is in open contradiction with the practice of the people of Madinah it should be disregarded. Al-Shāfi‘ī developed a highly sophisticated argument against the Māliki position. Needless to say, the constant reference to the legal practices of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb, and the traditions narrated by al-Imām Mālik himself, were essentially meant to provide compelling evidence that substantiated his case. Thus, al-Shāfi‘ī in a dialectical manner compelled his opponent to come to a conclusion that puts the Māliki position in dire need of rehabilitation.

Someone said: “Give me an example indicating that ‘Umar changed his practice when a tradition from the Apostle became known to him.” [al-Shāfi‘ī] replied: “[What will be the advantage of] my giving you one?” He said: “Such an example will establish two rules: First, that opinion may be accepted in case there is no Sunnah. Secondly, if the Sunnah reveals that one must do a certain thing, one must abandon what he had [previously] been doing. For one must discard all practices contrary to Sunnah. One must also abandon [the idea that] the Sunnah is confirmed only by a narrative that has preceded it, for he should know that it is not vitiated by anything that contradicts it.”¹²

Then, al-Shāfi‘ī cited a number of cases to prove his position on this issue.

Likewise, in the chapter on *Istiḥsān*,¹³ al-Shāfi‘ī argued for the validity of analogy and developed an intelligent argument against *Istiḥsān*. It should be remembered that al-Shāfi‘ī’s argument against *Istiḥsān* had a considerable impact upon both the Ḥanafī and the Ṣāḥīrī scholars. While the Ḥanafī scholars reformulated their doctrine of *Istiḥsān* to avoid the shortcomings which were pointed out by al-Shāfi‘ī, the Ṣāḥīrī scholars started a new school that used al-Shāfi‘ī’s arguments to demolish analogical reasoning altogether.

Admittedly, al-Shāfi‘ī’s arguments against his teacher al-Imām Mālik and his rival jurist al-Shaybānī (a close associate of Imām Abu Ḥanīfa) were advanced in a way that reflected a high sense of both moral and intellectual responsibility. One can say that other keys to al-Shāfi‘ī’s success in representing the ethics of disagreement are his ability to identify seminal issues and vital personae, and to accompany these choices with a lively, dialectical, and insightful legal narrative.

III. Al-Imām al-Ash‘arī and the Ethics of Disagreement in ‘Aqīdah

The story of the development of *Kalām* as an Islamic science is a bitter one. This is largely due to the fact that the founders of this discipline were not part of mainstream Islam. Even worse, they were the ones who led the Khilāfa institution to force the public to follow their interpretation of Islamic ‘*aqīdah*. What came to be known as the issue of the created-ness of the Qur’ān that led to the Miḥnah of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was a catastrophic event in Islamic history. The consequences of that event was that *Kalām* was associated with the Mu‘tazilah. Therefore, it

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was not viewed as an effective tool of understanding the religious text and a powerful method of defending *'aqīdah*, but rather it was seen as a deviant way of understanding Islam.

It took Islamic scholarship of the mainstream Islam a while to appreciate the usefulness of *Kalām*. The dramatic events that led Abu Ḥasan al-Ash'arī to declare publicly his renunciation of the Mu'tazilah creed and his complete acceptance of Ibn Ḥanbal and *Salaf 'Aqīdah* was the first step that ultimately led to the assimilation of *Kalām* into mainstream Islam. Gradually it became an important ingredient of Uṣul al-Dīn. The very fact that al-Ash'arī was forced to write a pamphlet¹⁴ to justify the application of *Kalām* method in the interpretation of the *'aqīdah* showed how difficult was the task. Despite all his sacrifices he was not spared the ordeal of defending the distinction between *Kalām* as a method and the Mu'tazilah's interpretation of *'aqīdah*.

During the fourth century of Hijra, three major expositions of the *'aqīdah* were written by al-Ash'arī, al-Māturīdī and al-Ṭaḥāwī. The last two based their exposition on Abu Ḥanifa's understanding of the *Salaf 'aqīdah*, while al-Ash'arī based it upon Ibn Ḥanbal's exposition. Evidently, the identification with a specific interpretation of the *Salaf 'aqīdah* was not solely linked with the juristic affiliation. At times the Ash'arite interpretation was accepted by Mālikis, Shāfi'īs, and Ḥanbalīs and even some Ḥanafis. Although al-Ṭaḥāwī was a Ḥanafi and based his exposition of the *'aqīdah* upon Abu Ḥanifa's tradition, yet his exposition is completely adopted by the Ḥanbalites.

However, the key to the success of al-Ash'arī is his wonderful ability to map the reality of religious identification in a way that reflected the dynamics of the relationship between *Dīn*, *Millah* and *Ummah*. He was once a Mu'tazilah and was about to be the intellectual leader in their stronghold, al-Baṣra, but he felt the need for articulating the unity of the *Ummah* within the possible interpretations of *'aqīdah*. Certainly, his book entitled *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* is the best example of understanding the issue of sectarianism in Islam. Both the sympathy and intellectual zeal he exhibited in his discourse showed a high sense of religious responsibility to maintain the continuity of the *Ummah* within a framework that tolerated diversity. Al-Ash'arī viewed the *Ikhtilāf* as a disagreement between people who essentially pray to the same Qibla: *Ikhtilāf al-Muṣāliyyīn* (direction of the prayers). In the introduction¹⁵ of his book he outlined the method through which the Muslim scholar should relate to other Muslims who disagree with his theological interpretation. Such consideration was extended to the understanding of other religions. I suppose the intellectual affinity between the study of Muslims' sects and other religions in the Ash'arite tradition might have originated from al-Ash'arī's account in the *Maqālāt*. And yet, the major difference between al-Ash'arī and the As'arite tradition is that he opted, with a great sympathy, for both unity in diversity from within and pluralism from without. The second volume of *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* is entitled "Mawālāt al-Mulḥdīn," where Al-Ash'arī gave his account of

other religions. Indeed, some leading Ash‘arite scholars were very polemical in their accounts of other religions,¹⁶ and in their hands the doctrine of pluralism suffered a great deal. In this regard it should be remarked that the work of Abu Rayḥān al-Biruni¹⁷ developed the doctrine of pluralism to its logical limits, and equally quite remarkable is the work of al-Shahristāni.¹⁸

Although al-Ash‘arī pointed out the numerous issues upon which Muslims throughout their history disagreed, he maintained a position that considered these differences as part of diversified opinions within the framework of the *Ummah*. Obviously he highlighted the issue of *Imāmah* between the *Muhājirin* and *Anṣār*, and equally kept a dignified silence on the issue of *Taḥkīm*. Admirably, al-Ash‘arī never forgets to emphasize the main issues of *‘aqīdah* which he illustrated in *al-Ibānah*. Time and again he praised Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and constantly adopted (in *Maqālāt*, *Risāla ilā Ahl al-Thaghr* and *al-Luma*) the *Kalām* methodology for presenting these issues. Indeed, the greatest accomplishment of al-Ash‘arī and Ash‘arite scholars after him may well be that, despite their passion for *Kālam*, they repeatedly instructed that the power of *Kalām* to be meaningful is dwarfed by the zeal of the scholars to reconnect to the tradition of the *salaf*.

IV. Principles of the Ethics of Disagreement

There are many books written on *ikhtilāf*. And yet al-‘Alwāni’s book, entitled *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*, represents a new trend that gives this type of literature in Islamic tradition a new meaning. Indeed, he felt the need for ethics of disagreement among the new ‘*ulama*’. This book equally reflects a rich experience of a contemporary Muslim scholar who spent much of his time bridging the gap between the traditional ‘*ulama*’ and the new generation of Muslim intellectuals and social scientists. Evidently, the summary he provided about the ethics of disagreement between the companions during the time of the Prophet (PBUH) and during the time of the four Khālīfas reflected that experience. Obviously, al-‘Alwāni’s style and his insightful narrative are extremely difficult to be rendered in other languages. However, his articulation of the aspects and principles of ethics of disagreement during these two important periods in Islamic history should be accessed in the original text. If the translation distorted the original sense of his text, I would be inclined to retranslate the text. Yet, perhaps it would not do to add a new bad translation to this leading text in the ethics of disagreement, which has both clarity and richness of language, and the imaginative power of persuasion. Therefore, I feel the fourteen aspects and principles of the ethics of disagreement extracted from the model of the Companions’ behavior during these two periods will provide us with an ideal ethics, yet achievable in our day-to-day activities. Under the title “Salient Features” the translator outlined the aspects and principles of disagreement during the first period as the following:

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1. The Companions, may God be pleased with them, tried as far as possible not to disagree. They did not make much about marginal issues but treated the matters that posed controversy in the light the Prophet's guidance. This manner of dealing with actual situations normally does not leave much room for argumentation, let alone dispute and discord.
2. If differences occurred despite attempts to avoid them, the Companions would quickly refer the disputed issue to the Qur'an and to the Prophet (PBUH), and any controversy would be quickly dispelled.
3. The Companions reacted with a ready obedience and commitment to the judgment of the Qur'an and the Prophet (PBUH), and with complete and total submission to it.
4. The Prophet (PBUH) used to point out to his Companions what was right and what was wrong with regards to controversial questions open to interpretation. For their part, the Companions had mutual trust in the genuineness of each other's judgments. This approach guaranteed the preservation of mutual respect among fellow Muslims who differed, and also kept fanaticism and bigotry at bay.
5. Commitment to God-consciousness and avoidance of personal whims made the pursuit of truth alone the goal of those who differed over an issue. It did not matter to anyone in a discussion whether the truth was voiced by him or by another person.
6. They [the Companions] adhere steadfastly to the Islamic norms of behavior during argumentation. They discussed matters politely and amicably, avoiding the use of vile and insulting language. Each was prepared to listen attentively to the other.
7. They eschewed hypocrisy and flattery as far as possible and exerted every effort to investigate an issue objectively. This practice, characterized by the seriousness of the argument and respect for the other person, would force the disputant into either accepting the other point of view or advancing a better opinion.¹⁹

Regarding the aspects and principles of the ethics of disagreement during the second period, the translator gave it the title "Ethics in the Pursuit of Truth."

1. They strenuously strove to avoid differences as far as possible.
2. When differences of opinion were inevitable owing, for example, to evidence being available to some and not to others or to differences in the understanding of a text or an expression, they would remain firmly within the bounds of what is allowed in striving to reach the truth. They would admit their errors without any bitterness or embarrassment while always having a tremendous respect for people of virtue, knowledge and understanding. No one would overestimate himself or disparage the ability or the rights of his brother Muslim. The search for truth and for the correct judgment was their mutual endeavor, and they willingly accepted the truth from whichever quarter it came.
3. They regarded the brotherhood of Islam as one of the most important principles of the religion, and without which it would be impossible to establish Islam. This brotherhood transcended difference of opinion or compromise on questions which were open to varying interpretations.
4. Matters relating to the tenets of Islamic belief were not the subjects of disputation. Differences of opinion were therefore confined to subsidiary matters.

5. Prior to the Khilāfah of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, may God be pleased with him, most of the Companions resided in Madinah and a few in Makkah. They rarely left their homes except for jihād and such purposes. In this way, they were able to meet frequently, consult one another, and reach consensus on many matters.
6. The reciters of the Qur’ān and the Fuqaha were prominent and had a high standing on society. They were treated in a manner similar to the leaders of the state. Each was given due recognition in his own special field. They were all aware of the juristic standpoint of others and were clear about a certain implicit understanding and agreement among them.
7. They regarded corrections of one another’s judgments as a form of assistance which a person extended to his brother in faith. Such correction was not seen as exposing a fault or as a form of censure.²⁰

Undoubtedly, al-‘Alwānī was aware of the fact that the revealed texts in Islam have been given to us in a natural language. Consequently, most of the disagreements are largely due to the nature of these texts. As a result, Muslim scholars addressed most of the problems of the natural language in their exegetical strategies and interpretative techniques. Evidently, the Sunni Islam represents the mainstream Islam, and historically speaking, it exerted a significant impact on other forms of Islam. Therefore, the linguistic strategies of understanding revelation and its implementation in socio-historical contexts developed by Sunni scholars generated the set of principles that governed both the understanding and implementation of the religious text. It has been argued that al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī is the architect of the Islamic methodology of understanding revelation. Many of the linguistic principles that developed later were either adopted from him or are a direct response to his position on the issue. Thus the whole science of Islamic jurisprudence, which dealt with the issue of *ijtihād*, evolved around analogical deduction. Certainly, al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī is the one who skillfully confined *ijtihād* to analogical deduction. It became clear after al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī that the essence of linguistic discourse in understanding the revealed text is based on analogical approaches. Therefore, Aristotelian syllogism was the object of learned criticism by Muslim scholars. It was a consequence of their informed criticism that a distinction was made between *qiyās al-Shumūl* (comprehensive syllogism-Aristotelianism) and *qiyas al-Tamthūl* (analogical deduction); the latter was used by Muslim scholars as a valid tool of analysis.

However, in addition to the major development in the theory of understanding the text in the third century of Hijrah by al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, the second major attempt was made by al-Imām al-Shāṭibī six centuries later. Indeed, a similar ethos led al-Shāṭibī to develop a set of principles based on the objectives of the Shari’ah to govern the process of implementing the text within socio-historical realities. It should be remarked that the *Maqāsīd al-Sharī‘ah* (Objectives of the Shari’ah) are much less related to linguistic analysis of the text, but rather to the implementation

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of the meaning of the text in any given specific socio-historical situation. Thus, parallel to the linguistic *ijtihād* in understanding the meaning of the text, and in addition to but not excluding it, developed another type of *ijtihād* called *Tahqīqal-manāt* (implementation of the meaning of the text). This type of *ijtihād* contributed a great deal to the elaboration of the principles of the objectives of the Shari'ah. While the first type of *ijtihād* was governed by the analogical method of deduction, the second was based on a textual-inductive method.

Given the complex history of methods of understanding the religious text in Islam, it is extremely important to emphasize the fact that pluralism/diversity in the Qur'ānic text reveals that complex history of the method of analysis. It is always the case that truth in Islam, in its particular sense, became very much associated with inter-subjectivity. Obviously, the unity of the *Ummah* was the driving force behind the history of the method of understanding the religious text. Since *Dīn* is essentially a relational term that governs the relationship between the absolute and the immanent in regard to the human being, *Millah* is the historical implementation of *Dīn*, and yet both *Dīn* and *Millah* in their representation will never exhaust the meaning and experience of Islam without the *Ummah*; therefore diversity in Islam is an inherent part of this religion which includes the diverse religious experiences of humanity prior to Islam in its final message. Interestingly enough, the term *Millah* is being exclusively associated with the religious experience of Ibrāhīm (Abrahām). Evidently the dynamics of the relationship between *Dīn*, *Millah* and *Ummah* will necessarily create a diversified understanding of the religious text. Thus, the historic development of the understanding of religious texts in Islam very often was, and remains, resistant to any form of monolithic interpretation. It is equally true that the diversity of interpretative techniques is the only safeguard for the principle of diversity/plurality in the Qur'ān. Finally, the tension between the need for a unifying set of principles for an *Ummah* that exclude the other, and the emphasis of the universal human *Ummah*, will always be the creative force behind the dynamics of the universal and particular in Islam. It is because of this complexity that al-'Alwānī and his group felt that the ethics of disagreement should be understood within an epistemic framework. As a result, Islamization of knowledge as a methodic concern developed six discourses based on the Qur'ānic theory of knowledge. These discourses range from developing specific methods dealing with the understanding of revelation to the Islamic heritage and the understanding of western civilization. It is assumed that the end result of these discourses is to establish the Islamic paradigm of knowledge.

Concluding Remarks

It would not do to conclude without strongly emphasizing the fact that Muslims should understand their socio-historical realities and adapt or sometimes invent solutions that are deemed to be suitable to their peculiar circumstances. However, the most important doctrine, in addition to the rich history of the method of understanding religious texts and its implementation, is the doctrine of Tawḥīd and the universality of ethics. Thus, the ethics of disagreement should ultimately lead to unity in diversity within the Muslim community (*Ummah*), and the appreciation of pluralism as a just and valuable doctrine in its dealings with others. This means that the ethics of disagreement should be practiced on both levels. There shouldn't be ethics to be practiced from within, and another set of ethics from without. Ultimately, this will lead to a development of a universal set of ethics of disagreement within the framework of *Din*, *Millah* and *Ummah*. Finally, the previous analysis might suggest that pluralism may be represented in two forms. The first is to transcend the absolute form of pluralism and emphasize the unity behind the particular forms of religious pluralism; this means exclusivism at a higher level. The second is to emphasize pluralism and accept the logic of relativism. The result of this is exclusivism at a lower level. However, these two positions can be combined to form a position accepting pluralism that neither emphasizes a transcendental unity, nor degenerates into relativism. Rather, it admits the possibility of knowing the truth and establishes a set of universal ethics of disagreement.

NOTES

- 1 N. J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh University Press, 1964) p. 86.
- 2 al-Imām Muḥammad Ib Idris Shāfi'ī, *a-Risāla* (Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, 1987) p. 112
- 3 *ibid.* pp. 112-113
- 4 Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Siyasa al-Shar'īyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1988) pp. 4-5
- 5 Al-Shāfi'ī, p. 113
- 6 *ibid.* p. 113.
- 7 *Ibid.* p. 333
- 8 *Ibid.* p. 333
- 9 *Ibid.* p. 333
- 10 *Ibid.* p. 333
- 11 *Ibid.* pp. 239-284 and also see p. 318
- 12 *Ibid.* p. 263
- 13 *Ibid.* pp. 304 332
- 14 Al-Ash'arī, *Istiḥsān al-Khawd fi 'Ilm al-Kalām* (Hiderabad: Dār al-Ma'arif al-Uthmāniyyah, 1979) and also see al-Imām al-Ghazali, *Ijām al-Awām 'an 'Ilm al-Kalām* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb, 1985)
- 15 Al-Ash'arī, *Maqalāt al-Islamiyyin wa Ikhtilāf al-Muḥliyyin* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Naḥḍa, 1969) p. 33
- 16 Al-Bāqilāni, *Tawḥīd al-Awā'il* (Beirut: Muasasat al-Kitāb al-Thaqafiyya, 1993)

Kyoto Joint Symposium of CISMOR and KIRKHS

"Salvation and Pluralism in Monotheistic Religions"

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- 17 Al-Biruni, *Dhikr Ma Lil Hind* (Hiderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmāniyyah, 1958). See also his book *al-Āthar al-Bāqiyah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Mutanabi, n.d.)
- 18 Al-Shahristani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992)
- 19 Ṭahā Jābir al-'Alwānī, *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam* (Herndorn: IIIT, 1996) pp. 33-34
- 20 Ibid. pp. 54-55

Session 1: Comments and Responses

Chair: Hassan Ko Nakata

Tokyo Gakugei University

KOBAYASHI Haruo

I would like to thank first of all the three speakers for the very interesting lectures they delivered this morning. I would also like to thank those related to CISMOR, particularly Professor Nakata, our chairperson, for giving me the precious opportunity to attend this forum.

I would like to give some brief comments, or rather, to be precise, to ask some questions. I have two questions, which are interrelated. So I would like to ask these questions as part of my comments.

