Religions

Published by the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue

Justice

RELIGIONS / ADYĀN

A Scholarly Journal Published by the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue

Religions/Adyân is an annual and bi-lingual (English and Arabic) publication in interfaith studies published by the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue with an emphasis on interreligious dialogue and the relations between Islam and other faiths.

In a world of religious misunderstandings, violence, and hijacking of religious faiths by political ideologies, Religions/Adyān intends to provide a welcome space of encounter and reflection upon the commonalities and shared goals of the great religions of the world. The title of the journal suggests religious diversity while suggesting the need to explore this diversity in order to develop keys to both a deepening of one's own faith and a meaningful opening to other creeds. The Qur'ân suggests a commonality of faith and a striving for the Truth within the context of religious diversity:

"To each among you have we prescribed a law and an open way. If God had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to God; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute." (The Table Spread 5:48, version of Yusuf Ali)

As a refereed international publication published the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue, Religions/Adyân finds its inspiration in the universal message of monotheism broadly understood, while engaging the various religious faiths that share common principles and values within this broadly defined context.

Religions/Adyān encourages comparative studies and interreligious exchanges in a spirit of dialogue and mutual enrichment. Its aim is to promote understanding between religious faithful of various traditions by exploring and studying the rich field of their theological and spiritual common grounds, their mutual and constructive relationships, past, present and potentially future, a better understanding of the causes of their conflicts, and the current challenges of their encounter with atheism, agnosticism and secular societies.

In addition, Religions/Adyân wishes to highlight and revive the universal horizon of Islam by fostering studies in the relationships between Islam and other religions and civilizations in history, the arts, and religious studies. This is also a way to revitalize intellectual discourse in Islam, within the context of an interactive and cross-fertilizing engagement with other faiths.

The essays published in Religions/Adyān exclusively engage the intellectual responsibility of their authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the DICID. They are published as part of an ongoing dialogue on religions, and should not be construed as the expression of the positions of any sponsoring organization.

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EDITORIAL

Justice is an essential dimension of religious teachings and religious consciousness. In fact it could be argued that religion, in its central inspiration, is nothing else than the realization of justice. The Gospel of Matthew teaches "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6 :33). This is an unambiguous indication that justice is primary in the religious search since it flows, or should flow, from the search for God. The Greek word used for justice is in this passage *dikaiosyne*, which is akin to righteousness and, through its connection to *dike*, the human reality of law and justice that is born from divine justice.

In Islam, justice stems from the discernment of the *shahādah*, and the consequent ability to give all realities, all human and non-human beings, their respective due, and sometimes more, in mercy and love. The just are both wise and generous, they embrace both intelligence and love. Their justice is first of all objectivity, or the ability to make abstraction of one's interests, and consequently charity vis-a-vis others that stems from our unity in humanness through the divine "imprint" of our theomorphic nature, and manifests itself in the forms that are most consonant with our respective vocations, destinies and circumstances. The Quran beautifully expresses this conjunction of objectivity and love in one of its most poignant calls for justice: "O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity (*qawwāmīn li-llāh shuhudāha bi-l-qist*), and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly (*allā ta'dalū*). Deal justly (*a'dilū*), that is nearer to your duty (*li-l-taqwa*). Observe your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is informed of what ye do".

Justice is truth in action. It presupposes an ability to be objective about oneself, and objective about others. It therefore presupposes a degree of command over one's egocentric impulses, as well as, by extension, over one's sentimental identification with a particular group, culture or nation. Justice is an ability to transcend oneself to recognize the right of others. To the extent that religion teaches the ways of transcending oneself it is also all about justice.

Today justice is almost entirely identified with social justice, which is only one of its manifestations. Religions preach justice for all, and particularly for the weak, but they also stress — and that is what distinguishes them most clearly from merely humanistic ethics, that social forms of injustice do not only nor primarily result from external factors, or structures, but from the fundamental inner injustice that gives rise to, and sustains, these very structures and factors. Justice starts at home, in the heart that chooses and loves the true.

Patrick Laude
Editor-in-Chief

Interview with Tariq Ramadan

Conducted by Latifa Al Rumaihi

What is the specificity of the Islamic concept of justice?

The concept of justice in Islam is based on three sources: the Quran and Sunnah are the two most important sources. And then there is a third source which has to do with *ijtihād*. *Ijtihād* means that we have the principles, we have the sources but we need to look at the situation to know how to implement them. Because justice is a principle and it is a goal. Between the principle and the goal there is a tension. We have to rely on the Quran and the Sunnah but also on rational reflection.

Three words are important to understand Justice in Islam. *Al-'Adl* which is also a name of *Allāh*. There is also *al-Qist* which means justice and equity which is a bit different since equity is not only the principle of justice but it has also to do with the context which makes it equitable. And the last word is *al-Haqq* which literally means the truth but it also means the right and when you get your rights it is also justice which is perceived both as a goal and a principle at the same time. So in Islam I used to translate the key principle of Islam as justice but now after having written the book about the Prophet I have come to a different understanding i.e. that justice is a condition of peace because the highest principle is to enter into God's peace, with all your heart and all your being. No justice no peace. It is through this understanding that I understand the meaning of the *ayah* from the Quran that "God commands justice and excellence or sincerity". This is the highest level. Sometimes we have to be very cautious when we want to say that excellence is spiritual well-be-

ing, sometimes we have to go beyond justice. We have to connect justice with other dimensions like compassion, forgiveness and understanding. There is the story from the Prophet's life about Lubaba who owned a fruit tree and a slave was using it. The Prophet asked Lubaba to let the slave to take the fruit from the tree. He told Lubaba: "although it is your right since you own the tree, which is justice, but you have to understand his situation since he is a poor man." And Lubaba said "no." And so another companion of the Prophet came and took the fruit tree from Lubaba and gave it to the slave. He went beyond justice. Justice is important but we cannot worship justice. When we worship justice we become obsessed with – for example – our status as victims and this could be a real problem.

Then it is left to say that justice is to give every single dimension of yourself and every single individual citizen in a society his or her right, as a goal so it is always that we are dealing with imperfect justice in this world. And perfect justice is God since this is one of his names. And what we are trying to do is give every single dimension of our being its rights to be just. And it is why we keep on repeating in our invocation asking for forgiveness for our *zulm* (injustice). We ask forgiveness for being unjust with ourselves and if this is the case we will also be unjust with other human beings.

Do you believe the Arab Society has been quick to victimize itself?

In Arab society we are very quick to blame others. It does not mean that we are not dealing with colonization, imperialism and oppression. I am not saying this, but I like very much the idea that we are colonized because we were colonizable. And that is very true, we have to look at our own weakness, setbacks and failures before blaming others.

What are the various words and names that epitomize the meaning(s) of justice in Islam?

It is important to remember that there is spiritual justice, social justice, political justice and economic justice. Spiritual justice is the way you deal with your own self. *Khilafa* is not only a political concept. The *Khalifa* is also your own body, your own heart, your own feelings and your own being. There is nothing in Islam telling us to deny something from your being. This is why in Islam we do not agree with the Christian priest who has to avoid getting married because it is the highest level of spirituality. This is why in Islam during Ramadan we have to avoid during the day to eat and to drink and anything to do with sexuality. Why? In fact we are trying to master our human qualifications, our human characteristics to experience purification. So we are experiencing this sense of purification, but it is temporary. We have to come back to our humanity since we are human and in fact we are celebrating divinity by knowing how to deal with our humanity, by mastering, by checking, by accepting who we are. For example it is important to respond

to the needs of our body and the first demand of our body is to eat. It is necessary to respond to our brains, our brains need to think, and this means education and knowledge. We need to deal with our need to be protected in society. It is our right to be protected and we need housing and it is justice to be protected in society. It is a right to get married because our body and our heart is in need of love. And it is among His signs that he created from you a spouse so that you may find love in him or her. You love each other for your qualities, as well as for *Rahma* which is mercy and compassion since you stay together despite each others' weaknesses.

