

# Islam: Is it an enemy?

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*The following is a speech to a symposium organized jointly by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Arab Thought Forum in Amman, Jordan on Oct. 23-24. It was entitled, "Ethics in Economy: Euro-Arab Perspective." Mr. Shubeilat addressed a special session attended by German participants and guests. Subheads have been added.*

It is told that two men visited a city for the first time; when asked about their impressions, one said that he found it to be a city of sensual pleasures, while the other described it as a city of shrines, museums, and cultural activities. A wise man explained the discrepancy by stating that each of the men found what he was looking for.

For the seeker of truth, the real truth, and nothing but the truth, nothing but a non-biased approach could lead to sound proper findings. I believe that such a selective group of people is not here this evening except for such a noble purpose. The world is getting smaller and smaller, and the people are getting closer and closer, to the degree that understanding between cultures is the only way to save humanity from the path of destruction that it is heading for (at least in the speaker's opinion.) It is my sincere belief as a Muslim that by analyzing the driving philosophical thoughts and ideas of cultures as to their basic principles, and by avoiding clashes and differences over the different interpretations of belief of similar or, sometimes, identical principles of thought, and by concentrating, rather, on the degree true human values are present in the social manifestations of such beliefs, I may identify persons or groups of people close to my Islam, the universal Islam that God and His prophet want, not the tribal Islam nor the tribal Christianity that identifies one's affiliations and closeness according to the title, label, or, as a figure of speech, the robe one wears, neglecting the substance matter covered by that robe.

With this introduction, I will set out my talk introducing my thoughts, searching for those who bear similar ideas and principles amongst a foreign congregation sharing the common label of Christianity: Christian Democrats. I will not be surprised at all to discover common ground with some of you, in the same way that I was not surprised to discover major differences with fellow Muslims who fail to see Islam other than as a tribe.

The Islamic civilization flourished and had its astounding impact on the history of humanity and humanity itself, when

Islam was understood as a human universal message. When this happened, backward tribes in the desert were transformed, almost overnight, to active civilizing agents that spread outside the Arabian Peninsula, to be welcomed in almost all of the geographic areas that they reached. It was Arnold Toynbee, I guess, who refuted the argument that Islam was an imperialist force simply by arguing that no imperialist force could stay in any country except by routing the indigenous population or subduing them to slavery; but when peoples and cultures gladly assimilate, integrate, and eventually identify proudly with an incoming force, then that force is anything but imperialist regardless of the military means it used sometimes for its introduction.

## **Islam based on natural law**

I have subtly made my first introductory idea, namely, that the Muslim civilization, unlike other civilizations, did not evolve for centuries before it attained what is considered to be the most important indicator of social progress: *law*, but rather the opposite; it was the complete set of laws based on natural law and universal human justice: the earthly manifestation of the Lord's message to all his human creations, that initiated this civilization and kept it going, or in times of weakness and loss of direction, kept it alive and immortal.

Islam and Christianity are both monotheistic religions; they believe that God is one, that He created man in His image (*imago viva Dei*), and created the universe at His service; that, as such, He is the center of the universe. The Lord ordained man to subdue the universe, to multiply and replenish the earth. As such, man is worthy of respect and has the irrevocable right to live and have a share of the bounty of the Lord (the wealth of the universe) according to the maximum of their enterprise, without transgressing over the minimum needs of the weakest in society who have the undeniable right to live a dignified life regardless of race, color, sex, or belief. It is these basic principles that lead both religions to the prohibition of slavery and its most vicious tool, usury. Therefore, any socio-economic policy that leads to slavery and usury, apparently or discreetly, is without any doubt anti-Christian and anti-Muslim.

We have zoomed in so little words, and with a beam of foresight that penetrates the clouds and storms of apparent differences in theological belief and worshipping rituals, to land on the firm common grounds of the founding principles



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of social justice in the two monotheistic religions. The logical question that follows is: Why is it that there is tension and alarm between the two civilizations? Why is it that they are clashing or on the brink of a clash? And what should be done to diffuse this tension that we all see being built constantly, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism?