All three speakers have very clearly presented the essential nature of Islam, which can be described as diversity, comprehensiveness, or a tolerance of differences. As a scholar specializing in the history of Islamic thought, I do agree that the essential nature of Islam lies in such diversity and tolerance. Having said this, I would like to cite some cases that contradict this understanding—to present a challenge, so to speak.

I think that the first case is related to the lecture by Professor Ibrahim Zein. To be sure, the two representative Islamic thinkers mentioned, Shāfi‘ī and Ash‘arī, presented a methodology or way of thinking for accepting or recognizing views extremely different from their own. On the other hand, it is also true that in the history of Islam or the history of Muslims, there have been thinkers and groups who, unlike Shāfi‘ī or Ash‘arī, maintain that people who have different ideas or creeds should be excluded from the *Ummah*, based on their extremely narrow interpretations of the Islamic faith or the Islamic notion of *Ummah*. I’m thinking, for example, of the Khariji, Wahhabism, Sayyid Qutb, Takfir wa al-Hijra, and many other thinkers and movements.

Even the Hadith (tradition) attributed to the Prophet allows the idea that the Islamic community is divided into numerous groups (seventy or so), and that only one of them will be *firqah nāji’ah*, which will be saved in the end. So we see one stream of Islamic thought that is characterized by great tolerance for diversity, and another, somewhat puritan, stream that views Islam in an extremely limiting, strict sense.

Neither of these two streams should be overlooked. So I would like to ask how these two different interpretations of Islam should be understood with regard to the essential nature of Islam or, in the terms which Professor Hazizan Noon suggested, the nucleus of Islam. One might argue that one of them is correct and the other is wrong, but for me how these different streams

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should be positioned in understanding Islam seems an important question.

My other question is a similar one. In the lecture by Professor Hazizan Noon, he mentioned the concept “*Islam Hadhari*” as a novel attempt in today’s Malaysia, an attempt to construct a tolerant society founded on Islam in a multi-faith, multi-ethnic country like Malaysia. Meanwhile, in the history of Islam, particularly in its dealings with other religions, or even within Islam itself, there have been movements to discriminate against and exclude communities and schools of thought which differ from Islam, as in the case of Greek-inspired philosophers.

As already mentioned in other papers, scholars who studied various groups within Islam and other religions, such as Shahrstani and Ibn Hazm, distinguished Islam and other monotheist traditions from polytheist traditions and Greek philosophy by using the term *mirra* to refer to the former, and *nihal* or *ahwa* to the latter. This means that the term *mirra* was not applicable to polytheist religions or philosophy and that it was used for distinction and differentiation. In this way of thinking, would it be possible to construct something like “*Ummah insānīya*” (human community) in the broadest sense of the term, encompassing not only Islam but other religions, including even atheism in some cases? If possible, I am very much interested to know how a logical structure that recognizes this human community can be realized within the logical framework of conventional Islamic law and theology.

Tenri University

SAWAI Hirotsugu

I have learned a great deal from the papers by the three professors. My research field is not Islamic tradition but India’s religious traditions. Since I have not studied Islam in a specialized manner, my comments may go off the point, but with your indulgence I would like to give some comments and ask some questions, having read the papers with my background.

First of all, Professor Noon said that salvation, the term used in the Judeo-Christian tradition in the West, has a secularized Judeo-Christian nuance and therefore has no equivalent in the Islamic tradition. Professor Noon then cited concrete examples of the Islamic version of “salvation,” using this term as a temporary substitute. As I engage in the comparative study of religions—that is, I compare different religions—it seems to me, from this academic perspective, that the concrete examples of “salvation” in the Islamic tradition mentioned in the paper perfectly correspond in their structure to salvation in the Judeo-Christian tradition. If those examples had been presented without the introduction specifying that they concerned Islam, one could have thought that they referred to salvation in Judaism or Christianity instead. This underlies what was mentioned in the beginning, that we all share our humanity beyond our different religious traditions.

In this sense, I think that the Islamic tradition, too, has an equivalent of salvation structurally, or in the structure of faith, despite Professor Noon's reservations about salvation. I would appreciate it very much if Professor Noon could elaborate further on this point.

As for Professor Ibrahim's paper, I also read it with great interest. When I read it, I was immediately reminded of the work of a well-known Japanese philosopher, Tetsuro Watsuji, called *Fudo* ("The Climate"). He analyzes in this book how the climate of a given locale influences its cultural and religious thought, proposing several types of climate into which the world can be divided. His classification differs slightly from Professor Ibrahim's, but I believe that Professor Ibrahim presented a perspective quite close to Watsuji's.

Professor Ibrahim also said that ideological differences between the Shaykh and the Shāh reflected cultural and social differences between the backgrounds in which they were born and grew up, and that those differences ideologically culminated in uni-culturalism and multi-culturalism respectively. I think Professor Ibrahim made a very clear analysis. Since my field of specialization is Indian tradition, I would like to ask a few questions focusing on the Shāh's thought. The Shāh's ideological pattern or structure, which developed in the Indian tradition, seems to closely parallel the Vedanta of Hinduism, which is my specialized research theme. I would like to know if the Shāh, who was originally born and grew up in the Indian social and cultural tradition, had any contact with Hinduism in the process of developing his thought. I would also like to know if Vedanta is mentioned in any of the Shāh's writings.

Professor Ibrahim said that it was not appropriate for Western scholars to refer to the Indian-Islamic Reformism as the Indian Wahhabism, and I understand Professor Ibrahim's point very well. At the same time, however, I think that it could at least be referred to as the "Indian type of Wahhabism" based on Islam's Tawhid. I do understand what Professor Ibrahim meant, given the Indian society's tradition of religious pluralism. India's Muslims have their faith reflected everywhere even at the level of everyday customs, based on Tawhid and in an attempt to differentiate their faith clearly from other religious traditions. I think that this attempt to purify their faith can be expressed as something like an "Indian type of Wahhabism." So I would like to know what Professor Ibrahim thinks of this.

With regard to Professor Zein's paper, I would like to know how today's Muslim scholars are trying to bridge the gaps in cultural traditions, although I may be deviating from more realistic issues, as Iraq was mentioned in the paper. In other words, I would like to know what types of gaps have the most important cultural and societal implications between the conventional, traditional *ulamā* and new-generation, somewhat Westernized Muslim intellectuals, and how today's Muslim scholars are trying to fill those gaps concretely, outside of political issues.

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Professor Zein said that the fourteen principles of *ikhtilāf* that al-Awāni revealed were "ideal ethics, yet achievable in our day-to-day activities." Wouldn't applying those universal ethics to today's specific situations require some hermeneutic approaches, to some extent? What approaches are being used mainly? Hermeneutic approaches include literalism, metaphorism, and so on. I would appreciate it very much if Professor Zein could elaborate on this point as well.

Doshisha University

MORI Koichi

Professor Noon, Professor Ibrahim, Professor Zein, thank you very much for coming to Doshisha. I still remember very well how warmly all of you welcomed me when I visited your university several years ago. I thank you all again for your kindness. At that time, I had the opportunity to speak at the International Islamic University about President Bush's fundamentalism. As you may recall, my main research field is the religious history of the United States, and today I would like to focus on theology, sharing with you what I think of the reality of the theories of salvation in Islam and Christianity.

About Professor Noon's lecture, Professor Sawai said that there seems to be some commonality between the Judeo-Christian traditions and Islam with regard to salvation, although Islam has no term or notion exactly corresponding to salvation. As for me, on the other hand, having listened to today's lectures, I feel that there are quite clear differences. So I am not sure if I have correctly understood what is in Islam that may correspond to the notion of salvation. I would like to do a comparative study on this theme one day.

I found Professor Ibrahim's and Professor Zein's talks on diversity in Islam extremely interesting. For the last five years, I have been spending time and conducting research with Professor Nakata and other Muslim scholars, and I have already come to think that today's Christianity and Islam differ considerably in terms of the theory of salvation as well as the theoretical framework and the views of the universe and the world on which the theory of salvation is based. So, in view of the diversity in Islam that has been discussed, I presume that in reality Islam and Christianity differ far more than I believe.

To get into the details, I believe that major differences lie in the way notions such as heaven and life after death are understood. About 300 years ago, there could have been little difference between Christianity and Islam in this regard. However, during the subsequent 300 years, modernization and secularization have progressed to the extent that the theoretical framework on which the notion of salvation is founded, as expressed by the belief that God is in heaven where we will arrive after our death, has largely or almost completely collapsed. I think this is the situa-

tion in which the modern and contemporary world finds itself.

To this evolution, Christianity has responded in two completely different ways as represented by two groups, the liberals and the conservatives, to put it simply. Who are the conservatives? What are they trying to conserve? They are trying to protect to the death the kind of worldview that can validate the traditional theory of salvation. The liberals, on the other hand, have accepted a new worldview based on the findings of modern natural science and are trying to reconstruct the theory of salvation on that foundation. There is this radical difference between the two groups. In my opinion, they possess roughly equal shares of influence within Christianity. As for Islam, I think Islam has remained extremely uniform with regard to the way heaven and God's presence in heaven are understood and with regard to faith in life after death. This is the first thing I wished to express.

The second remark I wanted to make concerns the question as to how those who have such differing religious views and notions of salvation should coexist side by side in peace. I have not yet read the book Professor Zein mentioned, *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*, and I would really like to read it, although I have not figured out if it discusses disagreement within Islam or the question of coexistence on the premise of disagreement among several religions. I believe that the question of coexistence of several religions today inevitably points to the futility of insistence on "what is correct." So I think we should table this question, for it is more important to discuss how we can establish and share an ethics or manners by which those with different understandings can coexist in peace.

The very fact that we are able to exchange ideas and opinions here like this is proof that people who recognize and accept diversity have assembled here. However, once we go back to our respective religious communities, we cannot have a dialogue with those who are called fundamentalists in Christianity or Islamists in Islam, although we are supposed to belong to the same religion. This is because there are no ethics of disagreement within either religion, be it Islam or Christianity. No dialogue is possible between Christian fundamentalists and liberals.

So I think what we are expected to do at the moment is to find out how we can establish an ethics or manners of co-existence within our respective religions.

Responses

(Chair) Thank you very much. Since we will have time for general discussions in Session Three, here in the present session I would like to invite the presenters to take three minutes each and respond to the comments and answer the questions that have been posed.

Professor Noon, would you like to start, please?

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(Noon) Thank you very much. I am sorry because I do not understand Japanese. So, when you invited me, I thought you were saying something else. That is why I did not respond immediately.

I assume what I have to do now is to respond to the commentators' remarks. There are a few things that I hope I had correctly jotted down here based on what I understood from the translation and I hope there is no miscommunication between me and the commentators due to the translations. I appreciate all the comments.

Let me start with the comments of Professor Kobayashi. I just want to highlight a few things here. Number one, you have asked or tried to get some clarification on the relationship between the two streams of Tawhid. That is what I understand, and by this I guess you are referring to the Divine unity on the one hand and the other types of unity on the other. Am I right?

If this is so, then the question is how we can explain it in the context of a total perception of unity. I used the word "nucleus" in my presentation simply to reflect that the ultimate reference of unity has to be in the unity of God. Other unities spring from this "nucleus." According to Islam, God is only one, and that one God is Allah, and it is this God that creates things other than Him. So these "other things," which are called creatures, can be seen as being united in the sense that they are created by or come from the same God. They are basically of the same status.

Thus, this very first recognition of God gives rise to other unities (or other types/levels of unity) which can be explained as follows. Since all things "non-God" are created by the same God, they possess the same status as created beings. In other words, this is the unity of creatures which may be called the second level of unity after the unity of God.

Among the creatures, there is one special category called human. From the Islamic perspective, all humans can be traced ultimately to the same "parenthood" as they are the offspring of the first man ever created by God, namely Adam. As human, they all basically possess the same characteristics compared to animals. This is another type or level of unity, i.e., unity of humanity after the unity of creatures.

In this sense or at this level, all men are equal in terms of their rights as human being. There is no ranking in this respect, as each deserves common rights. Thus, if we find among humans those who are poor, regardless of whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim, it is our obligation to help them. Indeed, we are common in this particular respect. Also, if some humans' lives are severed by having been slaughtered by others—Muslims or non-Muslims—it is the right of all humans regardless of their religious affiliation to prevent such incidents from happening. These are examples that I can give to illustrate that unity at the level of humanity defines the universal obligation that all humans naturally have to observe. Thus, your reference to *Ummah Insaniah* is relevant here as it reflects the concept of being similar in this particular sense.

Professor Sawai, you implied that I have mentioned things about salvation of which you find some to be common in Judaism. Am I right?

(Sawai) And in Christianity.

(Noon) This is not something strange because Islam is the last in the series of Divine religions, whose same theological beliefs were made available to the earlier nations too. It is meant for people of the last period in this series of Semitic religions. If there are some commonalities, this is natural because the previous Divine religions were also from the same God. The coming of Islam was only to perfect the Divine religions of the past, especially in terms of Shar'iah. In this respect, there could be similarities and differences in Islam compared to the earlier ones. Only theologically, Islam is not revealed to be different from what were revealed before. I hope I have clarified the issue.

As for the structures of Islamic faith from which we may discern some ideas about salvation from the Islamic perspective, I think it is clearly mentioned in my paper. This is related to the last question raised by Professor Mori. I think salvation is the concern of all religions if by "salvation" we mean in essence the basic religious teachings on "being saved," "being salvaged," "being successful" and so on. Islam naturally has its own teachings about all this. What I said was that there is no term in Islamic sources that can be said to be exactly representing the notion of salvation as understood in English. What I can say is that Islam, too, has its own understanding of salvation. But its concept of salvation is developed from a composite of terminologies from Islamic sources whose collective meaning defines the concept and nature of Islamic salvation. This is what I mean.

The last issue that I want to highlight here is quite crucial. I think to a certain extent we are all "the victim of modernity" in one sense or another. That is why sometimes being modern in the strict sense of the word is not always an advantage to us although we have to live with it or to face it. One phenomenon that prevails in our time is the traditional-modern phenomenon. Most of the time we are forced to use this category to explain our society and religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Yes, this may serve certain purposes. For example, it can reveal patterns of thinking about religion from among its adherents at different times. It also discloses that people may have similar ways of looking at things but not necessarily of doing things. But the situation is more complex than that.

I subscribe to the idea that society has to take into account both the changing socio-cultural circumstances and the fixed Divine expectations if it is to be dynamic, and at the same time, firmly grounded. In other words, one cannot simply disregard religious considerations in the course of the development process. Society needs ethics and dignified principles derived especially from

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religion to make development more enhanced, more civilized. The fear is that development efforts are imbalanced because people are concerned merely with the material side of human needs. As we all know, technological, economic and other material advancement are important to serve and fulfill the physical needs of individual and society. But this is not all, especially when maximization of economic profit, for example, causes other people to suffer because some people disregard ethical practices by choosing cheating and corruption rather than the right and legitimate ways to attain their economic goals.

Here, religion plays the role of preventing people from illegitimate practices in their effort to attain economic achievement, thus salvaging others from misery. In Islam, for example, it is sinful to be corrupt and to cheat. I strongly believe that integrating and incorporating these religious, ethical and spiritual values in the development process is a good strategy for attaining such balanced development—i.e. by considering both what I call “the body and the soul” of development. I think you also have quite a similar idea in your tradition. For example, a Japanese scholar named Fukuzawa Yukichi has mentioned two dimensions of civilization, the internal and the external. Here the external one, as he mentions, refers to things like food, clothing, shelter and so on. And the internal one means the spiritual makeup of people, which is non-transferable. So as you can see, you also have in your tradition a scholar who really goes for the broader sense of civilization, which includes comfort in daily necessities, refinement of knowledge, and the cultivation of virtue to elevate human life to a higher plain. I think in this sense we are sharing this spirit in our development process nowadays, in Malaysia. Thank you very much.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Ibrahim, and then Professor Zein, please. For three minutes each, please respond to the comments.

(Ibrahim) First of all I have to thank very much my colleagues Professor Kobayashi, Professor Sawai and Professor Mori for their enlightening comments and I am sure that we are going to benefit from their valued advice. There are a number of issues, I think, that demand our careful reflection, but following the advice of the chairperson, I will concentrate on Professor Sawai’s comments, for which I thank him profusely.

I will read with great interest the book “The Climate” by the Japanese philosopher, which seems to be quite relevant for developing my argument. This is very interesting, and I will make sure that I look into this scholarly piece.

Now, to your other question, did Shāh Walī Allāh touch on Hindu thought? To tell you honestly, I do not know for certain. But my impression while reading his sources is that he did. However, what I do recollect is that in several places in his discourse he advised Indian Muslims to establish more and closer contacts with the Arabs because, in his words, they are our ances-

tors and coreligionists. That is what I recollect, but whether he emphasized Hindu thought, I am not sure.

Next we come to the controversial issue of Indian Wahhabism. I agree with you that this is really controversial, but my point is that if those who coined this term mean that Shāh Walī Allāh is a replica, or a carbon copy, of Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd Al-Wahhāb, this is perhaps rather unfair, because the man developed his own thought and was a mujaddid in his own right. I have a strong hunch that Indian Wahhabism is a political term that has been coined by the British in the late ‘90s of the 19th century and in the 20th century to condemn the resistance of Indian Muslims and Hindus to British imperialism. As you know, in 1858 there was a major Indian revolt against the British in which the Muslims had actively participated. Before that, and since the 1830s at least, there was an anti-British drive in the Indian sub-continent in which Muslims played a considerable role. It seemed that the British imperialists aspired to discredit this movement politically by relating it to Wahhabism, which—in the past and until now—has been the custodian of hyper-Salafism. In a nutshell, the British were determined not to compromise with the revolution, but to crush it mercilessly. Hence their term Indian Wahhabism is politically motivated, it is heavily loaded politically. The other comments I should withhold in light of the chairman’s time limit. Thank you.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Zein, please.

(Zein) Thank you very much, Professor Nakata, and I am equally appreciative to the learned comments that were made throughout the discussion. As Professor Ibrahim said, these comments will certainly be considered for the improvement of this paper.

There was just one thing to be said. In Islam, it is inconceivable not to talk about the universality of ethics. This is because universality of ethics is tied up with the concept of Tawhid, or the Oneness and transcendence of God. Now, what I was saying here was that while Islam accepts pluralism as an existential fact, at the same time it would not accept the two positions of pluralism which will emerge out of the transcendental unity of religions; although the latter emphasizes the truth claim, but in such a way that would not be accepted by Islam, neither would Islam accept a pluralism that would be based on a relativism that sacrifices the truth claim. The pluralistic position of Islam would certainly accept pluralism as an existential fact, as I said, and Muslims have had to face up to that; in history they created a pluralistic state, and an international one. And Islam emphasizes that a truth should not be the monopoly of a clergy. In Islam, the Muslim has to strive to understand the truth and to live with it.

Finally, Muslims, in order to address this complex situation, were educated to look for an ethics of disagreement, and I agree with Professor Mori that it could also be an ethics of co-

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existence. This set of ethics should be practiced from within and without. You should not have one set of ethics of disagreement with Muslims where you are nice and tolerant, but when you turn to non-Muslims you start to be nasty and not follow the ethics of disagreement. I think this will go against Islam completely, so I urge my fellow Muslims to follow Tawhid and follow that important and cardinal principle in Islam, which is the universality of ethics. Thank you very much Professor Nakata for being patient with me.