Is this what justice is about in Islam?

When we sometimes stay awake in the night for praying, this is justice to our heart. Then there are levels. So social justice in Islam has a principle and an objective. This is why we have in *Maqasid–ash–Sharia* the main objective of our societies is to get justice. Rawls in his theory of justice is saying two things that are important when it comes to justice, equal rights and equal opportunities. So this is very important from the Islamic viewpoint that it is not just your rights but also your opportunities that are at stake. We have to think about how we deal with that. The best example of this is *Zakat*. *Zakat* is a right. It is a purifying social tax. It is purifying your body, spirit and heart. When we think about implementing *Zakat* in specific contexts we always have to think not only that we are helping the poor: it is not an assisting procedure. It means giving them the autonomy to become autonomous by providing financial help so that one day the recipients will be able to pay others as well. We are helping them to pay one day in order for them not to get help all of their life. So the meaning here is really a process to get out of assistance, to be autonomous and to be free. This is justice. So here it means exactly that it is not about equality of rights but also equal opportunities in life. Economic justice depends on political justice and the two are interconnected.

Do you believe being unjust to yourself is forbidden in Islam?

The meaning of *Khilafa* is to do justice with what you have got. Since you are not the owner you are just the vicegerent. One day you will be accountable. All the gifts that you receive, i.e. your health, wealth and wisdom you will be accountable for how you made use of them.

How do you think religions can work together for justice?

Regarding interfaith dialogue we have to avoid getting into it as a periphery of our tradition. We really need to go to the heart. And I would like to say that the first dimension we have to rely on is spiritual justice. It means looking at the world of our consumption, our productivity, our getting more and more. Having more and more and being less and less. We are putting so much time in having that we are less in our being.

This is unjust. This is injustice towards our being. This is why religions have a message. We must talk about spirituality and work more on social justice together. The very concept of *jihad* is the means for achieving the goal of justice. *Jihad* is the reality of my striving, my resisting what is bad, my reforming it in view of what is good. This is the very meaning of *jihad*. *Jihad* is a twofold concept: it involves both resisting the bad and reforming it in view of the good. It is not the way towards war it is the way towards peace because we are trying to reach justice which is peace. So this is the very essence of the word *jihad*. The best example I have to give for what religions can do together is the initiative that I launched together with Yusuf Daudu from Mauritius. We launched together a *jihad* against poverty. What is wrong in our society is poverty. We have to struggle to spread a better share of wealth around the world and in our society.

Will the unjust be punished on the judgment day?

When there are atrocities in a society we also need to think about the victims. We cannot forgive just like that. So a judgment is important. It is good for the victims and also good for the perpetrators. It is better to pay now than to come to God with all your injustice on judgment day after having escaped justice all of your life. It means also not having emotional justice which is retaliation. It is exactly why in the Quran being just is closer to God-consciousness, and this is a very important point having to do with mastering our emotions.

In Search of Elusive Notions of Islamic Justice in Elusive Contexts

by Farid Esack

1. Introduction

I want to reflect on the challenges facing contemporary Muslim intellectuals in the task of understanding justice – a concept deeply rooted in the Qur'an, a quality identified with the Transcendent, Allah, himself and one of the reasons offered by the Qur'an for the establishment of the heavens and the earth. Other than the lenses of our texts and traditions, there are also significant contemporary developments that steer us in to particular directions of when to center this religious demand, when to push it somewhat to the back burner and even how to understand it. These demands are not entirely neutral ideologically or without their own very clear hegemonic interest in the shaping of religio- ethical concepts such as *'adl* (justice) and *qist* (equity).

Let me use the analogy of a restaurant (and the purely arbitrary example of one that serves 'Indonesian cuisine') and its relationship to both its changing clientele and its kitchen workers to illustrate some of the issues related to

Islam and the quest for justice today. Outsiders will simply refer to it is as an Indonesian restaurant while the more discerning palate will be able to distinguish between various regional varieties of Indonesian food and recognize the influence of the different historical communities which inhabit the region. Indonesians, particularly when they enter the wider world, will simply say that "This is Indonesian food", rather than emphasize the specific regional origins of their cuisine (Javanese, Sumatran, Malaccan, etc.). The interpretations of authentic Indonesian cuisine may vary and be contested but there is a point at which some consensus will emerge that a particular food is "simply not Indonesian"

There are thus Islamic conceptions of justice. Sometimes we paint them in broad strokes, especially when speaking to novices (the *ammah al-nas*) and simply describe them as 'Islamic', and then we speak among the connoisseurs of food (the *`ulama*) we will speak of Ash'ari, Maturidi, Mutalizili, or Shi'i notions of justice and how these relate to Divine Justice. We may bring forth competing versions of authentic recipe books complied by the finest of our chefs (*muhadithun* or *mutakliimum*) which provide various interpretations of the most authentic conceptions of Islamic justice.

Like most traditional restaurants, ours is keen to offer an "authentic" local fare to its patrons but from time to time will present its menu in a way that attracts most patrons. And so, when we present Islam, to others, we try to package our beliefs in ways which will achieve a maximum number of patrons. We may use purely pragmatic arguments or base our presentation on the Qur'anic instruction to "invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom, good exhortation and engage them with those means which are best" (*Surah Al-Nahl*, 16:125).

As our faith expands and we encounter others, we do not have much of a choice to adapt our cuisine – both for ourselves and to attract others to our restaurant. We may go to abodes where the original ingredients are impossible to find and we would have to adapt our understanding of our cuisine. A critical question for me though is "Do we think to whom we want to appeal to as we re-shape our cuisine and rework our recipes?" Do we simply say, "Let us re-think our religio-ethical notions of justice because this is what the powerful demand from us and we need their business and do we do so in response to the hunger of the masses, the cries for justice from the weakest of our societies and the most marginalized?" Do we consider the non-negotiables of our faith that why should we consume only of that which is *halalan tayyab* (permissible and wholesome)? Do we recognize only our customers or do we acknowledge the workers in our restaurant kitchens and their centrality to the shaping of Indonesian cuisine? Is our Islam just a public relations exercise aimed at outsiders or is it also about how we relate to the weaker sectors inside our community?

2. Justice (`Adl) and Equity (Qist) in the Qur'an

'*Qist*' means 'equity'; 'justice'; 'to give someone his [or her] full portion' (Lane 1980, *s.v.* '*q-s-t*', 7:25), and the agent noun '*muqsit*', is one of the names of Allah. '*`Adl*' means 'to act equitably, justly, or rightly' (*ibid*., *s.v*. *`adl*', 5:1973). The terms *`adl* and *qist* are used interchangeably in the Qur'an (Q. 49:9; 2:282) and, according to it, form the basis of the natural order: "And Allah has created the heavens and the earth in truth; and so that every person (*nafs*) may be justly compensated for what she [he] had earned and none be wronged" (Q. 45:22). This verse, as was Q. 39:69, equates *qist* with truth. "Allah (himself) bears witness that He is the Upholder of *qist"* (Q. 4:18). In two verses, the Qur'an exhorts the believers to uphold *qist* as an act of witness unto Him (Q. 4:135; 5:6) and those who sacrifice their lives in the path of establishing *qist* are equated with those who achieved martyrdom in "the path of Allah" (Q. 3:20).