### 'Free enterprise' is not Christian

The answer lies in analyzing the prevailing socio-economic policies in both camps to uncover how close such are to Islamic or Christian principles. The primary research should be directed to the dominant culture, that of western civilization, because it enjoys independence with no outside ideas forcefully injected into it through hegemony. The driving socio-economic principles in the Christian West today—free enterprise and market forces—are based on non-Christian, anti-human thought and principles; yet the West puts them through as the normal offspring of Christian culture and humanity. That's why, from time to time, the Vatican comes out strongly criticizing such a system. One of its latest is the warning that the collapse of communism does not necessarily imply the correctness and nobleness of the other system, which rather needs enormous reforms to fit inside the humane parameters acceptable to the church. I am sure that reading through the Christian social economic principles and thoughts that were handed to me by the organizer of this gathering shall be very rewarding, if the substance matter is

coherent with the noble title of your party.

Today's prevailing thought is not based on man being the center and master of the universe, but rather nature. He is in many cases the cause of ecological pollution. The ecologists, with a prevailing pagan thought of Gaia, Mother Earth, put the pollution of nature ahead of people and mankind on their agenda. In a true monotheistic Islamic-Christian ecological agenda, poverty is considered to be the number-one issue on the agenda of the preservation of the planet and the universe. But preserving population is on a head-on collision course with the prevailing anti-Christian malthusianism, where, contrary to correct scientific thought, the resources of the planet and the universe are considered to be finite; such argument leads to none other than population control and eventually population shrinking that could take any form needed. Malthus uttered his famous policy: *laissez mourir*, i.e., let them die; George Bush is on record in the U.S. Congress to have talked about the need for wars, famines, and other natural disasters to limit the growth on the planet (1968-69). The Bucharest Conference on Population (1974) stated that the planet can sustain only 3 billion people (what about the rest?), and when the conference failed, the face of African and South American opposition, to pass the draft malthusian resolutions, Henry Kissinger, the U.S. President's national security adviser, formulated a confidential memo NSSM 200 in 1974, which eventually developed into the confidential presidential directive NSD 314 in 1975, identifying population growth in the developing sector as a threat to the national security of the United States, and adopting for the first time food as a weapon.

Here lies the major difference between a peaceful society with a humane outlook, and a belligerent society, no matter how cultured and refined its people may seem. Here is a civilization that deviated completely and categorically from the Scriptures regardless of the numbers of people going to church. Here is a civilization that looks to be the most scientifically advanced society in history, yet it is utterly unscientific by refusing to obey the Lord's commandments: subdue the universe, multiply and replenish. How do such Biblical and Koranic ordainments conform with science? Had we been talking about the ecological balance of all other living creatures, the malthusian logic would be unquestioned; but we are not talking about an animal, not even a "talking animal," as the Darwinians claim. We are talking about the image of God, the creature honored by God and lifted above all creatures with his unlimited creative abilities emanating from the spark of reason that bestows upon him rightfully the sovereignty that he should enjoy according to natural law, the law of the Creator. Facing this noble creature there is no such thing as limited resources. He attains the utmost worship of his Lord by striving to put his creativity at the service of mankind without bias, leading to the continuous redefinition of resources and wealth according to every technological breakthrough. The argument that the planet cannot sustain increasing population can have no logic except with the lack

of scientific progress which is impossible. The only other way this may happen is when the “haves” stand in the face of the Lord’s ordainments by practicing technological apartheid vis-à-vis the “have-nots.” This is practiced openly today in the so-called Christian West.

Before answering what the lecture set out to answer—Is Islam a threat to human civilization?—I hope to have successfully put forward the very large question marks on the non-belligerence of the West today, and by doing so I am not planning to make an arrogant grand victorious entry for the case of Islamic civilization, but rather make the very, very important scholarly statement that the clash and struggle we see today is not really between Islam and Christianity, but rather between societies and camps which do not maintain from their religious thought and background anything except the label, the robe. The driving forces of the West today, as well as those of an East prohibited from attaining its cultural identity under the hegemony of the cosmopolitan western cultural values and tastes, are in conflict with themselves, with the titles and labels they represent.