(Chair) Thank you very much. It is now time to close the first session. I would like to thank again the three speakers and the three commentators.

Kyoto Joint Symposium of
CISMOR and KIRKHS
"Salvation and Pluralism in Monotheistic Religions"

Session 2

The Concepts of “Salvation” and “Emancipation” in Pure Land Mahāyāna

Kyoto Women's University Michio Tokunaga

General

The common topic of this symposium, i.e. “Salvation and Pluralism,” is too inclusive a notion for me to understand it with precise accuracy. Is this a topic similar to that of “Christian Faith in a Religiously Plural World” which was frequently debated some ten years ago? If so, the topic “Salvation and Pluralism” could be understood as “the truth advocated by a certain religion and its significance in the contemporary, religiously plural world.” With this understanding I will be advancing my paper.

1. Salvation and Emancipation in Mahāyāna Buddhism

And yet there remains a question about the notion of “salvation.” What is “salvation” in this context? Does it simply mean a “religious truth,” or is it strictly limited to the idea of “salvation” which makes us think, for instance, of God’s saving work in Christian faith in its proper sense? In that case, Buddhism has to remain silent solely because there is no relevant way of grasping the idea’s ultimate reality in Buddhism. The *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (ERE), however, gives a definition of the Buddhist notion of salvation as follows:

- (1) well-being won and held against disaster, and
- (2) assurance and realization of blissful security hereafter, salvation is a structural idea in Buddhism no less than in other religions.

In addition to these definitions of Buddhist “salvation,” the ERE gives another description of this notion, as follows:

...we find that salvation in Buddhism is, ultimately, escape from *dukkha*, i.e. from suffering, pain, misery, sorrow, proximately, from the lusts, enmity, and stupidity that inevitably entail suffering, however much they may induce transient delights or satisfaction. These causes of *dukkha* are constantly represented as dangerous, not because, as a body of ‘sin,’ they set man at enmity with a deity, but because they hold him in bondage to misery now or hereafter. Thus ‘salvation,’ for a Buddhist is a state of sentient existence conceived as freed from *dukkha*. *Nor is the sentient, conceived as thus freed in a future life, considered as a saved ‘soul’ or detached entity.* [emphasis added]

Is this notion of “salvation,” in the broadest sense of the word, comparable to that of Christianity or of any other Semitic religion? As you may know, Buddhism in general presents the way to reach the final goal of “emancipation” or “liberation” from human limitation and bondage,

i.e., selfish desires, relativism, self-centeredness, and so forth. This state is commonly expressed as *satori*, originally a Japanese term used to indicate becoming awakened or enlightened to the ultimate truth-reality in Zen Buddhism, and came to mean in general the final stage one reaches in the Buddhist path. One who is emancipated or liberated from human limitation and bondage is the one who is awakened or enlightened to the ultimate truth-reality, and such a person is called “Buddha,” which literally means an “awakened one” or an “enlightened one.”

Gautama Siddhārtha or Shākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, was called “Buddha” because he emancipated himself from all kinds of human bondage. In the same sense, anyone who follows the path under the guidance of Shākyamuni’s teaching and has attained enlightenment is also called “Buddha.” That is, Buddhism teaches the way to become a “Buddha,” and “Buddhahood” is attained by following the teaching presented by Shākyamuni, not with the help of the saving work of something absolute or somebody beyond us.

Some further comments on Buddhist “salvation” are in order. The greatest difference of the Buddhist notion of emancipation or liberation from the common sense of “salvation” is that it is promoted not by anybody beyond oneself, but rather by oneself through one’s continuing self-restraint or self-regulation based on the direction left by Shākyamuni Buddha. Thus, the way to the final emancipation should be found by each individual as he/she follows the teaching left by Shākyamuni. In short, there is no “Savior,” no “Redeemer.”

Notwithstanding all that I have stated up to now, in Mahāyāna Buddhism there is a major stream in which a notion similar to that of “salvation” is found. It is commonly called “Pure Land Buddhism,” which arose within the Mahāyāna movement as representing its ultimate ideal that all beings can equally reach the final stage of emancipation. This stream is usually called “Pure Land Mahāyāna.” In Pure Land Mahāyāna, we can see the functioning of a “salvation system” enabled by a Buddha called “Amida.”

Before discussing the notion of “salvation” in Pure Land Mahāyāna, however, I have to clarify who or what Amida Buddha is. The original Sanskrit terms for Amida are *amitābha* and *amitāyus*, which literally mean “immeasurable light” and “immeasurable life,” i.e., the ultimate truth-reality which transcends space and time. Amida Buddha, or a personified expression of the ultimate truth-reality, enables all beings of blind foolishness and karmic evil to be born in their own Pure Land, which is promised in the so-called “Primal Vow,” or *hongwan* in Japanese. One’s birth in Amida’s Pure Land is thus activated through the working of Amida’s Primal Vow, or in other words, boundless compassion.

Viewed from the side of sentient beings, they can be born in Amida’s Pure Land through accepting the compassion of Amida. For them, this acceptance of Amida’s working is the key to

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being enabled to attain birth in the Pure Land. It is on this issue that the Pure Land Buddhists’ theological discussions have dwelt for many centuries.

I have explained so far that even in Mahāyāna Buddhism, which encourages us to become emancipated through our own efforts and self-discipline, we find a notion similar to that of “salvation” in the so-called Pure Land Buddhism. As I have already stated, this notion of “salvation” is applied to mean one’s attainment of birth in Amida Buddha’s Pure Land. The greatest difference of this notion from Christianity—that is, in terms of the meaning of “salvation”—lies at this point. This is because “birth in Amida’s Pure Land” is not the terminal station of the Buddhist path. One has to follow another way to reach the final state of enlightenment in the Pure Land. Thus, the Pure Land is regarded as, so to speak, an idealistic place to promote one’s attainment of enlightenment without any human hindrance or limitations. In this sense, the notion of “salvation” here has merely secondary significance.

The foregoing is a general understanding of the Pure Land idea of “salvation.” However, another interpretation of this notion appeared during the Kamakura period in Japan (around 1190-1333 CE). It was Shinran (1173-1262 CE) who claimed that attaining birth in Amida’s Pure Land is the final stage of the Buddhist path. When one is born in the Pure Land, one is liberated from any human bondage and, at the same time, attains the ultimate enlightenment as a Buddha. Thus, there is no need for one to continue more practice in the Pure Land. For Shinran, therefore, Amida’s Pure Land was no longer an ideal place for practicing and fulfilling the Buddhist way. Being born in the Pure Land is nothing other than becoming a Buddha therein.

Being born in the Pure Land is thus everything, and it is accelerated solely by Amida’s power. What is necessary, then, for attaining birth in the Pure Land is to entrust oneself totally to the compassionate working of Amida’s power. Nothing else is necessary for the attainment of birth in the Pure Land except entrusting one’s entire self to Amida.

This is a rough sketch of attaining “salvation” through an “other power,” that is, Amida Buddha’s working as interpreted by Shinran. He also uses the verb “save” in this context—as, for example: “The Buddha aspired to save the multitudes of beings from pain and affliction.”

2. Issues Arising from Buddhist Emancipation or Salvation

As I have explained so far, in Buddhism we can barely find a notion similar to that of “salvation” in its Semitic sense. The general ideal of attaining emancipation or enlightenment should be a characteristic of Buddhism in general. However, two major characteristics of Buddhism hinder contemporary Buddhists from having dialogue with other world religions, namely that it is seen

- (1) as too individualistic or personal a way of attaining the final stage, and
- (2) to have too negativistic a view of human existence and the world.

It goes without saying that these two characteristics of Buddhism in general seem to prevent dialogue with other religions even in the contemporary religiously plural world. I am afraid that Westerners would be astonished if I said that there has been hardly any dialogue among different schools of Japanese Buddhism concerning contemporary social issues. WCRP, or World Conference of Religions for Peace, is the only united organization of Japanese Buddhist denominations. There are, however, many sects that are indifferent to this movement.

As you may well understand, Buddhism has placed too much emphasis on attaining “liberation,” “emancipation,” or “enlightenment” for one’s own sake rather than for the welfare of the society, world, or humankind. In the early period of the history of Chinese Buddhism, too, such a lack of social engagement received keen reproaches from the side of Confucians. In other words, the Confucians regarded Buddhism as exceedingly “individualistic,” or too “personal.” In their reproaches, we can find a certain similarity to the criticism of Buddhism offered, for instance, by Christians today.

Forced by such criticism, and also by the growing necessity of social engagement in the contemporary world, almost all the Buddhist schools in Japan seem to be eager to participate in the contemporary social movements. But, frankly speaking, they have not yet succeeded in finding the basis for ethical engagement with society.

In order to consider this issue on the basis of a Buddhist way of thinking, and without applying Western standards, we have above all to take that very essential principle of Buddhism into account which is briefly expressed in a well-known phrase regarded as the essence of Shakyamuni’s teaching:

*All phenomenal things are impermanent, All existing things are non-substantial,
All things are the causes of suffering;
Nirvana is the true happiness*

It goes without saying that this phrase is based on a sort of “negativistic” view of life and the human world. Although it is quite often misunderstood as “nihilism” or “pessimism” by non-Buddhists, the truth contained in this phrase is not so superficial or shallow. The phrase that is the essence of Shākyamuni’s entire teaching clarifies the ultimate reality of the world, and points to the total negation of the ego-centeredness of human existence. It implies that only through realizing the futility of ego-centeredness can we reach the final emancipation from human bondage, and only on the basis of such a realization is true compassion activated.

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This way of viewing human existence develops into the realization of humanity's imperfectness. As a result, the opposition of "good and bad," "right and wrong," "useful and useless," and so on, is to be regarded as problematic. In other words, the values or standards produced by human reasoning are not always trustworthy. It is on this basis that the final goal of "emancipation" or "liberation" in Buddhism is encouraged.

Therefore, when Prince Shotoku, who was a great guardian and patron of Japanese Buddhism in the early 7th century, left last words before he passed away, he said:

Everything in the human world is false and empty, and only the Buddha's teaching is true.
(Phrase attached to the Tenjukoku Mandara)

Here we can find an incisive criticism of so-called "humanity." In addition, in the Seventeen-Article Constitution which was promulgated by Prince Shotoku in 604, we find such words as the following:

I am not always wise, and he is not always ignorant. Both are merely foolish beings.

It is on the basis of such an insight into humanity that Shinran, whom I have mentioned above and who highly respected Prince Shotoku, composed the following hymn:

*I am such that I do not know right and wrong
And cannot distinguish false and true;
I lack even small love and small compassion,
And yet, for fame and profit, enjoy teaching others.*
(Hymns of the Dharma Ages)

Also we find in Shinran's letters a very interesting expression, "sign of rejecting the world," as a synonym of the aspiration to attain birth in Amida's Pure Land.

Here it may be necessary to mention Genshin (942-1017), an indispensable and great figure in the history of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism who first systematized the Pure Land philosophy in his magnum opus, *Ojoyoshu*. In this book we find a well-known saying which became a conventional phrase among the aspirants of birth in the Pure Land:

Reject this defiled world and aspire for birth in the Pure Land.

There is no doubt that Shinran's words "sign of rejecting the world" originated in Genshin's phrase. According to Genshin's thought, "to reject the world" is "to aspire for birth," and "aspiring for birth" is no different than "rejecting the world." Then why did Shinran use "rejecting the world" only? If he had used "aspiring for birth" instead, the sentence would have been much easier to understand.

I would like to state this again: if the words "aspiring for birth" were substituted for "rejecting the world" in the above-quoted phrase "sign of rejecting the world," it would be much easier to understand. And yet Shinran kept using only "rejecting the world" in guiding people. Why?

According to my interpretation, Shinran intended to let people know the never-changing truth presented by Shākyamuni Buddha that human society made up of self-centered desires and calculation is neither trustworthy nor effective for the attainment of the final goal of enlightenment.

We have a well-known book written by one of Shinran’s disciples, entitled *Tannisho*, or *A Record in Lament of Divergences*, in which we find notable words attributed to Shinran: “When I consider deeply the Vow of Amida, which arose from five kalpas of profound thought, I realize that it was entirely for the sake of myself alone!” Here we find a very subjective or personal characteristic of Buddhism handed down from Shākyamuni to Shinran. In addition, we also find the difficulty of setting the standard of social ethics, as stated by Shinran in the same book:

I know nothing at all of good or evil. For if I could know thoroughly, as Amida Tathagata knows, that an act was good, then I would know good. If I could know thoroughly, as the Tathagata knows, that an act was evil, then I would know evil. But with a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world—this burning house—all matters without exception are empty and false, totally without truth and sincerity. The *nembutsu* alone is true and real.

Thus, when we speak of social ethics from the standpoint of Buddhism, we will have to take into consideration the aspects I have discussed so far. If we place a wholehearted trust in humanity, there is no difference between Buddhism and the so-called “religion of humanity.” The framework of Shin Buddhist social ethics, therefore, should be established on a negative view of humanity such as the one that Shākyamuni, Prince Shotoku, Genshin, and Shinran embraced.

Concerning the issue of social ethics in Buddhism and in Shinran’s thought more particularly, John B. Cobb Jr., a well-known Christian theologian who has a wide and deep knowledge of Buddhism, states:

What Christians most miss in Buddhism is often referred to as the ethical and especially the social-ethical emphasis. Some Buddhists have acknowledged that in this area they have something to learn from Christianity. And there are already movements among Japanese Buddhists seeking to fill this lacuna. (*Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1982, p. 132.)

It is true that almost all the schools of Buddhism in Japan are seriously concerned about social ethics out of the needs of contemporary society. In propagating the “anti-war movement,” “anti-Yasukuni-Shrine movement,” and “anti-buraku-ghetto discrimination movement,” Japanese Buddhists have obtained some results. The problem, however, is whether they are propagated based on a common Buddhist notion or ideal, as a joint project of all the sects of Japanese Buddhism.

Cobb further states: “What seems to the Christian to be missing, then, is not virtue or goodness. What is lacking is a *trans-social norm* by virtue of which society is judged” (ibid. p. 133, emphasis added). What is most difficult here for Buddhists to understand is the “trans-social norm” in Cobb’s terminology. Is it something endowed by God? Or is it totally freed of human ego-centeredness?

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In the Bible God is often conceived as lawgiver and judge. Although Jewish society in part embodies these laws and is thereby sanctioned by this view of God, God's commands are frequently experienced as judging the society. Certainly God stands beyond society as a trans-social source of norms whose commands have direct social relevance. The question as to whether society is functioning rightly is constantly renewed. There is no doubt that this biblical view directs attention to issues of social justice. (ibid., p. 134.)

According to this statement by Cobb, "trans-social norm" is clearly related to "social justice," which raises a serious question to Buddhists. Namely, is it something similar to "*justice*," which President Bush of the United States has frequently used since September 11, 2001? Who on earth determines that this is "justice" and that is not? For Buddhists who (fortunately or unfortunately) do not have the notion of "justice," there seem to be two kinds of "justice" representing the benefit of each respective side.

As I mentioned before, Buddhists should not be indifferent to social ethics, since everybody in the contemporary world is burdened with the same serious problems which were never even dreamed of in the past. But if we set up a certain "*norm*" in order to solve a certain problem under the name of "justice," there may occur another conflict because of the "justice" we have set up. The only key we should possess for opening the problem of social issues on the basis of the Buddhist spirit is whether we can conduct it with a deep realization of our imperfectness, which is awakened by the teaching of Shākyamuni Buddha.

Alfred Bloom, who has been leading a Shin Buddhist school based on Shinran's Pure Land teaching in the USA, states the following (emphasis added):

There are four principles that are life-enhancing and life-fulfilling: love/compassion, *justice*, peace and community.

Love and compassion are the fundamental basis of human relations, promoting life and mutuality or reciprocity, dispelling fear and abolishing hatred, prejudice and violence. These values inspire respect for the other person, the insider as well as outsider. They do not abolish interpersonal problems, but they encourage us to identify with the other and put ourselves in their shoes to discover a true resolution of issues.

If there is true love and compassion, there will be justice. One cannot say one loves and then permit a person to be treated unfairly and unjustly. Justice means respect, treating others right, seeking their welfare and happiness. 1 John 4:19 states: "If a man says, 'I love God' while hating his brother, he is a liar."

Here Bloom suggests a new type of "justice" originating in Buddhist compassion and Christian love. He also says:

These are not simply unreachable ideals but necessities of our modern world. We need converging spiritualities in our pluralism that will share mutually to strengthen each other and aid in realizing the true religion within each faith.

In this statement by Alfred Bloom, we can find the basis of social engagement for all Buddhists in spite of the organizational and theological differences between Japanese Buddhist schools. I will close by repeating his words:

These are not simply unreachable ideals but necessities of our modern world. We need converging spiritualities in our pluralism that will share mutually to strengthen each other and aid in realizing the true religion within each faith.

In Quest of Repentance: An Overview of Judaism and Its Basic Idea of Salvation

Doshisha University Isaiah Teshima

(1)

Religion exists in order to save the human soul from dangers and troubles without discrimination. But, the conviction that religion is a savior creates many problems in the real world. Perhaps one of the greatest has been the imposition of faith on infidels who do not accept salvation on any terms. In the Middle Ages, Christianity and Islam were the religions of the rulers. They were able to exert power over the subjects of their realms in religious matters, so that Jews as subjects often suffered from violent efforts of conversion such as during the Inquisitions and the period of the Almohads; according to the documents, Jews chose martyrdom as the alternative to conversion in many cases.

To be fair, one should note that Judaism experienced a drastic transformation due to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by the Romans in 70 CE, so that the Judaism of the Second Temple period is not identical with present-day rabbinic Judaism. Indeed, Judaism was once the state religion for the ruling majority in the Second Temple period, and according to Josephus Flavius, there was a Jewish king (John Hyrcanus) who indirectly imposed his faith and religious customs upon the people of Idomaea, the newly conquered area (*Jewish Antiquities* 13:257). Any religion can become a tool of rulership and a political device for kings and governments in spite of the transcendental nature of religion itself.

Nevertheless, the universalism which regards a particular faith as something absolute that all humanity should accept, i.e. the religious conviction of proselytism which is held by some religions as the most important value, is basically foreign to the nature of Judaism. Indeed, Christian theologians of the last two centuries often point out in a critical tone that Judaism is the religion of a people that has a strong tendency to be particularistic and to isolate itself from the rest of humanity in matters of faith; therefore, Judaism is not exactly as universal as are Christianity or Islam in terms of the spirit of monotheistic salvation.

This critique of Judaism has a basis in its structure and idea regarding conversion. For Rabbinic Judaism is certainly different from Christianity and Islam in its attitudes to the conversion of proselytes. Judaism discourages potential proselytes rather than encouraging them with clear affirmation. Conversion to Judaism is perceived by the rabbis, for instance, as a process of making a person realize how unhappy, miserable, and uncomfortable it is to live as a Jew in

this world. Many would be discouraged at this point, but a few would say with a humble heart, “I know of this and I do not have the merits” (i.e., “I am unworthy of its honor”). Then, that person will be accepted for conversion immediately and will be taught some of the commandments, light and heavy ones with their penalties, according to this rabbinic source (Yevamoth 47a).