A comprehensive understanding of *`adl* and *qist* is well illustrated in the first verses of *Surah al-Rahman*:

> The Most Gracious has imparted this Qur'an. He has created humankind; He has imparted unto him [her] speech. The sun and the moon follow courses computed; the stars and the trees submit; and the skies He has raised high; and He has set up the balance of justice in order that you may not transgress the measure. So, establish weight with *qist* and fall not short in the balance. It is He who has spread out the earth for [all] His creatures. (Q. 55:1-10)

These verses locate humankind and the task of doing justice within the context of their responsibility to the Creator, on the one hand, and the order permeating the cosmos, on the other.[1] It is within this overall context that humankind are being warned against "transgressing the measure" and exhorted to "weigh [your dealings] with *qist"*. The enforcement of *qist* is given as one of the objectives of revelation (Q. 56:25) and *`adl* is seen as a stepping stone to *taqwa* (Q. 5:6).[2]

Islamic society is expected to uphold *qist* as the basis of socio-economic life. The Qur'an is often specific about those areas of social affairs wherein lapses are most likely to occur, such as the trust of orphans and adopted children (Q. 4:3; 33:5), matrimonial relations (Q. 4:3; 49:9), contractual dealings (Q. 2:282), judicial matters (Q. 5:42; 4:56), interfaith relations (Q. 60:8), business (Q. 11:65), and dealings with one's opponents (Q. 5:8).

The Qur'an postulates the idea of a universe created with *qist* as its basis. The natural order according to the Qur'an is one rooted in *qist* and deviation from it is *fitnah* (disorder). The status quo in a particular social order, irrespective of its longevity or stability, does not enjoy an intrinsic legitimacy in Islam. Injustice is a deviation from the natural order and, like *shirk*, though it may stabilize over centuries such as the latter in pre-Islamic Mecca, it is, nonetheless, regarded as a disturbance in 'the balance'. In the Qur'anic paradigm, *qist* and the natural order based on it are values to be upheld. When confronted with this disturbance in the

natural order through the systematic erosion of justice, the Qur'an imposes an obligation on the believers to challenge such a system until it is eliminated and the order once again is restored to its natural state, i.e., one of *qist*. The Qur'an establishes itself as a dynamic force for *qist*, and encourages an active struggle for it. The Qur'an, as indicated above, repeatedly contrasts *`adl* and *qist* with *zulm* and *`udwan* (oppression and transgression) (Q. 3:25; 6:160; 10:47; 16:111.) and imposes on its followers the obligation to end the latter and establish the former.

3. The Current Context of Promoting the Justice Cuisine

Where is the authenticity of my cuisine located when I uncritically embrace the constructed intellectual and political categories and urgencies of others as my own and seek to re-define a fourteen hundred year old tradition – albeit an ever-changing one – in the face of external demands? (Even if these demands were generated by a complex array of factors wherein that tradition is not entirely innocent).

As for my personal context, the questions of pluralism, gender justice, human rights, democracy etc., have for long been ones that I have been engaged with and with a sense of principled urgency that has its origins in a rather different context than the current dominant one. My own engagement with the South African liberation struggle and that of my comrades, my work as a Commissioner for Gender Equality for five years and my current work with Muslims who are living with HIV & AIDS have often infused many of those elsewhere who share our ideals with pride – a sense that Muslims can be part of a vision larger than obscurantist fundamentalism. It is, ironically, precisely this location of my own scholarship within a principled vision of a just world that makes me so profoundly suspicious of the dominant urgency to re-think Islam in and its ethico-religious injunctions in 'contemporary terms'.

I do want to find new ways of making Islamic justice viable, "customer-friendly" and tasty to people in today's age; I, however, also feel under obligation to challenge the dominant notions of what constitutes 'good food'. While fast food may be *halaal*, is it wholesome (*tayyiba?*) Placing Islamic notions in conversation with contemporary notions of justice - blending my Indonesian cuisine with local demands - is not a one-way process. Authentic dialogue is about entering the other's world while holding on to yours, with the willingness to be transformed. Seeking to find a contemporary appreciation of Islamic justice is not simply about embracing Western values. The demand cannot be simply one for Muslims to change their cuisine to accommodate Western palates (even as there is a growing awareness that Western tastes are being shaped by interests which view human beings, not as persons in a state of returning to Allah, but primarily as consumers).

4. Challenges for the Contemporary Muslim Intellectual

There are a number of challenges for the contemporary Muslim intellectual who continues to identify with Islam and who derives her or his inspiration from it. I will address these in the context of an Islamic appreciation of justice. First, to live in fidelity to this heritage – this authentic Indonesian cuisine; second, to speak the truth to power; and third, to re-interpret the Islamic heritage and re-apply its fundamental principles in terms of the primary urgencies of today.

4.1 Attempting to live in Fidelity to the Islamic Heritage

In some ways, this seems like an impossible task; it is certainly one that cannot be measured because heritage, like cuisine, even if captured in recipe books, is not fossilized but ever-mutating. The suggestion is in fact that one lives with a loyalty to a partner, Islam, and commits oneself to be in a faithful relationship with it in a manner that both gives and takes for one's own growth. The believers whom we seek to transform are entitled to know whether we are really insiders or outsiders masquerading as insiders. When muslim intellectuals do not feel a genuine affinity with Islam nor try to live in fidelity to it, then this faith is reduced to a utilitarian tool to transform others,

"those Muslims" out there. We merely become paid interlocutors and translators. There may be periods of tension, even alienation, between the engaged Muslim intellectual and Islam. However, if we are seeking to be a part of transforming our faith communities in ways that also nurture justice, democracy and human rights (and genuine love, respect, and comprehension of our own faith) then a pre-condition for this is fidelity.

4.2 Speaking Truth to Power

Speaking truth to power is both a path and an objective for a Muslim's life. It, is being a witness as a returnee to God, has implications beyond the here and the now. Viewing ourselves as returnees to God enable us to take a more long term appreciation of things wherein optimism and pessimism or expediency are not the great variables, but constancy in God. Yet, it is a constancy that does not lead to the appropriation of God by fundamentalism because certainty is seen as only belonging to God.

In the current context there are three primary audiences that need to be engaged as we struggle to speak our truths to power; the conversation with all three takes place simultaneously and each inform the other: a) The personal self b) the Empire and c) the Muslim community.

4.2.1 Engaging the Self

I have spoken about the need for the intellectual to be self-critical and of his or her context. The element imbedded in all formal Islamic religious discourses is invaluable here; "*usikum wa nafsi awwalan*..." (I counsel you and, first of all, my self) or in the other form "*usikum wa iyyaya*..." (I counsel you and my self). It is the relentless self-critique that enables the scholar to be true to the ideals of a just society in a way that also prevents his or her co-optation by those who have their own agendas or the expansion of the Empire as their primary reason for wanting to engage Islam.

4.2.2 Engaging the Empire

The Empire needs to be engaged about the way it deals with Islam, a fourteen hundred year old faith, as a cheap restaurant that caters to all needs and tastes. The Empire cannot just flaunt its wallet and muscles, and demand "Jihad" on the menu when that suits its palates. Then after a few years, they shift gears and demand "peace" on the menu – as all dominant Empires demand of their subjects, never of themselves. And now the dutiful restaurateurs are expected to nod, smile and go around proclaiming that "Islam means peace." Islam is far more complex than this and as a self-respecting Muslim - or a restaurateur with integrity – the Muslim intellectual can respond by saying, "I am awfully sorry, but you may be in the wrong restaurant".

It goes without saying that the Empire is also more complex than this and in whatever ways that we engage with it, for our sakes and for that of our future vision, we must always recognize the intrinsic humanity of those who comprise the Empire. When we fail to

do this, then the methods with which we decide on engaging the Empire can so easily reflect its own violence and lack of humanity. We cannot become the evil that we abhor. Above all, we must be able to recognize the Empire within ourselves. *Fir`awn* is seldom only out there; he, more often than not, resides deep within our own hearts.