I’m glad to have the opportunity to address a congregation of politicians from the West who put Christian thought and morality at the center of their political socio-economic thought. It is a great opportunity for me to convey to them a few statements that they will surely find surprising, especially when such statements come from someone amusingly described by the misinformed or, to be more precise, the disinformed western media as a “radical Muslim fundamentalist”: “It is in our interest in the Islamic world that the West moves toward Christianity, the true understanding of Christianity, and it is very alarming to us to see the West embracing more and more pagan cult ideologies that do not breed anything except apartheid, bias, and racism, mobilizing the honest Christian feelings of the masses against the oppressed developing sector under the pretext of fighting for the preservation of Christian culture, while the real struggle is for the domination of raw materials and markets.”

### **A united front against usury**

Moving toward real solid Christian values in the West should not be alarming to us Muslims, but to the contrary, it should be soothing; whilst our quest for the real value system in Islam and its manifestations should be soothing to the West and not alarming. In this small world dominated by a united front of evil, a front of all humanity-loving persons and groups should start forming to lead a revolt in Christ’s tradition, in the Prophet of Islam’s tradition, to kick the usurers who enslave mankind from the Temple.

We in the Muslim world should not be weighed by our weak material presence today, but by our very rich and firm culture. Way long before equality and civil rights of people started to be debated in the West, our faith and practice established it. Man’s sovereignty, rights of women to have their independent legal and social identity and inheritance, the irrevocable right of minorities to co-exist and contribute

to the common culture of the society, and their right to organize their communities and enforce their special communal and religious laws under the general common law of Islam, are all established, practiced, and dogmatically protected from being revoked in the Muslim society. Different cultures are smoothly accepted to co-exist and assimilate, forming a new breed of civilization that lends pride to all those who participate in its creativeness.

Islam cannot be but friendly to mankind and is no danger to human civilization. The ultimate test of the correctness of the faith of a Muslim is not manifested in how many human beings were forced to embrace it, because that is contrary to the justice boasted by Islamic doctrine: “There should be no compulsion in religion. Normal behavior stands out clearly from error; so anyone who rejects the Arrogant ones and believes in God has grasped the Firmest Handle which will never break. God is Alert, Aware” (the Holy Koran, ch. III verse 255), but the ultimate show of faith is manifested in degree of justice one practices with friends and foes alike. The wealth and needs of people on earth may not be distributed biasedly according to race, religion, or the degree of piety, but according to their humanity as living images of the Lord. Not only would one practice injustice toward fellow humans if one behaves otherwise, but he would commit the gravest transgression against his Lord who forbade anyone but Him to distribute prizes according to the degree of belief.

An Islamic socio-economic program would not be dangerous except to the enemies of mankind who plan to egotistically exploit the planet. Islamic economy based on the abolition of usury and the establishment of economic activity based on partnership between labor, know-how, and money, and trade and monetary transactions based on correct real value of wealth in the monetary system, is but a blessing to mankind. The monopoly on scientific progress is unlawful, anti-human, and anti-God; such progress is to be disseminated for the advancement of all human societies at a reasonable and humane cost. Food is not allowed to be used as a weapon; rather, agricultural advances through shared technological breakthroughs everywhere on earth would protect humanity from imminent wars otherwise. Genocide is and has been constantly committed to prevent the unwanted societies and races from sharing the bounty of the Lord. Is such a program anti-civilization or anti-anybody, or is it the contrary? Does such a program clash with Christianity or rather collaborate with it for the benefit of mankind? I certainly do not see in front of the true bearers of these religions who embrace them enlighteningly, understanding the worldly message of human justice as well as the other side of the coin, the heavenly theological message, anything other than collaboration and shared love. That’s why I would like to end my talk by recommending to you a book about a third economic system called *The Science of Christian Economy*, which I benefitted from in advancing my understanding of the economic system in Islam. The book is written by the political prisoner Lyndon LaRouche of the United States.