But, the process is not finished until the rabbis remind the aspiring convert of the disadvantage of being a Jew by saying: “Alas, you know that as [while] you made your way to this level, you were not punished even if you ate meat with milk, not punished to death even if you broke the laws of the day of Shabbath. But from now on,” the person will be punished for all of these. Then follows the striking announcement that reveals the essence of the spirit of Judaism and its basic idea of salvation. I quote from the text of the Babl. Talmud, Yevamoth 47a:

Likewise, thus you should inform him of the rewards, saying, “Alas, you know that the world to come is made only for the righteous ones. And concerning the Israel of this time, none of them can receive much of goodness and sufferings.”

The announcement illustrates the clear distinction between Judaism and other monotheistic religions—such as Christianity—in its denial of guaranteeing the immediate reward. In light of this self-understanding, I think, the concept of salvation is not appropriate to express the spirit of Judaism. That is to say, while Christianity can promise individual salvation as the reward for the act of conversion, yet rabbinic Judaism demands from the proselytes a determination to join the sufferings of the Jewish people and to give up on the high expectation of their own reward, i.e., individual salvation through conversion.

The reason to be a Jew, at least according to this classical text, has nothing to do with personal comforts, nor with sufferings. Every Jew is just asked to stand firm in their sufferings, to be one aspiring for *the world to come*—awaiting a more ideal world for the righteous ones.

In sum, the lesson from the text is twofold. First, the sufferings and rewards of Judaism are ultimately not an individual matter but are collective, as expressed in the phrase “Israel of this time.” Second, obviously, reward belongs only to the righteous one individually, whereas the text says that none of “Israel of this time” is fully worthy of the reward. It follows that “the Israel of this time”—as a group—is not righteous enough for the reward. The wording of the text is not positive despite the fact of the many sages and Hasidim (pious people) are included in the Israel of this time. By all means, Israel has to be righteous collectively in order to receive the reward. This is a reason why the Jews prefer the term *redemption* to *salvation* in order to express their central religious goal. Next, I shall elaborate more on these terms.

(2)

Redemption is the English translation of the Hebrew "*Ge'ulah*." The term comes from the verbal root "*Ga'al*" which basically means Israelites' act of regaining lost inheritance by their paying debts or some kind of price. In the laws of Leviticus 25 and 27, the act of redemption is said to be obligatory for the relatives or members of the families when the original owner does not have the economic wherewithal to do so. The act of redemption can even include the case in which Israelites sell themselves into slavery.

Therefore, the implication of the Hebrew term for redemption is not exactly the same as that of salvation, even though the term speaks of deliverance from troubles: this is because the person does not fall into debt without reason. In other words, according to the biblical view, the person who needs redemption is not regarded as an innocent one free from blame for the situation, for sometimes the person can be a sinner who should take the blame himself or herself (Isaiah 44:21-22; Jeremiah 32:8; 22-25). Therefore, one cannot go free until someone comes to clear his or her debts.

This self-critical understanding of human distress and pains is often missing or is understressed in many contemporary arguments about salvation focusing on the victims only, whereas traditional Judaism regards human pains as just punishment. That is to say, redemption in Judaism signifies not only salvation from distress, but also the ultimate liberation from the burdens or penalties that humans place upon themselves by their misdeeds. Therefore, the Savior is also called the Redeemer; this cannot be but God Himself, who punishes Israel for their sins (Isaiah 41:14).

Within this conceptual structure, Judaism considers that redemption necessarily goes together with repentance. Again, to illustrate the point, let me quote a passage from the Talmud (Sanhedrin 97b), which reports a discussion on redemption and repentance between R. Joshua and R. Eliezer, who belong to the second generation of Yabneh after the destruction of the Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Said Rab, "All the appointed times have ended. And the matter [redemption] does not depend upon anything but repentance and good deeds." Shumoel said, "One standing in mourning may be enough for it [the coming of redemption]." Tannaim taught: R. Eliezer said, "If Israel does repentance [*Teshuvah*], they will be redeemed. If not, they will not be redeemed." R. Joshua said to R. Eliezer, "If they do not do repentance, are they not redeemed?! On the contrary, God will make the king stand to put hard decrees [of persecution] against Israel like Haman; then, Israel will do repentance (by force); and then, God will bring them back to the good state."

The text continues their exchange of arguments in which, for persuasion, they cite various biblical verses against each other. They are sages who escaped from the seized city of Jerusalem with their master Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai (Gittin 56a); they witness the destruction of the temple by the Romans, and so are aware of the question of responsibility for the national tragedy. Josephus Flavius, the contemporary Jewish historian, was not reluctant to blame their countrymen for the destruction, saying “Reflecting on these things, one will find that God has a care for men, and by all kinds of premonitory signs, shows His people the way of salvation, while they owe their destruction to folly and calamities of their own choosing” (Jewish War, VI, 310).

Those sages of the Yabneh generations of rabbinic Judaism hold the strong sense of responsibility for continuing Judaism after the destruction, which certainly affects R. Eliezer’s claim that redemption depends on repentance. Yet, what is repentance in Judaism in the first place? Repentance is “*Teshuvah*” in Hebrew, which literally means *returning*. Repentance is the act of returning, according to Hebrew. Then, one may ask where the one should return from, and to where. In general, the idea is returning to the presence of God from the state of sin or the feelings of the remoteness from His Presence.

Let me quote a biblical verse to illustrate this point: “Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, ‘If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines’” (1Sam 7:3; cf. 2Kings 17:13). As the quote shows, the fundamental state of the *Teshuvah* demands that the people be totally devoted to God, whom they formerly approached with their minds on other things.

The concepts of repentance and redemption, however, expand their meanings when the kingdoms of the Israelites are destroyed and the people are sent into exile. For instance, the concept of returning comes to mean not only the moral act of conscientiousness but also the physical return to Jerusalem of the people of exile; and also, the concept of redemption which originally lies in a concrete legal context shifts to signify the salvation of the people from the state of exile, as if the Lord sees the people of Israel in exile as his lost inheritance and He comes to pay the ransom to bring back them to Jerusalem.

Indeed, the language of the prophet Isaiah connects the return of the Israelites from Babylon to Jerusalem with the concept of the redemption as follows: “So *the redeemed ones* of the LORD shall *return*, And come to Zion with singing” (Isaiah 51:11 [35:10]); another example is in Isaiah 59:20: “‘The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,’ Says the LORD.” Thus, Israel’s return to Jerusalem is regarded as the redemption by God, while those coming back to Jerusalem are also regarded as sinners; thus, the significance of repentance for redemption grows immeasurably.

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But according to the Bible, the event of the return from exile also seems to require no accomplishment of repentance by the Israelites. In other words, the occurrence of the redemption from exile is initiated only by the will of God. Thus we read in Jeremiah 29:10: "For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and *cause you to return to this place*," and also in Isaiah 52:2-3: "Shake yourself from the dust, arise; Sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion! For thus says the LORD: You have sold yourselves for nothing, And you *shall be redeemed* without money." That is to say, the destruction of the temple and the exile of the people by the Babylonians are due to the sins of the Israelites; yet, when the time comes, God bestows the special mercy on Israel and brings about *the return from exile* through the Persians rising in the sixth century BCE.

Now, let us go back to the previous discussion of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua with these biblical traditions in mind, and let us consider the meaning of repentance more closely. R. Eliezer claims that redemption totally depends on repentance, while R. Joshua disagrees with him to teach that repentance is not an act initiated by the human, but required God's involvement; therefore, redemption cannot be brought about by repentance without the involvement of God. This exchange of opinions contains some very important points about repentance and redemption in Judaism.

(3)

The two completely different understandings of repentance derive, respectively, from the biblical traditions. As for R. Eliezer, all of the four biblical texts (Jeremiah 3:22; Malachi 3:7; Isaiah 30: 15; Jeremiah 4: 1) he cites for his argument place the verb "returning" before anything else in the syntactical order, thereby teaching the significance of repentance for bringing about the redemption of the Israelites.¹

For his part, R. Joshua counters R. Eliezer's argument with four different quotes from the Bible which represent the four different aspects of God's redemption.² First, Isaiah 52:3 shows that the redemption of the Lord has no pre-conditions and no human causes. Then, Jeremiah 3:14 teaches that redemption is not a collective act but a selective one in which God Himself chooses men and women to bring back to Zion; then, Isaiah 49:7 argues that God's selection includes not only the righteous but also imperfect ones; and finally, Daniel 12:7 claims that redemption has a date for its occurrence, and happens not without its historical scenario.

Thus, a brief overview of the exchange of these biblical quotes reveals the fact that, in the end, the sages are discussing two different issues. R. Eliezer concerns himself only with verses that convey the importance of repentance without relating them to the idea of redemption. In turn,

R. Joshua's quotes focus only on verses which expose the nature of redemption without mentioning the significance of the term "returning." The arguments of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua thus do not regard repentance and redemption together as the direct and immediate cause for the event of divine salvation. Therefore, neither of the sages logically succeeds in affirming or negating the cause and effect relationship of repentance and redemption through the Hebrew Bible. They just try to argue the distinctions of each concept (i.e., of repentance or redemption) separately, without truly proving or disproving that repentance is the cause for redemption.

The difficulty in associating repentance and redemption in the two rabbis' arguments is not accidental, but has roots in the Hebrew Bible itself. For the Bible understands the Babylonian (or Assyrian) exile as the result of the sins of idolatry or social injustice (Amos 5:15-27; 7:15-17; Isaiah 5:8-13), and so redemption must be understood in regard to these sins. That is to say, when redemption signifies the release from the bondage of exile (Isaiah 43: 1-6; 14), it must assume the pardon of sins as the requirement for the return from Babylon to Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:21-28).

In this regard, it is natural for the concept of the redemption to connect itself with that of repentance, if repentance brings the pardon. But the Hebrew Bible is not clear on the significance of repentance. For the prophets had consistently called upon Israel *to return to the presence of God* (i.e., to do repentance, *Teshuvah*), long before the exile actually took place. Yet Israel did not listen to the voice, and was punished with destruction and exile in reality. Therefore, the meaning of repentance must adapt to address the new difficult reality and deal with the sins already committed by the people; also it must involve the forgiveness of these sins by God, as we read in 1 Kings 8:46-50 (I modify the translation of the New King James version);

46 When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; 47 yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, *and repent*, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness'; 48 and *when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul* in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, *and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name*: 49 then (please) hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication and sentence them, 50 *and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You*; and grant them compassion in front of those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them.

The quote shows king Solomon seeking God's compassion for His people in their future exile, and mentions not only the *Teshuvah* (wholehearted repentance) but also their prayer toward the temple of Jerusalem. Then, the question must be posed: Is repentance (returning to God) enough to cause the sins to be forgiven by God, or is something else needed, like prayer or sacrifices

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to the Jerusalem temple? The text thus poses a critical question regarding God's forgiveness of sins or the expiation of these sins, while clearly admitting the importance of repentance for redemption.

Imagine, for instance, the murderer who wants to return to God. Yet, his wish to return alone does not suffice for redemption, since what he has done in the eyes of the victims (i.e., the memory of those who seek revenge: *Ge'ulat Dam*) certainly stands as an obstacle on the way to return. He needs to be pardoned by the victims. Likewise, the sins committed against Him cannot vanish by the will of Israel to repent, but remain until God forgives and the Israelites expiate their sins at some price. The expiation is the ultimate test of the will of the people of Israel when they seek to return to Him with their whole body and soul.

Therefore, the relation of repentance to redemption is just like that of the start line to the finish line in a marathon race; the relation of the former to the latter is clear cut, while the manner and the nature of the relationship of the two is not obvious at all. In conclusion, R. Eliezer and R. Joshua agree that repentance necessarily precedes redemption in the process, but not on the dependency of the former on the latter. If redemption totally depends upon repentance, this should mean that God also grants the pardon and expiation of sins as soon as the sinner wishes to return; that is to say, pardon as well as repentance are in the hands of the sinners. The question is this: does not the pardon of the sins require the will of the victim against whom the sins are committed? Does repentance mean the same as pardon?

(4)

I consider that the issue which divides the two sages is related to the question of the expiation of sins (the past) or the forgiveness of sins, which would be a big issue in the situation in which the temple no longer exist and the Jews have no means of sacrificing for the atonement of sins. At least, this should be the concern for R. Joshua who asks his teacher Rabban Yohanan ben Zakai a question on the expiation of sins when the temple is lost (Abot deRabbi Nathan, A4:11b). His teacher answered him that the expiation should be done through compassionate deeds (*Gemilot Hasadim*) on the basis of Hosea 6:7.

The present order of rabbinic Judaism emerges after the destruction of the Jerusalem in 70 CE. The order recommends repentance as necessary for expiating all kinds of sins, while it also recognizes the limits of repentance (the will to return and the vow to have no more sins of the same kind) by emphasizing the importance of the Day of Atonement for the expiation of sins in intermediate degrees of offence. Thus, sins of offences in the serious categories cannot be expiated only through repentance and the Day of Atonement, as the process of expiation will be completed only after sufferings come to scour the defilement of the sins (Yoma 85b; Hilcot Teshuvah 1:4); whereas for the fatal sins of blasphemers, the process is not completed with suffering but with death.

The Jewish calendar begins the year with the ten days of repentance, i.e. the Days of Awe from the New Year to the Day of Atonement. While fearing the judgments of God and the threats of the sins already committed, the people start to say the prayer of *Slihot* (Pardons) at midnight a month before the New Year, and cannot but believe in God's calling and His compassion and His will to forgiveness; otherwise, they cannot prepare themselves for the days of repentance and Atonement.

No salvation can be discussed in Jewish terms without wholehearted repentance and the expiation of sins, which together bring about redemption in the end. Every painful situation of the human being has a reason. According to the concept of redemption in Judaism, it is not proper for the human being to single out innocent victims as free from any blame in terrible situations, and then to search for the ultimate sinner who causes such need for the salvation of others. In Judaism, those who hunger for redemption and seek God's help more than anyone else are the sinners who do realize the consequences of what they have done. As for the self-righteous who regard themselves as being in no need of repentance and the expiation of sins, these may or may not be the most sinful ones, but clearly they do not understand their position in the eyes of God.

In any case, the hope is that the Gate of Heaven is always open for those who are stuck in the mud of sins and wish sincerely to get out of their painful situations, and seek the return to God—no matter what—according to the spirit of Judaism (Hilkot Teshuvah 1:3; 2:1). The ultimate salvation in Judaism lies in the deliverance from sins and the return to God. But, because of it, let me add this as a final note: the annihilation of six million Jews by the force of evil. This historical reality poses a serious question to the Jews of the present day, after the Holocaust: Why are they lost? So far, no one succeeds in answering this question.

NOTES

- 1 Jeremiah 3:22: "Return, you backsliding children, *And* I will heal your backslidings."; Malachi 3:7: "Return to Me, and I will return to you,": Isaiah 30:15; "In returning and rest you shall be saved": Jeremiah 4:1; "If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD, "Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved."
- 2 Isaiah 52:3; For thus says the LORD: "You have sold yourselves for nothing, And you shall be redeemed without money. Jeremiah 3:14; "I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.": Isaiah 49:7; "Thus says the LORD, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, To Him whom man despises, To Him whom the nation abhors, To the Servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, Because of the LORD who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; And He has chosen You."" Daniel 12:7;" Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that *it shall be* for a time, times, and half a *time*; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished."

A Critique of the Pluralist Model: “Exclusivism” and “Inclusivism” Revisited

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1. Introduction

Since the later 20th century, “pluralism” has always been one of the most discussed topics in Christian theology. There are clear reasons why pluralism matters so much to Christianity in comparison to other religions. First, religious diversity has now become an obvious reality that cannot be ignored in Western societies, where the vast majority of the population used to be Christian. This is the result of the increasing secularization of society, coupled with the continuous inflows of adherents of other religions. Second, there has been growing criticism of the injustice caused by the past colonization and “civilizing” of other peoples by the great Western powers, combined with the notion of the “absoluteness of Christianity.” For these reasons, a serious attempt was made in the 1960s to reconsider the relationship between Christianity and other religions from the theological point of view. Today, this attempt is termed the “theology of religions.”

In this paper, I will first outline the discussions that have taken place in the theology of religions and then highlight some problems pertaining to them. For the purpose of the theology of religions, or inter-religious dialogue, three typologies are generally used: they are exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. From the viewpoint of religious pluralism, exclusivism and inclusivism have often been made the target of critique as old-fashioned concepts that must be superseded. In this paper, I will critically discuss the evolutionary view of history on which religious pluralism is based, and indicate that even the religions and movements categorized as being exclusive or inclusive have some aspects that deserve to be commended.

In the latter part of the paper, I will examine the three typologies in greater depth, but for now, let me give an outline of each typology and show some specific examples. Each of these three typologies has its own way of perceiving “salvation.” Exclusivists argue that salvation can be achieved only through their own religion, while inclusivists hold that while salvation can be attained through other religions, the ultimate salvation comes only from their own religion. On the other hand, pluralists maintain that all religions are equal in their ability to bring salvation to humanity, and that exclusivism and inclusivism are to be blamed for the lack of tolerance for other religions.

If we apply these typologies, many of the Islamist movements that put special emphasis on Islamic values fall in the category of exclusivism. Especially, Islamist organizations that refuse

to make any compromise in their approaches to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, such as Hamas, are typical of exclusivism. However, what I would like to question here is this: what is the *raison d’être* of inter-religious dialogue, or the theology of religions, if we unconditionally determine that there is no way to communicate with organizations like Hamas or that dialogue with them will lead us nowhere, and instead drive them into isolation? Of course, we can never accept the violent nature of Hamas, but if we are to settle the conflict with them, we must deepen understanding of their reality, including their historical and ideological background (Tamini 2007). This is also the case with the Muslim Brotherhood, from which Hamas originated. Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), who founded the ideological basis of the Muslim Brotherhood, can be categorized as an exclusivist from the perspective of the pluralist model. However, I would like to question what made Qutb, an occidentalist, determine that the Western world was in “Jahiliya,” which means the “days of ignorance.” If Qutb’s vision influences many Islamists even today, I think it necessary to explore the meaning of his vision through the theology of religions. Of course, understanding the meaning of something is one thing, and justifying it is another: we should draw a clear line between them.

In fact, most pluralists are liberal researchers and believers, and gatherings hosted by them are likely to be attended by people with a liberal mindset. It is only natural that those who share the values of the Enlightenment, such as tolerance and value relativism, can communicate with each other with ease and comfort. Rather, we should explore ways to find a path to communications with those who have been considered difficult dialogue partners. People who are categorized as exclusivists are often thought to be anachronistic and behind the times by those with the Western liberal mindset. However, we should pay attention to the features of Western and modern values to which exclusivists raise opposition. If we fail to identify such factors, we have no way to establish reliable communications with them.