4.2.3 Engaging the Ummah

Like all individuals and societies Muslims are never powerless in the absolute sense. In relation to the Empire we may be having less power but others have less in relation to us in the various ways in which this us-ness is defined. The appropriation of the justice, human rights and democracy discourse by the Empire does not mean that Muslims can dismiss these; indeed, hiding their own unwillingness to confront the lack of these behind the guise of protecting Muslim society from the Empire. For Muslims, the challenge is that of the Mafia banging on the door of their restaurant while the restauranteur is employing slave labour to run it – The restauranteur may have less power in relation to the Mafia at his door but this does not exonerate him from his replication of patterns of exploitation and injustice with those who may share his religious identity but who have less power than him. The questions thus are: How does one challenge the Mafia in ways that simultaneously address the absence of justice and human rights in Muslim society? How do we ensure the victory of an alternative vision in the wake of the inevitable death of the Empire? What must occur amongst Muslims is a realization that, as Immanuel Wallerstein has correctly put it, "the basic conflict is that between those who seek to establish or re-establish a hierarchical world-order in which some are privileged and most others not and those who wish to construct a maximally democratic and egalitarian order" (2003, p. 122-23).

When we welcome the voices in the United States of America saying that "dissent is patriotic" then we need to understand that the same applies to us and our own societies where very often our most courageous intellectuals are quickly silenced for speaking truth to power. How we deal with our internal "others" are really the only truthful measure of what our values are really all about – all else is posturing for a better position at the banquet of the selfsame Mafia banging on the door.

4.3. Re-interpreting the Islamic heritage in terms of the primary urgencies

While I may refuse to participate in the shaping of my faith in response to the demands of the Empire, as a believer, I am never freed from the responsibility of shaping it. For me the question is "In response to whose demands do I re-think the meaning and implications of my faith and its ethico-religious ideas on justice?"

As a critical Muslim theologian I consciously locate my own work among the marginalized, not as a sociological category but as a real in-context condition. Acknowledging that it is always

a question of "less-power-ness" rather than powerlesness, this social location of the progressive thinker does not become a question of identifying with "Black persons" or "women" *per se* but with specific communities in these groups who are being marginalized. While I can, for example, be in solidarity with a male Black worker in respect of the exploitation that he experiences at work, I must also be in solidarity with his abused wife in the home context. While I can be in solidarity with the Muslim male who is being racially or religiously profiled at airports, I can also be in solidarity with the marginalized Christian who lives in the same Muslim country that he comes from.

Notes

1 Verse 10 of this passage ("And the earth He has spread out for all living things") is more specific in focusing on the eco-system and on social justice. The earth thus belongs to all, not only humankind, who inhabit it and humankind, as the vicegerent of Allah upon it, have a responsibility to be just in their dealings with all its co-inhabitants.

2 Some scholars such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292–1350) are, in fact, of the opinion that *qist* is the *raison d'être* for the establishment of *din*: "Allah has sent his Messengers and revealed His Books so that people may establish *qist*, [...] upon which the heavens and the earth stand. And when the signs of *qist* appear [...] in any manner, then that is a reflection of the *shari'ah* and the *din* of Allah" (1953, 14-16).

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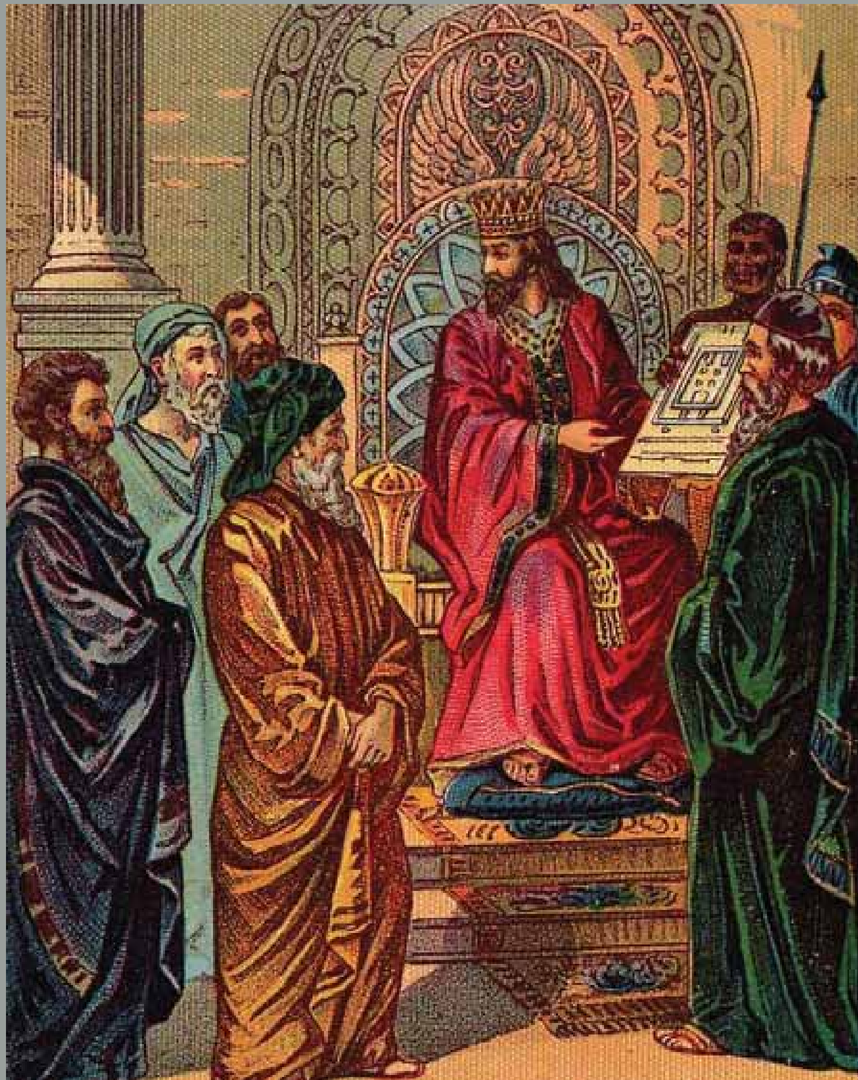


Judaism and Social Justice: Five Core Values from the Rabbinic Tradition[1]

by Rabbi Sid Schwarz

It is easy to lose the forest for the trees. Most religions are complex phenomena. In the realm of interfaith dialogue, it is helpful to return to the core of each of our respective faith traditions to understand its essence. For Judaism there are two core mandates—justice and holiness. Each of those two principles is rooted in a Biblical verse.

In Genesis 18:19 God tells Abraham that his mandate, as the first Jew, is to extend the boundaries of justice and righteousness in the world (*laasot tzedakah umishpat*). In Exodus 19:6,

God reveals to Moses a second mandate. The Jewish people are told to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (*mamlechet kohanim v'goy kadosh*). The paradox of these two mandates is that justice requires Jews to be fully engaged with the world. There is no other way to bring about justice. Yet holiness requires the Jewish people to establish some separation from the world. All of the practices, rituals and customs of the Jewish tradition are the ways that Jews distinguish themselves from all the other cultures, nations and faiths on the planet. This paradox is common to virtually all religions. At their best, religions offer a particular path to effect universal values in the world. At their worst religions allow the faithful to confuse ends and means. In the effort to insure fidelity to the group, its customs and its ways, one or more of the universal values at the core of the religion get violated.

What follows are five Jewish values that stand at the core of Jewish teachings about social justice. There are counterpart teachings in Islam and Christianity and they build on many of the principles articulated here. Each of these values is the product of a conversation that took place over many centuries by the sages of Judaism. Part of the beauty of the Jewish tradition is that a rabbi of the 15th century is in conversation with a rabbi of the 2nd century. And a rabbi of the 21st century can only be authentic to the Jewish tradition if he or she is in conversation with all of the rabbis who preceded them, even as they may bring new insight and new applications to values that date back to the days of the Bible. This list of five values is simply the "tip of the iceberg" of Jewish teachings in the realm of social justice. But it does give a flavor for the ethical impulse of the Jewish tradition and the generations of Jews who sought to be faithful to the words of Torah.

Kavod Habriot: Dignity of all Creatures

TORAH / Teaching

> The fundamental dignity of all creation is very precious to God. There is no value more precious than it. (Rabbi Menachem ben Solomon haMeiri, 13th century scholar, in his commentary on the Babylonian Talmud, *B'rachot* 19b)

Kavod habriot is the Jewish principle that requires we accord every one of God's creatures a level of dignity. Traditionally, this principle has been applied to all human beings although some have extended it to the animal kingdom as well. Long before western society embraced the concept of universal human rights, Judaism taught that every person – Jew and gentile, male and female, rich and poor – deserves to be treated with respect.

The centrality of the principle of *kavod habriot* is underscored in a Talmudic citation that teaches that any rabbinic ordinance may be set aside for the purpose of preserving *kavod habriot* (*Berachot* 19b). This is because *kavod habriot* is a principle that supercedes other, more specific legal obligations. The first chief rabbi of the *Yishuv*, the pre-state settlement of Jews in Pales-

tine, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, said: "Protecting [the respect] one rightfully deserves is not a matter of arrogance. On the contrary, there is a *mitzvah* [commandment] to do so. The opinion of the *halakhic* decisors is that it is prohibited to ignore *kavod habriot* even in the case of a *mitzvah*" (*Mussar Avikha*, p. 73). Jews must carry themselves in a dignified way and society must never function in such a way as to deny a person's dignity, regardless of the circumstances.

In the Talmud, the rabbinic sage Ben Azzai argues that Judaism's most important principle is *b'tzelem Elohim*, treating all human beings with the dignity appropriate to a creature made in the image of God. The principle derives from the story of creation which culminates in the creation of Adam and Eve: "God created humankind in the Divine image" (Genesis 1:26). When we treat others with dignity, Judaism teaches, we are indirectly paying our respect to God. The converse is also true, as the Mishna says: "All people are beloved for they are created in the image of God" (*Avot* 3:18).

It is instructive that the Jewish tradition speaks of *kavod habriot* – literally "respect for all creation" – and not *kavod ha'adam*, "respect for humankind." Jewish tradition reminds us that human beings were the last of God's creations. "The Lord is good to all," sings the Psalmist, "and God's mercy extends to all creation" (Psalms 145:9). There is an important place within Judaism for both environmentalism and advocacy for humane treatment of animals. The Jewish concern for the dignity of the non-human world owes something to the principle of *kavod habriot*.

The protection of the natural environment (*haganat hatevah)* also has deep roots in the Jewish tradition. The natural environment is owed the respect and dignity due to all of God's creation. A *midrash* tells of God charging the first man with a responsibility to preserve the environment: "When God created Adam, God led him around the Garden of Eden and said to him: Behold my works! See how beautiful they are! See to it that you do not spoil and destroy my world; for if you do, there will be no one after you to repair it" (*Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 7:13).

Judaism also embraces the idea that animals must be treated respectfully. The prohibition against cruelty to any living creature (*tza'ar ba'alei chaim*), is implicit in the Ten Commandments, where we are told that even beasts of burden must rest on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10). The Torah and the Talmud return repeatedly to the basic kindnesses that humans owe to animals under our charge. Jewish tradition even played a pioneering role in the development of the concept of animal rights. Centuries ago, Maimonides, the great medieval legal authority, explained that in some circumstances, "There is no difference between the pain of man and the pain of other living beings" (*The Guide to the Perplexed*, 3:48).

Kavod habriot is an attitude that must be translated into behaviors. It is intended to guide the behavior of Jews, not only with other human beings, though that to be sure, but also the way human beings interact with

animals and with the natural world. It also needs to inform the public policies of the societies in which we live. A society that implements a law or practice that results in diminishing in any way the dignity of one group of its citizens is violating the principle of *kavod habriot* and citizens of conscience are duty bound to do all in their power to oppose or reverse such a policy. "All commandments between man and his fellow man," taught the 20th-century Talmudic scholar Joseph Soloveitchik, "are based on *kavod habriot*."

Chesed: Lovingkindness

TORAH / Teaching

> Shimon the Righteous used to say: "The world survives because of three things: Torah, service (to God) and acts of lovingkindness". (Mishnah *Avot*, 1:2)

In the Talmud Rabbi Akiva advances the primacy of the principle to "love your neighbor as yourself," *v'ahavta l'reacha kamocha* (Jerusalem Talmud, *Nedarim* 9:4). *Chesed*, a word that is sometimes rendered as "lovingkindness" and sometimes as "compassion", derives from Akiva's principle to extend the love of self to others.

The Jewish tradition recognizes the difficulty – perhaps the impossibility – of loving all people. Rabbi Ovadiah Sforno, a 16th-century Jewish commentator on the Torah, sums up an important strain in the Jewish tradition when he comments on the practical implications of the Biblical imperative to "love your neighbor as yourself": "That is to say, try to do for your neighbor what you would want for yourself, if you were in your neighbor's place". Even if we do not love everyone, it is possible to act towards every person with *chesed*, lovingkindness. *Chesed* means always asking ourselves how we would behave if we cared about every person at least as much as we care about ourselves. *Chesed* is perhaps the purest expression of the altruistic impulse in Judaism, that impulse which was exemplified by Abraham's advocacy for the people of Sodom and Gemorrah and which, at Sinai, became the central moral purpose of Judaism. A true act of *chesed* is a good deed done with no expectation of reward. *Chesed* is an act of compassion extended without a motive of self-interest. The prophet Zechariah put forth a guidepost for Jewish behavior this way: "Let your judgments be guided by truth (*emet*), and compassion (*chesed*) and mercy (*rachamim*) guide your dealings with all people" (Zechariah 7:9).

The behaviors that fall under the heading of *chesed* span the varieties of human interaction. The scholar and philosopher Maimonides, in his encyclopedic compendium of Jewish laws, the *Mishneh Torah*, lists just a few: "It is a positive commandment to visit the sick, and comfort mourners, and bury the dead, and celebrate a wedding… These commandments are implied in the commandment 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (*Yad*, "Laws of Mourning," 14:1-2). Maimonides teaches that acting with lovingkindness means more than giving of our resources and our time. It means giving of ourselves,

sharing the full range of human emotion, from joy in a time of celebration to sorrow in a time of mourning. Part of what drives *chesed* then, is empathy

Everyone has material needs. And so, every Jew is obligated to give charity. But everyone has spiritual and emotional needs, too. "Deeds of lovingkindness" taught the Talmud's Rabbi Eliezer, "are greater even than charity. Charity is only towards the poor; but lovingkindness can be directed towards anyone" (Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkot*, 49b). And while Judaism forbids Jews from giving so much charity that the givers themselves are reduced to poverty, Maimonides explains that "there is no prescribed measure" for the boundless obligation of *chesed*.

Forced to sum up all of Jewish tradition in a single phrase, the sage Hillel declares: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary. Now go and study'" (Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 31a). Hillel gives a general rule but the general rule does not substitute for the Jewish moral tradition. It merely characterizes it. To leave Judaism at Hillel's general rule would be like declaring that American law begins and ends with the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

The rabbis did not want to leave the definition of *chesed* to human intuition. Having already suggested in our theme passage, Avot 1:2, that *chesed* is one of the pillars on which the world stands, the rabbis set about to define it. Using a verse from the Bible where God is described as *rav chesed*, "full of compassion" (Exodus 34:6), the Talmud goes on to explores God's actions, as recorded in the Bible, to determine what it might mean for human beings to be "full of compassion". Thus we have the following: " 'You shall walk after Lord your God,' this means that you should imitate God's virtues. Just as God clothed the naked, so too should you clothe the naked. Just as the Holy One visited the sick, so too should you visit the sick. Just as the Holy One comforted mourners, so too should you comfort mourners. Just as the Holy One buried the dead, so too should you bury the dead" (Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah*, 14a).

The behaviors cited in the passage from the Talmud typify the kinds of actions that fall under the definition of *chesed*. Implicit in the passage is the rabbinic view that just as God extends compassion to all humanity, so too must Jews practice *chesed* in every human interaction.