2. Three Typologies in the Theology of Religions

In this section, I will examine the three typologies in greater depth to analyze problems pertaining to the pluralist model. All of these typologies clearly reflect the Christian self-understanding and way of understanding others (other religions). First, I will discuss the relationships with other religions from a Christian point of view, placing focus on the issue of salvation. In reality, these typologies are applicable also to non-Christian religions and have actually been applied to them. Still, pluralists in the strict sense are hardly seen in non-Christian religions.

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(1) Exclusivism

Exclusivists assume that there are qualitative differences between Christianity and other religions. To emphasize the difference, they often prefer to use the dualistic distinction between justice and evil, light and darkness, and life and death. The traditional missionary work often emphasized the absoluteness of Christianity in a manner which excluded other religions, and compelled non-Christian society to submit to Christianity.

The Catholic Church has long held the notion that there is "no salvation outside the Church," but Catholicism is not the only denomination of Christianity which is categorized as exclusivist. However, it should be noted that since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), many Catholic theologians have parted with exclusivism. In fact, not a few conservative Protestant Churches now take a more exclusivist attitude than does the Catholic Church in dealing with non-Christian religions. During the years of the Cold War, many conservative Protestants had a great deal of interest in the fight against communism, and since the collapse of the Cold War structure, their missionary interest has shifted to the Islamic World. As well, there was a case where some Christian denominations, including the Southern Baptist Convention (the largest Christian denomination in the U.S.), were blamed by Jewish groups for having included "conversion of Jews" in their missionary policies.

While mainstream churches and liberal theologians are against exclusivism, some churches still maintain an exclusivist attitude in various respects. Their theological characteristics can be summarized as follows.

- (a) Exclusivists believe that there is a gap between Christianity and other religions and that such a gap can never be bridged. In other words, they assume that the revelation of God in Christianity is superior to any other religious revelations (truths), and further, that there is an epistemological difference between Christian and other religious revelations because they belong to different categories. Thus emphasis is placed on the authority of churches as recipients of the divine revelations of God (ecclesiasticism).
- (b) The view of exclusivists is predicated on the authority of the Bible. The passages of the Bible that exclusivists often quote are: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12); and "I am the way, and the truth and the life: no one comes unto the Father, but by me" (John 14: 6). Exclusivists argue that even with the most liberal hermeneutics, the distinctiveness of Jesus and the universal significance of His life, crucifixion, and resurrection cannot be relativized. In other words, they have remained indifferent to the vast amount of biblical knowledge that has accumulated since the modern age, and have stuck to biblical

literalism in the majority of cases. This tradition of biblical interpretation has been handed down from the Christian fundamentalists of the early 20th century to today’s Evangelicals.

- (c) As regards salvation, exclusivists place much weight on Christology. They believe that salvation comes only through Christ, not through any other divine beings (Christocentrism). In the theological understanding of exclusivists, their Christocentric soteriology is structured in a relatively sophisticated way, in contrast to their naïve interpretation of the Bible discussed above. Specifically, they often look to the Christocentric soteriology advocated by Karl Barth, a Protestant theologian, as the grounds of their theological reasoning.
- (d) For exclusivists, the ultimate goal in having a dialogue with non-Christians is spreading the Gospel to them. The Great Commission, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations” (Matthews 28: 19), is one of the typical commands that drive them to missionary efforts.

I have outlined the theological characteristics of exclusivists above. Here, let me emphasize that the conventional discourse that exclusivists are not interested in inter-religious dialogue is not correct. In reality, exclusivists, or conservative Christian groups, are now fostering links across the boundaries of denominations. For example, the so-called Religious Right, such as the Christian Coalition and Focus on the Family, now encourages conservative Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish groups to join in with efforts to address political and social issues of common interest, such as abortion and homosexuality. Unlike a mere theological theory, interdenominational dialogue and inter-religious dialogue focusing on specific policy issues are realistic enough to be understood even by general believers. Characteristically, however, inter-religious dialogues led by exclusivists are confined to the boundaries of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which reflects the limits of their religious understanding.

(2) Inclusivism

While the history of exclusivists in a broad sense is almost as long as that of Christianity, it is relatively recently that self-conscious inclusivists entered the stage. The declaration *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time), issued by the Second Vatican Council, states that the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in non-Christian religions, thus opening up a new era of inter-religious dialogue. As if in response to this movement, Protestant Churches since the 1960s have been launching various programs to promote inter-religious dialogue, mainly led by the World Council of Churches (WCC). While the efforts within the WCC to deepen understanding of non-Christian religions are considered to have stemmed from the tension between exclusivists and inclusivists, it is certain that they are steadily establishing a methodology for inter-religious dialogue. However, in promoting inter-religious dialogue they are not paying equal attention

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to all religions: due partly to the influence from European member countries, the WCC is far more interested in dialogue with Islam than with any other religion. This is also the case with the efforts of the Catholic Church towards inter-religious dialogue.

The theological characteristics of inclusivists can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Inclusivists maintain that salvation is achieved also through non-Christian religions, which, however, occurs thanks to the universal power of the Christian God. In other words, in their theological understanding, inclusivists take for granted the existence of one and only one Divine being, though called by different names in different religions.
- (b) Like exclusivists, inclusivists interpret salvation in terms of Christology. Yet, while the interpretation of exclusivists is epistemological, that of inclusivists is ontological. In other words, exclusivists hold that we cannot achieve salvation without being conscious of the blessings of the Christian God; inclusivists assure, from an ontological viewpoint, that salvation is brought to us through the universal blessings of Christ even if we are not conscious of God's blessings in Christological terms. Universal soteriology originates from this line of thinking.
- (c) Inclusivists do recognize truth in other religions, but believe that it constitutes only part of or is merely an incomplete form of the authentic truth possessed by Christians. For them, the ultimate truth is seen only in Christianity, and for this reason, Christianity is superior to all other religions. The value of non-Christian religions, therefore, is determined by the degree to which their truth fits in with the Christian truth. This means that there is a principle distinction between Christianity and other religions, but such distinction does not lead to exclusivity. Instead, it is replaced by an inclusive hierarchical relationship. Basic and ordinary beings constitute the lower layers of the hierarchy, which are subjected to the supervision and control of Christianity positioned at the summit of the hierarchy as a sophisticated and extraordinary being.

(3) Pluralism

Emerging after exclusivists and inclusivists, pluralists criticize the notion of the superiority of Christianity inherent in the two preceding typologies. In the area of the theology of religions, most of the discussions are now led by pluralists and inclusivists. The views commonly shared by pluralists in past discussions can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Religious pluralism is a permanent phenomenon and cannot be replaced by any single religion.
- (b) Every religion contains its own truth. (However, not all religions have soteriological significance.)
- (c) No religion can be credited with having ultimate, absolute, or universal truth.
- (d) For Christians, Jesus has a special meaning, but such uniqueness should not be associated

with exclusive superiority and transcendency.

While pluralists share these views, one issue remains controversial among them. Should plurality be considered to have stemmed from one origin, or two or more origins? A representative pluralist, John Hick, developed a concept of “the Real” and maintains that “the Real” is “the One” who transcends divine beings of any religions. By “pluralism,” he means the existence of a number of paths leading to “the One,” and in this sense, each religion represents only a limited portion of the entire truth and therefore is complementary with each other religion. On the other hand, an Indian theologian, Raimon Panikkar, and others argue that pluralism does not need unification, as pluralism itself represents the structure of the ultimate realities. Mark Heim also criticizes Hick’s view of pluralism as being a meta-theory based on the Western sense of value, and insists that we must accept plural salvations and justices (Heim 1995).

3. A Critique of the Pluralist Model

Already, various problems inherent in pluralism have been identified, and issues concerning the typologies in the theology of religion have been repeatedly discussed. Some argue that the existing three typologies cannot fully cover the complicated reality and that additional typologies are needed. For example, Knitter (2005) revises the conventional typologies and attempts to address problems by applying four typologies. For simplicity’s sake, I will not discuss this issue further in this paper. Here, let me emphasize that out of the three typologies that have been used by Christians in considering their relationship with other religions, many liberal theologians who are aware of the importance of inter-religious dialogue are sympathetic to pluralism. As mentioned earlier, pluralists are against the exclusivism and inclusivism that are associated with the attitude of Christianity’s superiority. As long as this pluralist model is used for the self-verification and self-criticism of Christianity, it is significant enough in theological terms. However, while the pluralist model aims to attach equal value to all religions, it has eventually placed different religions in a hierarchy within the evolutionary framework on which the model is based. We should exercise full caution when applying to non-Christian religions the notion that inclusivism is better than exclusivism and that pluralism is better than inclusivism.

In light of the fact that all of these typologies reflect the Christian self-understanding and understanding of others, they can be effectively applied to soteriology from the viewpoint of comparative religion. However, when we try to rank these typologies, a serious problem arises. Simply put, it is the problem of supersessionism. Supersessionism is the belief that a new idea supersedes the previous one, and the latter loses its inherent significance. In the scientific community, this belief is known as paradigm shift. For example, the replacement of the geocentric

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theory by the heliocentric theory was a major paradigm shift, and once the heliocentric theory was established, the geocentric theory became a useless superstitious idea. The scientific community has often seen old paradigms being completely replaced by new ones. However, in the religious community, the arrival of a new paradigm does not mean the immediate demise of an old one: they often coexist. Unlike the case of the scientific community, we cannot be certain that new ideas are always better than old ones in the religious community.

Still, Christianity has remained inclined to supersessionism since its beginnings. Such an inclination is typically seen in the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. The notion of Judaism (Old Israel) being replaced by Christianity (New Israel) is seen in the "Letter to the Hebrews" and other sections of the Christian Scriptures. The "Bible" of Judaism is called the "Old Testament," which was replaced by the "New Testament." Though both the Old and New Testaments are regarded as the canon of Christianity, I must say that there is a soteriological hierarchy between them. Probably, such Christian supersessionism towards Judaism was partly responsible for the anti-Semitism in European society. In this sense, we may say that supersessionism has the power to influence not only theological discussions, but also society at large. Because of this fact, the supersessionism inherent in the pluralist model should not be overlooked. Needless to say, it also plays an inherent kind of role in the exclusivist and inclusivist models.

The Christian view of history is linear and ascending in nature, and in this sense, we may say that supersessionism is highly compatible with Christianity. Interestingly, however, supersessionism is also apparent in Japanese society. The representative notion of Japanese supersessionism is of monotheism being superseded and replaced by polytheism. It may be hard to believe for Muslims (who call the days of polytheism "Jahiliya") that in Japan, not a few people believe that the monotheistic sense of value is violent, self-righteous, and destructive to nature, and should be superseded by the polytheistic sense of value that places importance on peace, tolerance, and nature-friendliness if we are to contribute to the well-being of humanity. Polytheism means worshipping many gods at the same time, and thus is often interpreted to be tolerant to other religions. But the type of Japanese supersessionism mentioned above can make it quite difficult to foster communications with the monotheistic world (Kohara 2006).

4. Conclusion

Upon considering both the usefulness and risks of the pluralist model discussed above, I would like to conclude the discussion by reviewing the positive values of inclusivism and exclusivism, which have been perceived negatively in the pluralist model.

(1) Inclusivism revisited

Characteristically, Christian inclusivism recognizes truth in other religions, and at the same time tries to integrate these truths into the Christian truth. This type of inclusivism can be seen in many non-Christian religions as well. Many of Japan’s new religions are in favor of syncretism and boast of the mixture of various religious traditions in their doctrines. In this sense, they are inclusivistic in nature. To give a specific example, a religion called Oomoto that originates in Shinto has a belief that “every religion has the same root.” Some Oomoto believers think that their god and Allah are one and the same god and feel strongly sympathetic with Muslims.

Considering that inclusivism has a channel through which to develop a positive interest in other religions, it is not wise to simply reject the inclusivistic way of thinking. Inclusivism merely teaches us that any religion can perceive its relationships with other religions only within its religious languages and theories (incommensurability). For these reasons, we should accept inclusivism as a basic means of understanding other religions.

In recent years, there have been attempts in the Buddhist community to address the issues raised in the theology of religions, and I think that the inclusivist way of thinking should be introduced to such attempts. For example, Kristin Beise Kiblinger indicates that while some Buddhist studies incorporate the viewpoint of comparative religion, there have been few cases where exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism seen in the theology of religions is analyzed from the Buddhist perspective. With this understanding, Kiblinger tries to examine the meaning of inclusivism that is most compatible with the Buddhist context (Kiblinger 2005: 2).

(2) Exclusivism revisited

In the conventional pluralist model, the term “exclusivism” and its alternative designations evoke a negative image. Accordingly, we should be cautious when using these terms in general contexts. When analyzing specific problems, therefore, we should avoid using the term “exclusivism” as a “general” or “objective” term; instead, we should use the “subjective” term that is used in each individual religious movement. This is because detailed problems hidden within the generalized concept of “exclusivism,” whether called by other names or not, have often been overlooked in the theology of religions. With this in mind, we should duly recognize the significant role of “exclusivism” as a force to resist oppression, violent domination, and cultural invasion.

In the case of Christianity, the threat of modernity gave rise to fundamentalism, which led to efforts to explore the fundamentals of faith. Other religions, too, began their exploration of the fundamentals of faith when faced with the surge of modernization and secularization or when subjected to colonial rule, in not a few cases. If we are to criticize the modernity that is based on

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Western values and properly indicate its problems, we should not simply dismiss as premodern the attempt of exclusivists to rediscover and embrace the value of fundamentals of faith, as was eloquently stated by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt as follows:

The anti-modern thrust that defines fundamentalisms might be better understood, then, not as a premodern but as a postmodern project. The postmodernity of fundamentalism has to be recognized primarily in its refusal of modernity as a weapon of Euro-American hegemony—and in this regard Islamic fundamentalism is indeed the paradigmatic case. (Hardt/ Negri 2000: 149)

While we cannot automatically identify fundamentalism with exclusivism, a considerable proportion of people who are categorized as exclusivists can be identified as fundamentalists in a broad sense, and are positively opposed to liberal modern values. While the "Islamic fundamentalism" in the above quotation is described as a postmodern entity which criticizes Western modernity, such a viewpoint has been virtually unknown to the conventional pluralist model, because most of the advocates of the pluralist model share modern values. It is not surprising, therefore, that the following question has arisen mainly from the non-Western world: eventually, isn't the pluralist model, though cleverly camouflaged, an ultimately exploitative Western imposition? (Knitter ed. 2005: 28) In the past, the non-Western world was thought to be the recipient of the benefits of civilization brought by the West. In light of this fact, we may conclude that supersessionism was already rooted in Western civilization, and was co-existing with imperialism and colonialism long before the pluralist model was established. Paradoxically, if we are to demonstrate that the pluralistic model is not an inferior copy of such supersessionism, it may be necessary to pay more detailed attention to exclusivism, to which the pluralist model has accorded the least value.

Reconsidering exclusivism does not mean justifying it. Exclusivism can never be justified if it involves any form of violence. However, oftentimes problems cannot be rooted out merely by tracking down and ousting certain groups (eg: terrorists and armed groups), as paradigmatically shown by the cases of the Taliban in Pakistan and Hamas in Palestine. Violent groups are not solely responsible for the continued violence and conflicts. It is wrong to look only to external factors in our search for the cause of violence; what is needed is a sober analysis of structural violence to find the internal factors which have caused violent acts. If we simply label certain groups as violent and oust them, we will lose the chance to analyze what has driven them to violence and how we can prevent violent conflicts from recurring.

(3) Discussion on the recognition of others

Above, I have discussed the modern significance of inclusivism and exclusivism. Of course, problems still remain with these typologies. The most important matter that inclusivists and

exclusivists should address is how they can avoid falling into the trap of blindly justifying their principles or attaching absolute importance to their views. They can avoid the trap only when they are conscious of the views of “others.”

By “others,” I mean not only beings other than ourselves, but also unpredictable and uncontrollable beings who cannot be manipulated at our will. In this sense, we may say that God—the origin of human beings—is also the origin of “otherness.” This means that those who remain blind to the otherness of God and humans are constantly exposed to the danger of ultimately falling into consciousness-based absolutism. In other words, those who cannot accept the otherness of others are inclined to subordinate others to themselves. Under such tense circumstances, we are required to discover the norm of values which can bring equilibrium to a flood of relative values. For this reason, the pluralist model, grounded in a supersessionism that obscures the recognition of others, cannot be the ultimate goal of inter-religious dialogue.

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Session 2: Comments and Responses

Chair: Hassan Ko Nakata

(Chair) First, I would like to invite Professor Hazizan to comment. Could you please give your comments within five minutes, since we do not have a lot of time? Thank you.

International Islamic University of Malaysia

NOON, Hazizan Md.

In five minutes' time, I will not go to each and every paper but I will just give general remarks on them. I do not think I will be fair in my response if I do not really digest the points and discuss with the presenters.

Let me start by saying that to me religion or religious faith—whether Semitic or non-Semitic, divinely-based or 'man-made' or culturally-generated religions—deals at least with four major issues. First are issues related to transcendence, especially the issue of God. For example, is/are there God/s? How many Gods? Which God is true? God in what form? And so on. Second are issues related to the "ultimate." For example, what will happen to us after we die? What is the meaning of the present life? I think here is where the issues of salvation, repentance, redemption, and so on are relevant. Third are the normative and the moral issues. Such questions as what is good and bad, what is right and wrong, to a larger extent involve religion. Finally, especially in the case of Islam, religion plays important role in people's social life. Since Islam is a way of life, it is expected to provide guidelines for individual and social lives.

To me, the four papers seem to have dealt with the different dimensions of the issue of salvation and also of other topics mentioned earlier. Since they are related to one another, perhaps we can raise a number of general issues.

First, and this may be relevant to all the papers: we can easily notice that within Buddhism and Judaism, there are many interpretations, versions and views. My general question is: how do you deal with these differences from your respective religious perspectives? Following this, may you also enlighten us on the following questions: 1) To what extent can we answer such questions as, which one among all these interpretations is the most preferred, if not to say the truest one? For example, which opinion about salvation in Buddhism and Judaism is preferable? 2) You have been referring to a number of sources and quotations; to what extent are these sources, in your opinion, authoritative? And what are the justifications for relying on them? Do you consider them also as the products of society's cultural development?

The last question is related to the fact that we all have various forms of diversity, both inter- and intra-religious. So, where do you move from here? Some questions about religion may be sensitive. For example, each religion has its own stand on the issue of “truth,” right? And followers of any religion naturally claim that the “truth” taught by their religion is the most or the only legitimate one. That is why it is natural to find a situation where one does not recognize or accept the “truth” of another religion when he himself adheres to a religion different from this one. If one says, “I accept that your religion is true,” then logically he will not be in his religion. In this regard, Islam teaches that “to you is your religion, and to me is mine.” Despite different religious beliefs, Islam teaches that cooperation is always possible if it is for a good cause. I think here we have to draw the line between insistence on specific theological truth and the wider social and cultural cooperation and collaboration among followers of different religions. Thank you very much.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now I would like to invite the speakers to respond to these three questions in about two minutes each, before we move on to the next commentator. First of all, Professor Tokunaga, please.