Lo Ta'amod: You Shall Not Stand Idly By

TORAH / Teaching

> You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:16)

Three verses before the book of Leviticus offers up the famous maxim, "Love your neighbor as thyself", there is a verse that puts forth a commandment that might have even wider ramifications. As is so often the case with timeless wisdom literature, verse 16 seems to anticipate the human tendency to ignore injustice. The Jewish value

"*lo ta'amod al dam reacha*," the prohibition to stand idly by while the blood of your neighbor is being shed, makes it an obligation to try to stop a crime, an injustice or an atrocity. The choice to go about one's daily affairs as if there were no moral obligation to act is a violation of this Biblical commandment.

Lo ta'amod extends the right and obligation of self-defense – rooted as it is in our impulse towards self-preservation – to the altruistic effort to protect other people's lives. Motivated by this value, it is the responsibility of Jews to protect other people's right to live free of aggression and injustice.

Judaism understands that sometimes the failure to use force in defense of life will only lead to further violence and aggression, and ultimately more loss of life: "if someone comes to kill you", taught the rabbis of the Talmud, "you kill them first" (Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 72a). The individual who represents the threat is called in Hebrew a *rodef*, literally, "a pursuer". When one has evidence of a pursuer's intentions, Judaism sanctions killing that person before s/he kills you first. The Talmud connects this principle to *lo ta'amod*: "From where do we learn that if someone pursues his friend with the intent to kill, one is obligated to intervene, even if that means taking the murderer's life? The Torah says, 'You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor'" (Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 73a).

Perhaps aware of the difficulty in determining the right level of intervention, the rabbis of the Talmud added a qualification to the principle of intervention — if one was pursuing his fellow to slay him and the pursued could have saved himself by maiming a limb of the pursuer but instead killed his pursuer, the pursued is subject to execution on that account" (*Sanhedrin* 74a).

The experience of the Jewish people during World War II heightened Jewish consciousness about the application of the principle *lo ta'amod*. Historians have brought to light how much information was available by the early 1940's about Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jews of Europe and his ability and willingness to do it. Arthur Morse's book, *While Six Million Died* and David Wyman's *The Abandonment of the Jews*, provide painful details of a world violating this very principle, sitting idly by while the blood of others were being shed. It was in light of this historical experience that after the war, Jews became leaders in campaigns for human rights and were in the leadership of many human rights organizations.

The entire field of human rights attempts to balance the right of countries to run their own affairs free from outside interference against the danger posed if a country begins to persecute and/or kill some subset of people within its borders. The often quoted phrase "Never Again", was supposed to mean that, given the horrors of the Holocaust, the world would never again let genocide take place. The failure of the world to heed that call is underscored by numerous genocides since the end of World War II, most recently the "ethnic cleansing" in the Balkans in the early 1990's, the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the genocide that took place

in Sudan in the first decade of the 21st century. In each case, the nations of the world reacted slowly and inadequately, making possible the massacre of millions of innocent people. The response of religious communities to such atrocities is not much better than that of the United Nations or the nations of the world. Unfortunately, the moral principle of *lo ta'amod* has hardly become standard practice in the post-Holocaust world.

According to many traditional and modern Jewish authorities, the value of *lo ta'amod* extends much further than intervention in defense of human life. Jews have a powerful responsibility to take action on behalf of vulnerable people in general, wherever help is possible. Jewish legal authorities take *lo ta'amod* as a commandment to protect not only the lives of others, but also their property (Ridbaz on *Choshen Mishpat*, 426). The rabbis of the Talmudic era further extended *lo ta'amod* to mandate speaking out when silence would lead to injustice: "From where do we know that if you are in a position to offer testimony on a person's behalf, you are not permitted to remain silent? from, "You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor" (Sifra Leviticus on 19:16). Withholding testimony in a court of law or failing to come forward when your testimony might advance the cause of justice, is a violation of this Jewish principle.

It is rare that we are called upon to serve as witnesses in court but we may be in other situations where we can act on behalf of, or in defense of, others. Voting, we might argue, is a way of offering testimony as is lobbying public officials on an issue that affects the health and welfare of a society. Coming to a demonstration that raises public awareness about a cause, be it gun violence, protesting hate crimes or to demand higher wages for underpaid workers are all examples of the application of the principle *lo ta'amod*. The principle at work here points in the direction of civic engagement and social responsibility for the society in which we live.

Here, *lo ta'amod* is complemented by another important Jewish value, *"lo tuchal l'hitalem"*: "You cannot turn away" (Deuteronomy 22:3). The Torah introduces "*lo tuchal l'hitalem"* in the context of the moral imperative to return a lost object to its owner. But the value has much broader implications. *Lo tuchal* can be seen as expressing the obligation to assist whenever people are in need and cannot help themselves. Notice carefully the Torah's language. We are not told that we "shall not turn away" but rather that we "cannot". Helping someone in need, the Torah implies, ought to be instinctive. So deep-seated is our moral responsibility that it ought to seem physically impossible to "turn away".

Darchei Shalom: The Ways of Peace

TORAH / Teaching

> We support the non-Jewish poor together with Jewish poor, and we visit the non-Jewish sick alongside Jewish sick, and we bury non-Jewish dead alongside Jewish dead, all for the sake

of the ways of peace. (Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin*, 61a)

One of the abiding tensions in Jewish ethics is how Jews are supposed to relate to non-Jews. There exists in the Jewish tradition some fairly shocking passages about non-Jews that would offend modern sensibilities such as Shimon bar Yochai's statement that even the best of the gentiles should be killed (Jerusalem Talmud, *Kiddushin* 66b)! Yet such statements are more than balanced by other texts that cast gentiles in a more sympathetic light as with the sage Samuel's observation that God will make no distinction between Jews and non-Jews on the Day of Judgment (Jerusalem Talmud, *Rosh Hashana* 57a). The contrasting examples provide evidence to the dangers of taking quotes out of context. A full and fair survey of classical Jewish texts will reveal that the historical circumstance conditions the attitude of a given sage. Thus Shimon bar Yochai uttered his indelicate comment after he witnessed his teacher, Rabbi Akiva tortured to death by the Romans. Conversely, Samuel lived in the Babylonian exile during which Jews enjoyed excellent relations with their hosts and were able to develop a communal life that was actually intellectually and materially superior to that experienced by their counterparts in Palestine. His kind comment about gentiles needs to be understood against that backdrop.[2]

It is in this context that we must understand the principle of *darchei shalom*, the ways of peace. In this formulation, *shalom* is not referring to the absence of war but rather to peaceful social relations between Jews and non-Jews. In our teaching we see that the Talmud calls upon Jews to provide for the non-Jewish poor just as they would provide for the poor among the Jews. The Talmud goes on in the same passage to list other acts of compassion, like tending to the sick and burying unclaimed bodies. This suggests that such acts of compassion should have no national, ethnic or religious boundaries.

There is perhaps no area of ethical concern that reflects greater inconsistency in the thinking of rabbinic sages than that of relations with gentiles. Much of the anti-gentile sentiment and legislation in rabbinic Judaism was influenced by the Bible's aversion to idolatry. Judaism begins with Abraham's rejection of the idolatrous ways of his father and his culture. In the Talmud, idolatry joined incest and murder as one of the three cardinal sins that Jews must avoid, even at the risk of death. One rabbinic teaching suggests that the practice of idolatry is tantamount to denying the entire Torah (*Sifre* Deuteronomy 54). Motivating some of the harshest rulings like not needing to return the lost property of a gentile (*Baba Kama* 38a) had to do with categorizing gentiles as idolaters. Since the goal of monotheism is to root out idolatry from the world it should not be surprising to find many rabbinic sages who regard gentiles as unworthy of fair and equal treatment.

Yet by the middle ages, prominent rabbis issued decisive rulings to correct any impression given by earlier rulings that gentiles could be treated unfairly. This despite the fact that gentile treat-

ment of Jews during this period had not much improved. Maimonides, living in 12th century Egypt, still believed that Christians were idolaters yet wrote: "It is forbidden to defraud or deceive any person in business. Jew and non-Jew are to be treated alike. If the vendor knows that his merchandise is defective, he must so inform the purchaser. "It is wrong to deceive any person in words even without causing him a pecuniary loss" (Yad, Mekirah, xviii. 1). In his Mishnaic commentary Maimonides remarked: "What some people imagine, that it is permissible to cheat a Gentile, is an error, and based on ignorance". Within a generation, Rabbi Menachem Meiri (1249-1316) in his commentary (*Bet Bekhira*) on the Talmudic tractate *Avodah Zara*, (Idol Worship) would issue a definitive ruling declaring that neither Christians nor Muslims should be considered idolaters. As such, long standing restrictions on commerce and social relations between Jews and gentiles were eliminated. Subsequent rabbinic sages repeated and reaffirmed the position that Jews must comply with the highest standards of justice and fairness in their dealings with gentiles.

Sefer Hasidim, an ethical treatise dating from 12th century Germany, maintains that Jews must continue to have strict boundaries in their dealings with gentiles. At the same time it exhorted Jews to be ethically scrupulous in their dealings with gentiles provided that they lived according to the seven Noachide laws. This principle, established early in the rabbinic tradition, says that gentiles can attain the ultimate reward of a share in the world to come provided they observed the universal moral laws set forth in the Biblical book of Noah concerning murder, stealing and the like. Jews, on the other hand, are required to observe all 613 commandments of the Torah to merit the same ultimate reward. Perhaps the most remarkable passage in *Sefer Hasidim* is that which holds up a noble act by a Christian as one worthy of emulation by Jews (No. 58).

By the 19th century, when there already existed the possibility for Jews to live among gentiles on more or less equal terms, rabbinic authorities gave even greater emphasis to the way Jews behaved among gentiles. Rabbi Samuel R. Hirsch, one of the leaders of neo-Orthodoxy in Germany, said that the conduct of Jews needed to be exemplary so that non-Jews would come to know that the Torah was about truth, justice and love. Conversely, he claimed that injustices committed against non-Jews were worse than those committed against Jews because it will bring the entire religion of Judaism into disrepute.[3]

Although the phrase *darchei shalom* does not appear in the Bible, the principle becomes an important Jewish guidepost for behavior. It points to a consciousness about how Jews are viewed by others and an acute sensitivity that the welfare of the Jewish community depended on the good graces of those in power. Here, too, one can find a range of attitudes from defensive to altruistic. Thus, in some places, Jews are urged to act in a respectful and fair manner with gentiles so as to "avoid enmity" (*Avoda Zarah* 26a). The He-

brew expression used is *meshum aivah*. In other places the texts warn Jews against bad behavior toward gentiles because it will "profane God's name" (*Baba Kama* 113b), what is known in Hebrew as a *chillul hashem*. This notion suggests that the reputation of the God of the Jewish people is tied up with the reputation of the Jews themselves and visa versa. The opposite idea is *kiddush hashem*, Jews acting in such a way as to bring honor to God's name. Through history, acts of Jewish martyrdom, when Jews allowed themselves to be killed rather than abandon their faith and Jewish practice under duress, came to be closely associated with this concept.

Darchei shalom, acting properly for the "ways of peace," is the most altruistic of these three rationales given for acting kindly towards the gentiles. On one level, the end result is no different than the rationales "to avoid enmity" or "so as not to profane God's name". In all three cases, Jews try to avoid trouble because others have power over them. On the other hand, one could also read *darchei shalom* as motivated by more than just wanting to avoid more persecution or another pogrom. It can be read as a sincere desire to create harmonious relations with other ethnic and religious groups. Given the fact that society still falls short of this level of intergroup respect and tolerance into the 21st century, the expression of this value in pre-modern Jewish texts is fairly significant.

Ahavat Ger: Loving the Stranger

Torah / Teaching

> You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:19)

No commandment is repeated as often in the Torah as that of protecting the stranger. The rabbis enumerate 36 separate injunctions that underscore the centrality of the principle in Jewish tradition. The core teaching from Deuteronomy 10:19 makes this commandment anything but theoretical. Its invocation of the Jewish people's historical experience with being strangers clearly ties the commandment to a sense of empathy. While many commandments of the Torah require faith—we act in a certain way because God commands us—the value of protecting the stranger is historically intuitive. Jews identify with the outsider because they themselves have been outsiders.

In the Bible, the word *ger* refers to gentiles who live among Jews. Such outsiders require special protection. They are alone, without ties of religion, nation or culture and therefore are vulnerable. In the prophetic literature the *ger* is associated with the widow and the orphan. Treatment of the stranger emerges as a category that is not so much a legal designation, as it is in the earlier stages of Israelite history. It is a euphemism for the weak outsider who needs protection. The *ger* has no natural allies. It is therefore the obligation of every Jew to protect him or her.

When the Israelites took possession of the land of Israel, the earliest ethical impulses of the Jewish people acquired legal status. It is therefore telling that among the first laws established in the land of Israel was to define the status of *gerim*, literally "foreigners" who attached themselves to the Israelites and resided among them. Since the land was apportioned among the Israelites, the *gerim* were essentially day laborers or artisans. In an agrarian society, this virtually assured their dependency on the kindness of the landowners. That is what makes the Biblical command so significant. The Israelites must treat the strangers in their midst as "equal before the law" (Deut. 1:16). Equally significant is the fact that the Bible mandates a form of welfare for the strangers in the land, instructing all landowners that the corners of their field and the fallen grain was to be left for the poor and the stranger (Leviticus 19:10). Both are mentioned in the same verse suggesting that destitution was commonplace among those who were outsiders.

What begins as the directive not to oppress the stranger evolves into treating the stranger fairly and providing her or him with sustenance and support. But the Bible does not stop there. In the same chapter that introduces the phrase, "You shall love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19:18), we read: "The stranger who shall reside with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:34). Whatever ambiguity might have ex-

isted with who was meant in verse 18 by "loving the neighbor,"—only Jews or those beyond the tribal circle—is now gone. Verse 34 says explicitly that the love you feel for yourself and your kinsmen, must also be extended to the stranger, the outsider.[4]

This is the implication of verses that tell us that God loves the stranger (Deut 10:19), God protects the stranger (Psalm 146:9) or that God considers those who oppress the stranger in the same category as adulterers and those who bear false witness, (Malachi 3:5). The Jewish tradition is making the case that God is on the side of the stranger, and by extension, Jews understand that it is to the stranger's side that Jews must rally. If loving the stranger did not quite make it into the "top ten" commandments, the verse from Malachi seems to be trying to make an amendment. Adultery and false witness are both part of the Ten Commandments and the prophet is saying that one who does not protect the stranger is no better than one who violates the core covenant of Mt. Sinai.

This clearly seems to be the intent of the prophet Jeremiah when he says that the House of the Lord and the land of Israel is reserved for people who follow a certain ethical course of action in their lives: "If you execute justice between one person and another, if you do not oppress the stranger, the orphan and the widow, if you do not shed the blood of the innocent, if you do not follow other Gods…then will I let you dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers for all time" (Jeremiah 7:5-8).

Similarly, the prophet Zechariah uses this "vulnerability ethic" as a centerpiece for what is required for Jews to merit God's reward of living in the Promised Land: "Execute true justice, deal loyally and compassionately with each other, do not defraud the widow, the orphan, the stranger and the poor and do not plot evil against one another…" (Zechariah 7:9-10). Again, we find the invocation of the vulnerability ethic and it is not restricted to the *ger*. Rather the *ger* becomes symbolic of all outsiders, all who are victimized by the forces of oppression.

The Jewish historical experience of oppression makes it impossible for Jews to ignore the Torah's commandment to protect the vulnerable. The modern nation-state has become accustomed to gaps between privileged and underprivileged classes. It is often justified by the economic, political and/or religious ideology of the ruling elite. Jews have been on both sides of that divide. It is easy to act with sympathy to the outsider when that is your status as well. It is much harder when you begin to have a taste of privilege.