(Tokunaga) Thank you for your comments. You presented the most difficult question to answer. I would like to take as one example that there is a Christian theologian who is trying to interpret Christian theology from the standpoint of the Buddhist notion of *śūnyatā*, or “emptiness,” and I do not quite agree with him. But I have to admit that there is room to accept such a view, or such an interpretation in Christianity. So, I do not know what to say about it. That is all I can say for now.

(Chair) Can we move on now? All right, thank you very much. Then, Professor Teshima next, please.

(Teshima) I cannot relate to every question that you ask, but I just pick up one aspect of your concern, i.e., the truth-falsehood issue. I think it is nonsense to try to reach a consensus on the truth-falsehood issue by having this kind of conference. After all, we all belong to different religions and I must wonder about the merits of having this kind of a conference. I just pray that the conference may lead each one of us to inner reflection upon our own religion, and that is why I chose to focus on sin and repentance in Judaism specifically. Therefore, I think, the truth-falsehood question is not essential for our conference, which cannot and should not influence faith in God. It is enough for us to know that only God knows.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Professor Kohara, please.

(Kohara) I would like to answer your question combining the first and third questions. In terms of the differences in our own religion, honestly speaking there is an unbridgeable gap in Christianity between conservative and liberal Christians, as Professor Mori said in the morning

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session. You know, our Doshisha University belongs to a very liberal tradition, and so far, in a sense, we have almost neglected the conservative group of Christianity, but now I believe it is time for us to reconsider the relevance of conservative Christians in the world as represented by so-called Evangelical Christians or Pentecostalism. Now we are going to expand our interests even to the conservative Christian camp, to create some room for cooperation.

So, how can we create a meaningful space for cooperation? As I said before, I have been so engaged in interfaith dialogues, and many of them seem very abstract and metaphysical, just dialogue for dialogue's sake. But I think that, for creating a space for cooperation, we should focus on more concrete ethical issues such as global environmental problems or human rights problems and so on. So that could be a good starting point for a good dialogue among different religions. Thank you.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now I would like to invite Professor Hassan Ahmed to give his comments.

International Islamic University of Malaysia

IBRAHIM, Hassan Ahmed

I have read Professor Tokunaga's paper, and attentively listened to his presentation. It is indeed very interesting. It is very enlightening to me to know that it is quite difficult to speak of the concept of salvation in Buddhism in the same manner as you do in Christianity, and, to some extent, in Islam. But what struck me about his presentation is that he said that Buddhism is entirely concerned with the emancipation and enlightenment of the individual, to prepare him for the final stage; it is like a wakeup call. That is why, as he said, it is too individualistic and, at the same time, it has a negative attitude towards life. Now, this is more or less what we find in some brands of Sufism in Islam, because in Sufism there is a famous saying that may be translated like this: "We are in the world, but not of the world," meaning physically we are here, but spiritually there, that is, we are constantly preparing for the other life. They also speak of modesty. So, I really wonder, is there any impact of Buddhism on Sufism? Some people speak of such an impact, but I do not really know. This is an area for research. So, this is my query on this issue. I have a hunch that there may have been some impact.

Now, for the other two papers, I would like to choose one theme, the one of Professor Teshima, and to relate it to Professor Kohara. He apparently said that the message of Islam is like the message of all religions, that is, like a saviour of humanity, and he added that this is problematic when believers strive to impose their religion on so-called infidels.

Now, if we relate this to the other theme of inclusivism and exclusivism, I would like to say a few words on a region about which I claim to have some knowledge, that is, sub-Saharan Africa. I believe that when going there, the *Du'āh*—or the preachers of Islam—understood the real nature of Islam, that it is far away from exclusivism, that it is an inclusive religion. And many times, they speak of its universal mission. Since it has a universal mission, it cannot be exclusive, it has to be inclusive and it has to be flexible.

So, in this interaction between the Muslim preachers and the inhabitants of the land there was no imposition on the latter. This is in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in the savannah zone historically called the Sudanic belt, which extends from the Atlantic Ocean right across the African continent to the Red Sea, where Islam has dominated for centuries. This extensive drive succeeded primarily because no force was used, that is, because the Muslim preachers understood the true nature of Islam—in fact, it was an interaction and not a forceful imposition. In the Nile Valley, Christianity was well established. There were two major Christian kingdoms there whose people gradually and peacefully accepted Islam. In what is now called West Africa there were so many traditional kingdoms which had interacted with these Muslim preachers and traders over the centuries, and it was not in a day or two or a year or two, but over centuries, that Islam got the upper hand. Many scholars suggest that this is because the traders and the Sufis, who spread Islam, understood the real nature of Islam. So, this is perhaps another query.

Professor Kohara, just one quick comment: you said that you have met Dr. Azzam al-Tamimi, and I am glad that you did because I think when people speak about Hamas and its attitude they have to have in consideration what Hamas leaders say. Some of them, amongst whom are Azzam al-Tamimi and Khaled Mashaal, argue that Fateh has gone a long way in giving concessions to the Israelis on the promise that they will get the Palestinian state within a few years. Yet nothing concrete happened. Hence, if Hamas follows the same pattern then we will end up by having nothing; it is the same situation. So what is needed is *tête-à-tête*, in other words, give us something concrete so that we can give you something concrete. I think people will have to understand the Hamas position as well. Thank you.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now I would like to invite the three speakers to quickly respond to the comments as before.

(Tokunaga) It is popularly said that Sufism is influenced by Buddhism, but I do not think so. About 15 years ago, my roommate in the United States was a Sufist. We lived together for six months and we did not quarrel at all. We found many points of agreement concerning the teaching of each faith, and the conclusion we reached is that both Buddhism and Sufism are the product of the Indian philosophical atmosphere. That was our conclusion.

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(Chair) May we move on now? Then, Professor Teshima, please.

(Teshima) Well, we are having here a discussion from historical perspectives as well as philosophical perspectives, and let me be a little bit sarcastic towards the historians. Historians are quite naive sometimes in their judgment of the facts, in which they look at things from the outside and giving values to them. But things are not what they seem; they look quite different from the inside. So the Jews and Islam have many different understandings of events. Historians may regard an event as a successful case on the basis of which they might speak for the value and the merits of some theories of religion, but sometimes the same event would look quite different from an insider point of view, namely, as approached from the Jews' memories of events in those times. Let me refer to Maimonides as an example. Maimonides writes the article on Kidush Hashem (martyrdoms), and among those is the epistle of destruction in which he answers the questions posed by the Jews asking about possible threats in the realm of Islamic kingdoms. This is an aspect of Jewish memories about the Islamic age in which they sometimes had to think seriously about martyrdom. I think we the historians can learn from successes, but at the same time from the failures.

My comment regarding another question is this: I wrote, "the conviction that religion is a savior creates many problem." I did not write "the conviction that God is a savior." Sometimes, it is difficult to discern true causes in cases where the religion seems to oppress the people; one wonders if it is coming from the religious institution itself or from the faith in God himself. The people and the leaders of the religious institution sometimes take over God himself. I am thinking of the case of the Almohads, at least in the eyes of Jews and Christians.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Kohara, please.

(Kohara) You pointed out rightly that Islam has inclusive aspects. So not only Islam, but also Christianity has a sort of a universal religion because the histories of both religions have identified themselves with universal religion for all humankind. So, in a sense, the two religions truly have inclusive features, but I think a problem is how we command such inclusive attitudes in the real society. So to explore that aspect, historically speaking, there are many ways to realize, to embody inclusive ideas in multi-religious society. Professor Noon has suggested an idea of Islam Hadhari in Malaysia, so personally I would like you to explore the details of Islam Hadhari in Malaysian society in the later discussion. Thank you.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Zein, your comments, please.

I felt I should say that I am really delighted to have heard the learned scholars speak about the three topics that they discussed, and I learned a great deal and I do not think that I am in a position to comment in such a way that would be useful to each one of them in five minutes. But I will just ask three questions that might help me to understand the submissions of the three learned scholars.

The first one about Buddhism, given by the professor here—it is very difficult to pronounce your name, I am sorry for that. The issue here is clearly that this form of Buddhism has been influenced by Christianity, especially on the issue of social ethics. But again, it is equally difficult for a non-Buddhist to understand that Buddhism can be anything but an individualistic religion. The very concept of Nirvana, at least for an outsider—this idea of selflessness, the idea of going out, the idea of condemning this world as not real, as evil, as a place of suffering—with these notions it is quite difficult actually to talk anything sensible about social ethics. It will be an ultimate contradiction talking about social ethics within this context. But I am glad that some version of Buddhism has developed a concept of social ethics, which is very important for religion and religiosity as such, at the expense of that inherent individualism.

For my friend Teshima, it is very interesting to know these developments in rabbinic Judaism, especially during the postexilic era where the rabbis started to talk about redemption and repentance in such a way that, later, has been reflected in Christianity in a similar way. I do not think it follows the essential understanding of a monotheistic religion where Christianity developed the idea of salvation which was anchored on the concept of original sin. It is because of the enormity of the sin committed by Adam that the only way out of it was the crucifixion of Jesus, the son of God. This is my understanding of it. Then that necessitates the acceptance of Jesus as a Christ, who actually paid back for that original sin, and salvation will be meaningful within that historical and theological understanding of Genesis. It means for salvation: you go and look back to the past. It has nothing to do with the ethics of consequence. You look back to the past and from that past then you talk about salvation. For me, if I understood you correctly, perhaps the postexilic discussion among the rabbis was very similar to what later developed in Christianity. From my understanding of your submission I could say that, well, now I can see how Christianity came up with this concept of salvation, which is obviously a development within Judaism.

Finally, Professor Kohara, it is good to listen to you. I listened to you previously when you were giving this lecture right after the invasion of Iraq by the Americans and you were very criti-

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cal, and I enjoyed your lecture. Again, I really enjoyed what you have said, especially when you had this correspondence and interaction with Azzam Tamimi and what you said about Hamas—not because I am a fan of Hamas, no, I am very critical of them, but it is good to know that there are other people who are listening and seeing things as they are, not being influenced by the media, not being caught in this electronic rhetoric, and just repeating things as they were projected by the media. It is good to see that some people are really thinking and seeing things in a different way. I would like to tell you that both Islam and Christianity, as you said, are talking about universality, they are open to everybody. And I would suggest to you that my teacher, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, wrote a book on Christian ethics and he suggested that we can have a meaningful dialogue not only at the level of cooperation on social issues but also in understanding our religious traditions by talking about metareligion. He developed a whole scheme of metareligion, where he talked about theoretical principles of understanding religion, especially within the Abrahamic religions, and also principles of evaluating our main doctrines. At the end of the day he called it metareligion, which is essentially about the evaluational principles. He used that method in understanding Christianity and, to some extent, Judaism. We might disagree with him, but at least there is a way of seeing the whole thing differently which emphasizes engagement rather than discord.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Then, Professor Tokunaga, please.

(Tokunaga) I said that Buddhism is too personal and too individualistic, but I forgot to mention the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva path. Mahāyāna Buddhism teaches the way to become enlightened, and the process is called the Bodhisattva path. And the necessary condition for the Bodhisattva path is to “benefit oneself” and, at the same time, to “benefit others.” “Benefiting oneself” and “benefiting others”: both are required for the fulfillment of the Bodhisattva path. But I do not know why the second aspect has been forgotten; benefiting others has been forgotten, especially in Japanese Buddhism. That is a problem, and I keep saying to my fellow Buddhists that we are burdened with the same problem in this contemporary world. We are Japanese, and you are from Malaysia, Africa, Europe and America, and we are all burdened with the same problems—contemporary human problems. So, we have to think seriously about that. This is the basis of my insisting on the necessity of dialogue and the social way of thinking.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Teshima, please.

(Teshima) Thank you. I am entertained by your deep question that makes me think, of course, of how Judaism is the basis of Christianity and the cradle for its birth. Therefore, Judaism and Christianity sometimes sound similar. But here, as a historian of Judaism, I have to make a distinction between the Judaism of the Second Temple period, whose diversity includes those

Jewish believers in Jesus, and the rabbinic Judaism which became the basis of today's Judaism and which comes into being after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. So scholars believe that two kinds of Judaism have existed: one before 70 CE and another after this date. They are historically connected, but their characteristics apparently differ from each other at the same time. The diversity of historic Judaism is a hot topic for historians, who could easily take a whole year to explain their views.

Let me illustrate an aspect of drastic change the Jews underwent in those days with the dispute between Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezer on *Geulah* (redemption) and *Teshvah* (repentance). They disputed about the meaning of redemption as dependent on repentance, asking if redemption comes as soon as Israel repents, or if repentance is not a matter of free will but is conditioned by historical circumstances. They are the witnesses of the destruction of the temple; therefore, when they discuss redemption, they are talking about the rebuilding of the temple and they wish to return again at least to the state in which Judaism existed before the destruction. Redemption as dependent on repentance is clearly the idea going back to the biblical origin. While, of course, both concepts are clearly present in the biblical context, the two rabbis had to understand them as meaningful to the Jewish context of their own time. They naturally expand the implications of both concepts, while they seek to be faithful to the Bible as the basis of their arguments. Therefore, in order to understand the profundity of the dispute about redemption as dependent upon repentance in rabbinic Judaism, one must first understand the basis of the Hebrew Bible. Here one should note an important feature of rabbinic Judaism, that is, the fact that rabbinic Judaism is the religion which tries to survive without the temple. While their understandings and teachings rest upon the basis of the Hebrew Bible, in order to survive the crisis they have to focus upon some new aspects of the Hebrew Bible, as different from the biblical interpretation before 70CE. The traditions of the disputes among the sages sometimes help us to have insights into the issues and difficulties involved in the biblical interpretation of those days, and into complexities in the understanding of the terms used before 70CE. Therefore, the interpretations of repentance and redemption by the sages are not representative of all the Jewish efforts of understanding the Bible before 70CE; but, the rabbinic sources of the biblical interpretation of repentance and redemption are ancient and diverse enough to reflect the diversity of Judaism before 70CE, which surely includes, within that scope, the issue of original sin. I would say that some Jews of the Second Temple period may well be concerned about original sin, while the Jews after 70 CE limit their concern to their immediate crisis and search for the meaning of redemption and repentance only in terms of the followers of rabbinic Judaism. For those caught in the crisis of the destruction, I suppose, the issue of the original sin committed by Adam is too

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theoretical and too philosophical to have effects upon their understanding. Rather, when they speak about sins and transgression, they are not fanciful people who are entertained by philosophical discussions, but serious realists trying to understand the reason why the temple was destroyed and to save memories of the war and the bloodshed. This is my understanding. Maybe, let us discuss it later.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Kohara, please.

(Kohara) You mentioned the concept of metareligion. I am not sure whether there could be such a concept or not, but anyway within Abrahamic religions, I have a great deal of interest in constructing a kind of common theological framework to explore each of our traditions. Salvation is one of the key terms. So, we have many common terms in our Abrahamic religions, but unfortunately we do not have enough dialogue for discussing those details. One example is the concept of God. In my presentation, I often mention the God in Abrahamic tradition, but in reality we do not have any consensus on the idea of God, even among the Abrahamic religions. So, for example, after 9/11, President Bush called for religious leaders in the US to have a ceremony for the victims in the National Cathedral, and he even invited Islamic leaders. But after that some conservative Christians criticized President Bush and accused him of inviting Islamic leaders, because for the conservative Christians the Christian God is totally different from the God of Islam. So afterwards in some Christian journals theological disputes began. Is the Christian God the same as the God of Muslims? I think this kind of debate still continues. Personally, now I have a great interest in some frameworks to reconstruct Abrahamic traditions. Thank you.

Questions and Responses

(Chair) Thank you very much. Since we will have time for discussions in Session Three, I would like to invite now only questions to which relatively simple replies can be given. I would like to ask the floor if anyone has questions to ask of the speakers from the first and second sessions, as well as to the commentators. Yes, Professor Mori, please.

(Mori) This is not a simple question, but I would like to make a proposal for our subsequent discussions. I find the discussions we have had thus far very satisfactory and interesting, from the standpoint of a professor of the Faculty of Theology. As the Director of CISMOR, however, I must say that I am frustrated. This is because we are stuck in a "theological debate." I myself find a theological debate per se quite interesting since I am a theologian, but I have just used the term "theological debate," in which we are stuck, in the same way as the Japanese media generally use it, which is extremely negative and suggestive of certain characteristics. One of them is clannishness; we form a circle in which we share some knowledge and we understand each other

perfectly, but once outside this circle, everything is meaningless. Another is the obscurity of the purposes of the debate: it seems like a debate for the sake of debate.

Now, coming back to the purpose of CISMOR meetings, why we hold these discussions, it is as written in the program title: thinking about what should be done to realize coexistence. So I must say that I had to ask myself if we were having the kind of discussions that would correspond to that purpose.

So I would like to propose one model, which I shall start by asking a question of Professor Kohara. Mother Teresa can represent a model for our project of working toward coexistence. Was Mother Teresa exclusionist, inclusivist, or pluralist? I would say that she was exclusionist in her understanding of faith, but she clearly exemplified coexistence in her action and presence. In other words, her work suggests that you can keep your faith intact while at the same time being practical about what you actually do. So we had better finish the debate about “systematic theology,” as it is called in Christian theological terminology, because we must, I believe, discuss and contemplate what we should do, and what and how we should change, in order to realize coexistence through practical theology. So this is my proposal for our subsequent discussions.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Mother Teresa was, as we all know, a Catholic, and she was also Albanian. Perhaps the fact that she came from a predominantly Islamic culture had some significant impact on her work. Since we do not have much time left, I would like to leave that proposal to be followed up in our discussions. Do you have any simple questions?

If not, as the chairperson, I would like to ask the three speakers to respond to the question Professor Hazizan asked earlier about canonical scriptures. If I may paraphrase, are there still texts regarded as canonical or authoritative today in the religions? I would like to ask Professor Tokunaga to respond to this question in regard to Buddhism. Does Buddhism have such texts? Professor Teshima mentioned earlier the “traditions of the sages”; are they regarded in the same way as the Hebrew Bible? Finally, to Professor Kohara, do today’s liberal Protestants still consider the Bible as the canonical book on which all should rely? I would like to have brief responses to these three questions.

(Tokunaga) We are told that there are 84,000 scriptures in Buddhism and all the scriptures are based on one reality that is *pratitya-samutpāda*, or “interrelated co-relationship.” That is the very original truth which Shākyamuni Buddha discovered, and each sect of Buddhism depends on each sect’s scriptures. There are so many scriptures that nobody can count the accurate number. In addition, speaking of the language, we have Sanskrit texts, Pali texts, Chinese texts, and also Tibetan texts.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Teshima.

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(Teshima) Professor Nakata, I would like to make sure if by canonical or authoritative you mean some order-forming force, or enunciation by someone, which then becomes established and authorized? In fact, Judaism has a form of literature called *responsa*, which is an epistolary collection of questions about the Jewish statutes and their answers. There are rabbis who reply to questions posed by Jewish communities in different areas. This has been going on up to the present time. In this system, it is lay communities who have questions that choose rabbis who are to give them answers for *responsa*. So if a lay Jew who has a question and obeys a certain rabbi's authority, he or she normally writes to that rabbi. In this system, there is no single central body of authority that stipulates to whom you should write. In this sense, you can say that authority in religion is generated because there is human organization or unification, after all; otherwise, the system of *responsa* cannot exist.

Reading *responsa* and studying how it has been written ever since, up until now, you would inevitably notice that every answer is given with a quotation from the Bible or the sages. Without such precedents, without this traditional framework of debate, the answers would have no power of persuasion. So in this sense, I believe that Judaism still has authoritative texts.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Kohara, please.

(Kohara) Since there are various views among liberal Protestants, it is impossible to generalize them in terms of their attitude toward the Bible. Still, as compared with conservatives, liberalists do share some characteristics. I would say that since the 20th century, along with developments in Biblical studies, most liberal Protestants ceased to believe certain matters written in the Bible. One typical example is the Virgin Birth; there are even some very liberal Protestants who say they can no longer believe in the Resurrection. That is to say, one characteristic shared by today's liberal Protestants is selective reading of the Bible, whereby you remove or forget or give little importance to what is incredible in modern times, and focus only on what is comprehensible. On the other hand, the conservatives are not selective; they consider the Bible as a whole as important and authoritative.

With regard to authority, the Catholics and conservative Protestants generally think that the interpretation of the Bible should not be left entirely to individuals, but that it should be entrusted to the Church or authorized leaders. For liberal Protestants, however, it is each individual who determines the final interpretation of the Bible, regardless of what everybody else says. This is where the most important characteristic lies, that for liberal Protestants the interpretative authority has shifted to individuals.

(Chair) Now it is time to close the Session Two. Thank you very much for your participation.

Kyoto Joint Symposium of
CISMOR and KIRKHS
"Salvation and Pluralism in Monotheistic Religions"

Session 3

Session 3: General Discussion

Chair: Hassan Ko Nakata

(Chair) Now I would like to start Session Three. I am sure all of you have many questions and opinions, but since our time is extremely limited, I suggest that we follow the proposal Professor Mori made earlier and try to limit ourselves to contemporary themes that are more directly concerned with our actual situations. We can start with anybody; if you have questions, please push the button.

(Seigel) I think that this question of salvation is a very good topic for interreligious dialogue. Professor Mori talked about the difference between liberal Christianity and conservative Christianity, but I think the most fundamental difference within Christianity is with regard to the different ways that salvation is understood. One interpretation has salvation completely in heaven. In this interpretation, anything that we do in this world is simply to qualify to get into heaven and has no meaning beyond that. In this understanding, if I have a relationship with another human being here on earth, that relationship, in a certain sense, is not important in itself. The only thing that is important is that through that relationship I am getting the good marks that will help me get into heaven. The other interpretation is much more that, whatever salvation is in the afterlife, it is somehow a continuation of what has already begun here in this life, so that the relationship here with the other person, the reason I am to love the other person, is not just because of some salvation in the next world, it is because that relationship has a value in itself here, and the ultimate salvation in the next life somehow incorporates these relationships here. In theological language it is talked about in Christianity as the Kingdom of God being present on earth, but basically it means that the good we do to others, the relationships that we have with others in this world here, are important in themselves and constitute a part of the ultimate salvation that we are to receive in the next life.

I think, in fact, that we can go through Christian history and actually demonstrate that the really bad things in Christian history, the Crusades, the persecution of heretics, and a lot of the complicity in colonialism, and so forth, are associated with the kind of faith that only places value on the next life and sees everything that happens in this life as nothing more than a means to that end.

For Christianity to become a religion that has a great deal of meaning in the world today, I think now the emphasis has to be on salvation in this world—as, to be sure, a preliminary stage of salvation in the next life, but an understanding of salvation that looks on relationships in this

world as having value in themselves. It should be an understanding that sees this world, all that exists in this world, and all our relationships in this world, as having value in themselves. This should include our relationships with all people and all peoples and also with the world of nature. This is an understanding of salvation that sees the world of nature too as being intimately bound up with our salvation. Our salvation is constituted by our relationships—with God, with other people, and with nature.

I was wondering how that issue is seen in other religions. I did get the impression from Professor Zein's presentation that perhaps something similar exists in Islam, but I would like a comment on that, if possible also from Judaism as well as from Islam. Thank you.

(Chair) Professor Seigel, thank you very much. Next, Professor Teshima, please.

(Teshima) Professor Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim talked about changes in Islam. My understanding is that Islam was the religion of Arab nations until a certain point in time and then it came to be embraced by others as well. Is my understanding correct: that until a certain period Islam was an Arab-centered religion? I would like to ask this question first of all.

(Chair) Professor Ibrahim, could you respond to this question, please?

(Ibrahim) If the translation is correct, is your question that up to the 18th century Islam was Arab—is that the question? If you understood me this way I beg to apologize, as I do not mean this. You know, when you look at the history of Islam, scholars speak of the Arab phase of Islam, the Persian phase of Islam, and the Turkish phase of Islam. As mentioned by my colleague, even in the early period of Islam many of the scholars were non-Arabs. One of the pillars of Islamic thought at that time was Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who was not an Arab; Ibn Taymiyyah was also not an Arab, nor were many others. So, I do not think it is correct to say that Islam was Arab. In the very early period, the Arabs were naturally the leaders because Islam was then exclusively in Arabia, but once it started to spread into the world, other cultures and other peoples have come in. It happened that they knew Arabic, and they knew Arabic very well, like Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who wrote extensively and brilliantly in this language. So my answer to your question is: perhaps not.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Sawai, followed by Professor Mori, please.

(Sawai) Professor Hassan Ibrahim, my question is related to Professor Teshima's. If I understand you correctly, you mentioned that the Islamic religious tradition in India, for example, was not like that in Arabia by the 18th century. So, by this statement, do you mean that there were historically various types of Islam, related to indigenous socio-cultural contexts—like a Middle Eastern type of Islam, an Indian type of Islam, and a Turkish type? In other words, can we understand that, although these types of Islam share such Islamic ideas as the concept of Tawhid, there

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were or are concretely different religious customs and ways of living in respective socio-cultural contexts?

(Ibrahim) Yes. I think it is right to say that in Islam there are no chosen people. This is a very important concept in Islam. Even to the Arabs, the Qur'ān says clearly to them that you are not the chosen people, but political power happened at one time to be into the hands of the Arabs, and later it went to the Persians and then to the Turks and other peoples. But as far as the religion itself is concerned, it is clearly stated that this issue of chosen people is not there, and I think this is one of the areas where Islam is perhaps a little bit different. We cannot speak of chosen people.

(Chair) Now, Professor Mori.

(Mori) I have a question for Professor Tokunaga. In fact, I have already asked him this question and received his reply during the coffee break, but since I wish to share our exchange with you all, I would like to ask Professor Tokunaga to repeat his reply. I said earlier that today there is an increasing number of liberal Christians who do not believe in a literal heaven. In the same vein, I would like to know how the notion of the Pure Land of the Jodo Shinshu sect of Buddhism is understood by its followers.

(Tokunaga) Yes, nobody in Shin Buddhism thinks of the Pure Land as a place one can view with a telescope, and it is hard to explain. Shin Buddhists believe in the existence of the Pure Land, but they do not think of it geographically. And yet *Jodo* is not within themselves. *Jodo*, the Pure Land, exists outside of the follower, not inside. The greatest heresy is that the Pure Land is within one's self—that Amida Buddha is myself: "I am Amida and this world is the Pure Land." This kind of view is strongly criticized by Shinran. So we have a special kind of view of the Pure Land.

(Mori) I think that that is the problem of transcendence.

(Tokunaga) Yes.

(Mori) The meaning of transcendence in the Pure Land sect is not like the heaven of Christianity, but it is not in the inside of the self. So what does the Pure Land mean?

(Tokunaga) You are right in your view that the Pure Land is not something like heaven of Christianity, nor is it found in one's own self. Then what is the Pure Land? It is beyond my capacity to explain it. Professor Mori, aren't we having a theological debate (laughter)? It is curious that everyone believes in the Pure Land. Every follower of Shin Buddhism believes in the existence of the Pure Land, and also that birth in the Pure Land comes after their death. They believe in rebirth in the Pure Land at the moment of their death. And yet they do not believe in the geographical and the substantial existence of the Pure Land. I cannot explain this psychology. For instance, Shinran teaches that Jodo is coming to you when you utter the *nembutsu*, or you

call out to Amida Buddha. *Nembutsu* is pronouncing the name of Amida Buddha, the calling out of Amida's name. And through the *nembutsu*, the Pure Land becomes existent. That is all I can say about the birth in the Pure Land. How about *Tengoku* in the Christian sense? Now I would like to ask you: how do Christians believe in heaven today?

(Mori) So, in the Bible, heaven is expressed as “the Kingdom of God,” the place where God rules. So, God's rule is among us, not far away from us. However, in other places, the framework of the world is heaven, ground, and the world of the death. The universe was understood as having three storeys. So, both conceptions are found in the Bible. But in recent years, as Professor Kohara said, among liberal Christians the individual decides his or her own understanding.

(Tokunaga) The most difficult question asked by young people of today is, “What is born in the Pure Land after death? Is that your soul, or something else?” In Buddhism, however, we do not talk about the existence of a soul. All Shin scholars would answer that “it is yourself,” and this may be the only answer for the question. “Not your soul, but ‘yourself’. Your very self is born in the Pure Land.” But I am afraid to say that nobody can understand it.

(Mori) I hope the professors of Malaysia understood this.

(Chair) Now, Professor Kamada, please.

(Kamada) I think the exchange Professor Tokunaga and Professor Mori have just had is indeed a theological debate, a topic in theology, and that is something those who do not share the same religion or religions in question could not care less about. So, when salvation is being discussed, and I say I'm a Buddhist, I would not quite understand if someone retorts by saying “so you're not a Christian; you'll go to Hell.” So when we are trying to contemplate coexistence, it is meaningless to merely speak of the doctrines of respective religions as they are.

When coexistence of those embracing different religions is at issue, the first precondition should be the existence of individuals of different religions, from which the understanding and recognition that these individuals do have different ideas from yours should emerge. In this sense, it is extremely important, I believe, that we try to search deeply in our respective cultural traditions for a starting point for accepting those whose ideas are different from ours, and knowing to what extent we can accept them.

I do research on Islam, and from what I know, I can say that in Islam there is a notion, “*Ahlul-Kitab*” (people of the Revelation), which indicates that Islam recognizes the existence of non-Muslims. In the traditional interpretation, this term only applies to a limited number of other religions such as Christianity and Judaism. This is because they were the only religions with which Muslims came into contact historically. Therefore, it is not impossible to expand the meaning of the term to apply it more broadly. Since the notion itself took shape in social situa-

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tions where Islam was predominant, it implies non-Muslims as second-class citizens. At the same time, Islam being a practical religion, a notion that has survived in theory can be flexibly adjusted to accommodate the present reality. What is important, as with the meaning of a religious term, is searching in our respective religious traditions for core ideas that express the willingness for coexistence and developing them for realistic application. Studies in theology and religious law can be pursued toward this end.

The best way to arrive at the final coexistence of various religions would be to find the rationale for recognizing and accepting the existence of the "Other" in one way or another within respective religious traditions. So, instead of getting together as representatives of different religions just to explain our respective religions to each other, we could make a far better start if we contemplated how we can understand the Other in our respective cultures. I wanted to say this because I think it is related to what Professor Kohara said earlier.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Samir, please.

(Nouh) My question will go to Professor Tokunaga. I am a Muslim; I lived in sub-continental India and Pakistan for a long time. I had the chance to meet many Buddhists there (and in Japan as well), and also I had the chance to make connections with many Buddhist friends. I am interested in Buddhism because I saw many things in Buddhism which I have in my religion, Islam. When we take, for example, the idea of Amitabha or Amida, so we can find in Islam the idea of "*Al-Insanul Kamil*," which is the same in some aspects. I do not know if Muslim Sufis took this idea from Buddhism in India or we have it actually in the Qur'ān. This idea of *Al-Insanul Kamil* can be seen even in the philosophy of Goethe, who wrote about the superman. Goethe was somehow influenced by Islam. So I can say that *Al-Insanul Kamil* in Islam and the Buddhist Amitabha can be the same. But the difference is that in Buddhism, of course, the human being can be Amitabha, and therefore he can be God. The other point I want to mention here is that when Shinran (who established Jodo Shinshu) wanted to make Buddhism—the Japanese form of Buddhism, I should say—very easy, he said that any person can just call the name of Amitabha to go to the Pure Land. Pure Land in Islam is Paradise, and in the Qur'ān we find some verses similar to what Shinran was preaching. For example:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

If you call Allah, you will feel relaxed within your heart. (Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest. (Arraad - The Thunder; 28)

I cannot continue talking about these points because I found many similarities between Buddhism and Islam. Even the idea of God in Buddhism and in Islam is similar in a way. When

we see, for example, the statue of Buddha showing him having many hands and many legs and many eyes—endless it seems—we feel in my opinion that this idea expressed what is mentioned in the Qur’ān, that Allah (God) sees everywhere and reaches everywhere and knows everything. I am talking here about the Indian form of Buddhism, because there is a difference between the Japanese and the Indian forms of Buddhism.

I will turn to my last point. I feel from the presentation of Professor Tokunaga, when he speaks about Buddhism in Japan, that he feels Buddhism is not active in society, Japanese society. I think it is a natural phenomenon. Buddhism started in Japan for select people, and I feel it has been continuing like this for long time in Japanese history. But we cannot say that Buddhism was not active within the society. Buddhist temples had schools that were teaching children the literature of Buddhism—short stories, history, etc. But Professor Tokunaga wrote here in his paper that he felt that, “[f]orced by such criticism, and also by the growing necessity of social engagement in the contemporary world, almost all the Buddhist schools in Japan seem to be eager to participate in the contemporary social movements. But, frankly speaking, they have not yet succeeded in finding the basis of ethical engagement with the society.” The way I understood it—maybe I am wrong—he thinks that Buddhism cannot go with the social movement without applying standards of the West. Actually, I understand the West here not as the West the way it will typically come to our mind; I understand it as the countries west of Japan, as China or India from where Buddhism came. Am I right—or maybe the professor means by the West the European countries? If so, then I have a question: how can we apply standards of the West to Buddhist thinking? This is my question.

(Chair) Now, I would like to ask Professor Tokunaga to respond.

(Tokunaga) The word “West” indicates Europe and America, not the west side of India.

(Nouh) How can we approach the Western countries, I mean, applying standards of Western countries for Japanese Buddhism? This is actually my question. We are in Japan, not in Western countries, and you have your own organizations, Buddhist organizations all over Japan. Of course they were doing well and acting better before the war, of course. They had kindergardens and schools teaching children, we can read it in the literature—I mean Buddhist literature. We can see the same nowadays. I have visited many Japanese families, and when I enter their houses I feel that they are Buddhist, according to the way of Japanese Buddhism, even if they will not show or declare that. I am not Japanese, but I feel it; maybe you live in it and so you are accustomed to it, you do not feel it, but I feel it. I feel the Japanese are Buddhist, everything is Buddhist. I go to anyone’s house, and I find Buddhism there. I talk to them, and they talk to me about the Pure Land. So, how do we adopt standards of the West to make Buddhism progress in Japan?

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(Chair) Professor Tokunaga, would you like to comment?

(Tokunaga) It is beyond my ability to answer your question. I am sorry.

(Nouh) No. I am sorry, maybe I could not understand in a good way.

(Chair) Now, Mr. Shimomura, please.

(Shimomura) I would like to ask a question because this is an international symposium and we have scholars who have come all the way from Malaysia. As Professor Kamada said earlier, Islam has the notion of "people of the Revelation" which usually refers to Christians and Jews. I have heard that, in India, the term has come to refer to Buddhists as well. I would like to know if this term with its expanded meaning has been introduced into Indonesia. If it has not been introduced, I would like to know how the Muslim community in Indonesia has managed to coexist with the Chinese and Indian communities. If the coexistence has been maintained without any theoretical support, there must have been some kind of wisdom that has enabled it. So I would like to know what has enabled the coexistence there. Thank you.

(Chair) May I ask Professor Noon to respond to that question?

(Noon) Thank you. I think the first part of the question was not translated or maybe I could not hear it. Therefore, I cannot respond to it. The last part asked about how they coexist, right? But you seem to refer to Indonesia, not Malaysia. This is the problem and it is beyond my ability to answer that.

However, I may explain the general situation of coexistence among people of different religions in Malaysia. To me, it largely has something to do with the history that we have undergone. It happened that many religious beliefs had been introduced to Malaysians. Almost all major world religions are subscribed to by Malaysians—Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism—in addition to animism and others. Islam was the latest to be introduced to this country. Nonetheless, it was the most dominant and influential one until today. Now it has become the official religion of Malaysia.

Coexistence in Malaysia, to my understanding, is due to several factors. First, I think in general Malaysians after independence seemed to have gradually accepted the fact that despite the existence of different ethnic groups created mainly by the colonial powers, they agreed that at the end of the day they have to live together and therefore they decided to focus more on development, which is more common to all, rather than to focus on ethnic and religious differences. That explains why, from the very beginning, people of different religions and ethnic groups in Malaysia somehow have been forced by circumstances to appreciate the common cultural goal, i.e. development, which is more relevant to all.

Another thing is that religious tolerance in Malaysia seems to be highly observed. Each religion has certain limits for expressing itself within specific national cultural circumstances. In this sense, any extreme practice is seen as being not good for the society. There are always elements of extremism in all communities. You will find that this has also been dealt with by the Malaysian government in order to make sure that such elements do not jeopardize or disturb the general interest of society. That is also why you find that some Islamic sects in Malaysia have been dealt with quite seriously because the country does not want the general welfare of the people to be at stake because of extremist views. I think this is what has been taking place in Malaysia to ensure the prevalence of such coexistence. Thank you.

(Shimomura) Can you answer whether you know about the application or broad interpretation of the Ahl al-Kitab to Buddhists or Hindus?

(Noon) I must say that I am not the best person to answer this question from the religious legal point of view. I would rather leave it to one qualified to deal with it. But culturally, to me, such has never been an issue in the context of Malaysia. The fact is that Malaysians generally have been living together in peace without having to categorize or brand people. I think Malaysians focus more on cultural and social dealings rather than theological and religious dealings, although theology and religions do play active role within the defined constitutional limits. For this reason, we do not really have that problem in our daily communications.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Does anybody have any other questions? Yes, first Professor Kagaya and then Professor Samir, please.

(Kagaya) My comment is related to Professor Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim. I have been interested in the thought of Shāh Walī Allāh and I have published articles on his thought. I was not present at the reading of your paper, but I can agree with your conclusion that Shāh was significantly original and dynamic. I think his basis or his ground of thought is “*fitrat*,” that human nature, human beings have needs. Needs are a basic motive of building and organizing society. That was his opinion, and I think he was a Muslim type of natural law philosopher. What do you think of my comment? He lived in a pre-modern age that came before the advent of Western thought, and he composed his ideas relying on Islamic thought. Traditional Islamic thought could be instrumental in building a humanistic construction in the middle of the 18th century. Thank you, that’s all.

(Chair) Professor Ibrahim, would you like to respond?

(Ibrahim) Yes, thank you very much for your comment. I agree with you, and I feel that the reason for this is that, perhaps, he understood Islam properly. When you read his literature, it always emphasizes that when talking about Islam, we have to reflect on the sources of Islam, the Qur’ān in particular, rather than to speak about the Muslim experience. So this universality and

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flexibility is important in Islam, they are two important components of Islam, and therefore, that is why it is universal. My argument, besides this, is that he was also influenced by the conditions of his time, that is, in the Indian subcontinent: the environment, the social set up, the cultural interaction, etcetera. So, I think, both factors worked together to make him different. In a sense, as I suggested in my paper, he was more diversified in his thought and more tolerant as well. Thank you.

(Chair) Now Professor Samir, followed by Professor Shinohe, please.

(Nouh) I have a comment, a question for Professor Hassan Ibrahim about Shāh Walī Allāh—actually I want to answer the question raised by Professor Sawai about Shāh Walī Allāh and Hinduism. Shāh Walī Allāh, of course, was not affected by Hinduism, but he found the Muslim society affected by Hinduism so he tried to end such things. For example, no one can get married with a widow in Hinduism, so the Muslim people also had the same thing and he was against this. Divorce was illegal in Hinduism. Muslim people also started doing the same thing in India, so he was also against such a thing and he wrote about the problem of the effects of Hinduism on Islam, but he was not, in his thinking or his literature, affected by Hinduism at all. The Muslims in India were affected by Buddhism, not by Hinduism actually.

My question to Professor Hassan Ibrahim relates to how Islam was spreading in India by the efforts of Sufis—Sufi Muslims, Sufis in India were actually spreading Islam when the movement of Shāh Walī Allāh started. Many people say this actually and sometimes I accept it. When the movement of Shāh Walī Allāh started and the movement of Ahle-Hadis came after it, Islam stopped spreading in India. What do you think about this?

(Ibrahim) I am not the authority to answer this, but I will try my best to do it. I think if you look at Shāh Walī Allāh, his role model was Ahmad Sirhindi, the famous Ahmad Sirhindi. You know that Ahmad Sirhindi was a Sufi—he was a Naqshbandi, you see, and when you speak about a Naqshbandiyah, you speak about.... And Shāh Walī Allāh was an extension of this tradition. I think I agree with you that the Sufis—not only in the Indian subcontinent but in other places as well, particularly where I come from in Africa—they have played a major role in this spread. This is because Sufism is generally tolerant, is generally tolerant in its understanding of Islam. It is one thing to read Islam, the other thing is to understand it, just like in all other religions. You can understand it differently, but the Sufis and the Naqshbandis and others have understood it this way. So, when extremist people come, I mean now, even in our time now when extremists insist that it is either my way or no way—this is exactly what the extremists say: either my way or no way—this, of course, will not help. But for Shāh Walī Allāh and other Sufis, they interacted with the people; as you said, he was telling the Muslim world that there are good sides in Hinduism and Buddhism, Buddhism in particular, but there are also negative sides...

I can also relate this in the African setting. You know, many of the Du‘āh in Africa in the 19th and 18th century, and before that, were speaking the same language; Usman dan Fodio in West Africa was a very leading Muslim revivalist. He put forward the concept we call a Takhleef, meaning to mix up Islam with traditional religions. He said that some aspects of this are not good and he spoke about it. That is why some people suggest that he wanted to purify Islam of this, but I totally agree with you that Sufism has played a major role, and this is because of their understanding of Islam.

(Chair) Professor Shinohe, Professor Mori, and Professor Hosoya, in that order, please.

(Shinohe) Thank you very much. I have a comment and a question. At first I was not able to associate salvation with pluralism, but after listening to Professor Kamada and Professor Kohara, I arrived at the understanding that pluralism comes into the picture once you start dealing with the question as to whether or not the Other could also be “saved.”

As you know, since around 2001 the coexistence of religions has been much talked about, while at the same time inter-faith confrontations have been intensifying. Against this background, focus has been put on the theme of salvation of the soul as a possible breakthrough. Consequently, a number of publications have appeared on that theme. This is my understanding of the situation. In this sense, salvation is indeed an extremely important question. In the symposium’s presentations, I think that the speakers treated the question of “salvation in this world and hereafter” within the conventional frameworks. I would like to ask the speakers’ views of salvation in several different stages in those frameworks: that is, how salvation is positioned in the doctrines of the respective religions; how it was positioned in the early periods of the religions’ foundation. For example, in the case of Islam, there was the victory of the conquest of Mecca, and salvation was defined in relation to this victory. Continuing with my questions, how has the view of salvation evolved in history, as the religions have undergone various developments? For the monotheistic religions in today’s society, what concrete issues directly concern the question of salvation? And what final images of salvation are proposed at the end of the world? I would like to learn about these views because I believe they can help me better understand the notion of salvation in Christianity and Judaism.

Next, I have a question about Islam in non-Arabic areas, since fortunately we have with us today scholars from Malaysia and Sudan. In Japan, in Japanese popular belief, salvation is associated with the repose of souls as something extremely important. So people are very much concerned about how to console the souls of the dead and how to maintain ties between the dead and the living, since the living play a role in helping the dead to rest in peace. This is all related to the question of salvation. I would very much like to know how Muslims in Malaysia and Sudan deal

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with the question of salvation during the period between a family member's death and the day of the Last Judgment, what traditions they have to ensure the repose of dead souls, and how such traditions are mixed with the Muslim practice. Thank you.

(Chair) I would like to ask Professor Hazizan to respond about Malaysia, and about Sudan, Professor Ibrahim Zein, please.

(Noon) I must say that I am not qualified to say this, but I think there is one comment, specifically with respect to the last question. Salvation basically is dealing with the soul. I mean, we are concerned about the safe soul rather than a safe physical body and this can also mean either we are saved here or in the Hereafter. For a religion like Islam which believed in the stages of, I mean, the different stages of the life of a human being, this world is actually connected to the other world that is the Hereafter. That is why we say, *addunyā mazra'ah al'ākhirah*, that this world is a cultivating ground for the Hereafter, that what we cultivate here, the result will be in the Hereafter. The actual Hereafter, when our worldly life or our world comes to an end, the destruction: nobody will be there and there will be a great what is called a "transfer" from this world to the other world. But then, those who had passed away or those who have passed will have to wait for some time before that big event comes.

So what happened to this idea? There is one Hadith, one tradition in the Prophet which says *taraktu fīkum amrain lan taḍilla in tamassakta bihimā*, meaning that the moment one passes away, one leaves behind everything except three things which will benefit him. First are the good things that he has done in the world, especially in the form of his donations and his other good things which other people have benefited from, and this reward will continue to redeem or to help him there. Second are the good children, the religious children or the children who look into themselves by doing good things and avoiding wrong things; we call this *walad ṣāliḥ*, a good person. So the prayer of the children will continue to give to or to help the soul after death. And the third thing is the knowledge that we leave behind which is beneficial to others. That is why I feel very comfortable being a lecturer, even though you cannot be a rich man by being a lecturer, like a businessman, but I think we have some contribution whereby the knowledge that we give to people, generations and generations, will then be a kind of capital for us to redeem whatever deficiencies that we have in the world.

So, basically Islam believes that more good works will redeem bad deficiencies, or the deficiencies that we have. So this is one of the ways our soul will be salvaged. Thus, I think the tradition in Malaysia is for those who believe in religion—who will always concentrate on making sure that their children will be good and that the knowledge they leave behind is okay, and who will do more works in order to give benefit to them later. I think these are the traditions. The tra-

dition of donating when there are victims of earthquakes and so on, I think that can also be a part of it. Thank you.

(Chair) Professor Ibrahim Zein, please.

(Zein) Just one thing. I would like to answer you in relation to the question raised by Dr. Seigel. In answering your question, I should say that it needs to be remarked that, in Islam, who is going to be saved and who is not going to be saved is not our business. This is the business of God. In this regard, who is going to be sent to Hell or who is going to be sent to Paradise is not our business, and you cannot say for sure that “X” is going to go to Paradise or “X” is going to go to Heaven. Now, stating this principle, Islam is understood as a religion that focuses on the ethics of intention and the ethics of action, and both of them are important in Islam. Good deeds are clearly associated with true belief. So, it is more or less just like the other version of Christianity or interpretation of Christianity that said that you have got to focus on this world; you have got to be good to your neighbor, have got to be good to other human beings, if you really wanted to make it up there.

So I completely agree with you that this line of thinking is present in Islam, but I also wanted to say that there are Muslims who would drum up the issue of the Hereafter, and for them salvation is the consequence of being Muslim in this group or that one, and then in the Hereafter you will be saved because the whole group is going to be saved. There is this kind of popular understanding of Islam, I do not deny it, but I think learned submissions by learned Muslim scholars would emphasize the things that you emphasized.

Now, in Islam it was said that after you die, from the moment of your death up to the Hereafter is just one hour. I mean people in the Hereafter, they would not feel the time lapse that we are having now, but from the time you die, your soul or yourself—as Professor Hazizan said, the good deeds which would be done by your relatives or your friends, this supplication, would help you in the Hereafter. But it is very important that, before you die, you have got to do good things here and to have the right intention and belief. I mean, your relatives cannot interfere with God or bribe God to let go of you in the Hereafter, so if you did not make it here in this world, if you have not done good deeds in this world, I do not think that many of the things that could be done by your relatives after your death would help.

Now, I understand that, in Malaysian tradition also, this misunderstanding is there—and it is also there in the form of popular Islam in Sudan—that when somebody dies the people start reading Yasin (one of the Qur’ānic Surahs), and they will have *Tahleel* for quite a number of days, meaning that this is one way of consoling your soul and helping you to get somewhere when you die, to the place where we all want to go.

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If Professor Hassan Nakata will allow, I was really disturbed by the provocative remarks that were made by Professor Mori regarding how we are just talking and having theological debates, which will not get us anywhere. I have to confess that coming here, whenever I write anything after this, this is going to be a part of my audience. I never had such an experience of people from different religious affiliations, who would be looking and watching to whatever I will be writing. So, this type of interaction is very useful and fruitful and it will shape my religious imagination in a positive way, and I agree with you when you said that we need to have this ethics of coexistence. That is very important, but if you want to be practical, I think we have to sit together and listen, in order to develop a set of ethics of disagreement. I am not denying hands-on things, but we have got to sit together to develop an ethics of disagreement, which are so essential for any kind of meaningful coexistence. What I mean is, you can coexist with me, yet I might hate you day and night and I will wait for the time when I have a chance to get to you, and I will get to you—but that is a very superficial kind of coexistence.

Real coexistence, if we manage to develop an ethics of disagreement—and this type of ethics of disagreement if it were to be reflected in our curriculum, especially at the undergraduate level if people are going to teach this type of ethics of disagreement and to reflect on them—would be quite helpful. Certainly, it will change the world around us. And perhaps in addition to this, the tradition that we are starting to have of this student exchange will also be very useful. But if we push it a little bit, those students who are going to come here, if they were asked to do some social work, that would be very helpful. Obviously, I mean social work among Buddhists, and when your students come to us in IIUM, we will ask them to do social work among Muslims. So Muslims would see some people who are Buddhists and Japanese, yet willing to help and lend a hand; they will see real Buddhists, among Muslims, who are helping Muslims, making a difference in the life of the Muslims in rural areas. That will be a good thing.

And the final thing to be said is, I think this place would be a good place for exchanging ideas between Muslims and Jews, especially Jewish scholars. It would be a good place because we do not have trust in the American institutions at the moment. Although I have been educated in America, I think they are very biased and a great number of these institutions of higher learning, now, are calling Muslims terrorists and developing a nasty kind of scholarship that needs to be dismantled. Certainly, we need somebody like Edward Said to come and to tell the Americans that this is not the case, but here in Japan, you are very neutral. On this ground, it could be very helpful for us to talk and to have a meaningful exchange of ideas and that will help the world. Certainly, as Professor Hassan said, the issue of Palestine is very vital for world peace, for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Thank you very much Professor Hassan.

(Chair) Thank you very much. Now, Professor Mori, followed by Professor Hosoya, please.

(Mori) Thank you very much, Professor Zein, I wholeheartedly agree with you. What I wanted to say earlier is that, when we have this kind of opportunity for exchanging opinions, we must agree beforehand on what we are supposed to exchange opinions about. In this sense, I find what Professor Kamada said earlier about searching in respective religious traditions for elements that enable coexistence of different religions to be extremely important.

Now, I would also like to suggest the opposite: I think it is equally important to recognize which elements in respective religions constitute obstacles to coexistence. If I cite this symposium's theme, the notion of salvation can indicate some such elements which tend to hinder coexistence. I believe that it is also important to contemplate these.

The notion of "good deeds" has been discussed. In Christianity, while it is said that it is by faith that you are saved, some also believe that those who have done good deeds will be saved. Is there anything in the Christian idea of "good deeds" that can hinder coexistence? Yes—for example, so-called Holy War or Just War. How should we overcome this contradiction? This is an important question. Another obstacle to coexistence in Christianity can be the notion of mission. It is generally believed that missionary work is for salvation. Yet, missionary work involves changing the "Other." How do you change the "Other"? By making him Christian, like yourself, or in other words, by assimilation. So this form of "good deeds" prevents coexistence with the Other, and this is something we must seriously reflect on.

Then, what elements does Islam, or Judaism, have that prevent coexistence? I believe it is very important that we have discussions to tackle this issue. This is my comment, and since this is not a question, I do not request any answer. Thank you.

(Chair) Thank you very much. I might just point out that what Professor Mori has just said about the importance of examining our respective religious traditions to detect elements that might hinder the coexistence of different religions is one of this year's research subjects for CISMOR. Now, finally, Professor Hosoya, please.

(Hosoya) I hesitate to talk after such a wonderful statement by Professor Mori; maybe I should keep my mouth shut. However, putting all the theoretical questions aside, I would like to ask some questions related to coexistence among people who have different religions. In the case of Malaysia, one such case of coexistence on a personal level would be inter-religious marriages. Maybe it is difficult to distinguish between inter-religious marriages from inter-racial or some other marriages. Frankly, I have to confess I am very ignorant about the Malaysian situation. What is the situation of inter-religious marriage in Malaysia? Is such a thing happening, or it is not really prevalent? I know that you have *Islam Hadhari* and the government is justified in

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promoting Islamic ideas and so forth. Still, I think there will be some inter-religious marriages. If there are some cases like that, are they increasing or decreasing given the situation in Malaysia? If they exist, then what are these couples going to deal with in terms of the education of their children or the school curriculum or the marriage ceremony itself? In the case of funerals, for example, are the deceased buried, and if so, in which religious tradition? Those are rather concrete cases of coexistence I would like to ask about. I would like to have some idea if this is the case. Will you inform us of what is happening in Malaysia?

(Chair) I would like to ask Professor Hazizan to respond to that question. Then, we will have the last question from Professor Teshima before closing this session.

(Noon) As mentioned earlier, we have people of different religions who live together in one country. There are many things that we have to consider when we go through the adaptation process. As the official religion of the country, Islam enjoys a special status and privileges over other religions. This however does not reduce the freedom of others to adopt and practice any religion they wish. This is one thing to be aware of. Yes, marriage among people of different ethnic groups does take place in Malaysia. In most cases, people from other religions convert to Islam to get married to Muslims. But as to conversion from Islam to other religions for marriage purposes, I do not have much information about it or statistics on it. At any rate, one has to realize that the nation has to be very, very careful in dealing with any religious matter because it is highly sensitive and controversial. We do not want all these sensitive issues to override the nation's higher objectives. In fact, such kinds of marriage also took place in our history. For example, when Islam came to the land, the ruler converted to Islam and many people embraced Islam as they followed the footsteps of the ruler.

The problem arises when there is no clear-cut case of conversion, that is, when people do not know whether someone has converted or not. This might be less problematic in terms of education. However, when it comes to funerals a lot of things need to be resolved. Of late, we have cases whereby people converted to a certain religion but they did not declare it. Only when they passed away did the problems begin to surface. For example, relatives from both sides will claim the body because they believe the deceased is of this or that religious belief.

Yes, I think we increasingly have to face this kind of problem. And I believe the country is trying her best to deal with such unclear cases of conversion. Generally, we can say that in reality conversion and inter-marriage do take place in Malaysia, for good or bad, to any particular religion. However, this is not a proper forum to talk about it. What ought to be from a particular religious perspective or a Malaysian perspective is to me more complicated than what we can discuss today. Thank you very much.

(Chair) Thank you very much.

(Ibrahim) Can I just say one thing? I think you are aware, in what Professor Hazizan said, how one has to keep in mind that Islam would not allow a female, a woman, to marry a man who is a non-Muslim. This is in the Qur’ān, but I am aware that a few Jurists argue that a Muslim woman may marry a Christian or a Jew, “*Ahlul-Kitab*,” the people of the Book. But the mainstream ruling is that if a non-Muslim man wants to marry a Muslim woman, he has to opt for Islam—I mean, they have to be of the same religion, that is Islam.

This is the mainstream view, but if you are aware of Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, he issued a very controversial fatwa that allowed, in specific cases, the marriage of a Christian or a Jew to a Muslim woman because he might convert to Islam. In case a husband apostates, the marriage bond, in Turabi’s view, may continue to save the family, a very important institution in Islam. So this is Turabi’s fatwa, which created a lot of havoc.

I myself do not adhere to this fatwa, but I think it shows you some of the legal opinions that can be given in specific situations. But generally speaking, the state of Malaysia follows the Shāfi’ī school of jurisprudence which does not allow such a marriage.

(Chair) Professor Teshima, please.

(Teshima) I will be brief. I just want to speak for Judaism again, but I cannot agree more on the statement of Professor Mori, and we should have a courage to study and look into the details of negativities in each religion. Yet at the same time I have a hesitance to rush for generalization and the systematization of what we can agree as ethics of disagreement. I mean, speaking of Judaism, Judaism is a religion of a minority which cannot be heard, yet I think cannot yet be understood properly through the eyes of Jews as they are, nor through the eyes of Christianity, nor Islam. And I think CISMOR builds very positively and fosters the mutual understandings of each religion. Especially, I gain more understanding of Islam, and I am influenced by the Talmudic method of studying Adin Steinsaltz’s thought; I am influenced by it, and he said that good study starts from the real concrete case, not from the definitions and the systems because systems and concept and definition come only after the real cases. And therefore I consider this conference as a real good case. Thank you.

(Chair) Thank you very much. May I say a few words, as I have not been able to voice my opinions until now, having served as chair?

Personally I believe that the traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam dictate that there is one absolute Truth and we must go on seeking it, but we will not know it until the day of the Last Judgment. I believe that our faiths are about continuing debates on this very difficult path. So in this sense, I find our discussions today extremely significant.

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Before we close this symposium, I would like to ask Professor Mori to give a closing address.

Closing Address

(Mori) I have talked a little too much today; so I would like to keep my remarks brief.

I believe that we have been given a truly great opportunity. There are many questions that we must tackle, and there are many different views from different standpoints as to how we should do so. Yet, it is extremely important to maintain this kind of forum where we can exchange opinions, and I do hope that we continue to meet in the future.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to our three colleagues from Malaysia, as well as our colleagues from Japan, for your active participation and contribution. Thank you very much.

(Chair) This concludes the symposium. Thank you all very much for your participation today.

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