In the end, the test of any faith tradition is the extent to which it helps its adherents understand that the ultimate act of religious fidelity is seeing to it that all of God's children can enjoy the blessings of liberty, economic opportunity and the freedom to act on the dictates of their conscience.

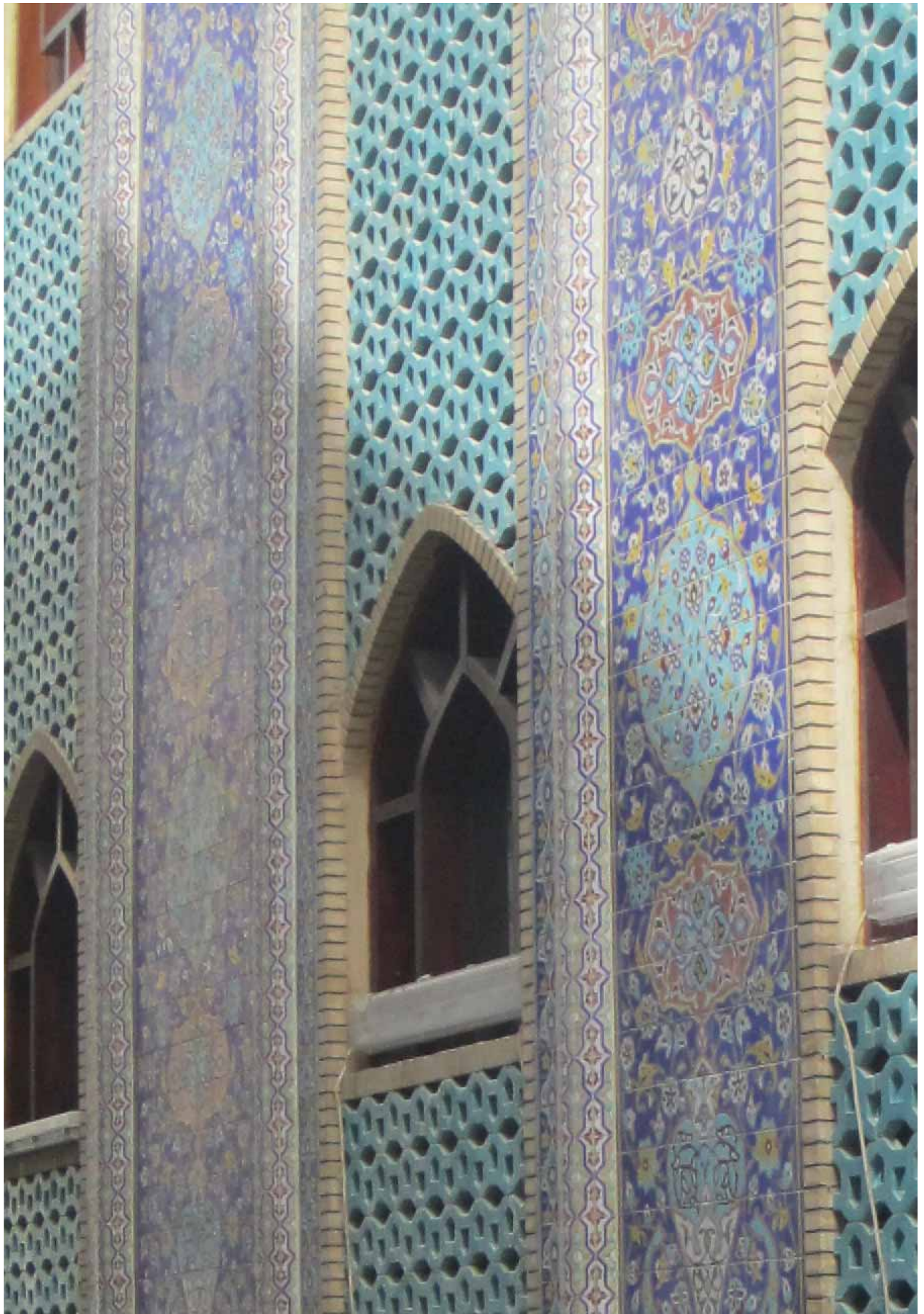
Notes

1 This article was excerpted from Rabbi Sidney Schwarz, *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World*, © Sidney Schwarz. Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, VT, USA, www.jewishlights.com.

2 For a full treatment of this subject see Elliot Dorff, *To Do the Right and the Good: A Jewish Approach to Modern Social Ethics* (Jewish Publication Society, 2002) ch. 3.

3 Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb: A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observances* (Soncino Press, 1962) pps. 392-3.

4 See Ernst Simon, "The neighbor (r*ea*) whom we should love" in M. Fox ed., *Modern Jewish Ethics* (Ohio State University Press, 1975).



Reflections on Justice in the Context of HIV/AIDS

by Elias K. Bongmba

The spread of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the African context today calls for a critical reflection on the virtue of justice. I begin by describing in a broad manner recent perspectives on justice. I then examine the meaning of justice in the context of HIV AIDS, with a limited focus on religious healthcare, especially the Christian tradition that is a major partner in healthcare delivery in Africa. Justice for many is a national and global concern even though philosophers and theologians often examine justice within the confines of the nation state. Justice is a global issue because international protocols like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recent articulations of women's rights call for a rethinking of justice. The growing abuse of human rights today and the inability of many states to meet the basic needs of their citizens, especially in relation to food, water, and health point to the absence of justice.[1] Charles Beitz argues that justice is a compelling idea for a cosmopolitan context because of growing economic interdependence and transnational politics.[2]

At the national level, the scope of justice includes individual and social units. It is a virtue grounded on the traits that people possess and exert; a view which John Rawls described as "the first virtue of social institutions".[3] I understand virtues to be character traits as well as those dispositions which individuals develop to promote human wellbeing in each community.[4] Philosophers and theologians have discussed justice as a social good that is related to the social contract because the idea and practice of justice requires a social context which in many cases is a settled political community where members seek the common good as they work out the relationship to one another and to the goals and vision of the community.

Aristotle described justice at the individual level as that characteristic which disposes an individual "to do just things, act justly, and wish just things".[5] He classified justice under two parts, general and the particular, which reflect what he describes as lawfulness and fairness. General Justice is lawfulness and deals with the sum of all virtues directed toward the good of another person. Particular justice refers to the right disposition towards good things such as security, money and honor in a political community.[6] In further elaboration of particular justice, Aristotle defined it in terms of equality or fairness with respect to the common good that falls under the jurisdiction of the political community. He called general justice as that which is complete because it is based on laws and such justice is directed towards another per-

son. Aristotle claimed: "justice alone of the virtues is thought to be the good of another."[7] On particular justice, Aristotle differentiated between distributive and commutative justice, indicating that distributive justice deals with the equal distribution of the common goods available to the political community. Distributive justice works on a proportional basis and what he called corrective justice promotes fairness and equilibrium in society. Commutative justice involves contracts and legal transactions.

Saint Thomas also described justice relationally; pointing that justice is the virtue that involves relationships between persons. Particular justice deals with one's relationship to another person and general or legal justice deals with communal matters.[8] Overall, he argued that justice is that virtue which promotes fairness, as people see the common good. At the particular or individual level, compensatory justice deals with restitution and recompense. At the communal level, justice refers to the fair distribution of state resources. At both levels, communities strive to reach the good for members and seek ways of enabling members of the community to experience social justice.

Discussions of justice since 1971 has focused on the ground-breaking book, *A Theory of Justice,* by John Rawls in which he argued: "justice is the basic structure of society . . . the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation".[9] Since members of a political community decide what is just through a process that involves public reasoning, debate, and deliberation by reasonable parties subjects, Rawls indicates that such a process allows participants to focus on seven primary goods distributed by the "political constitution and the principal economic and social arrangements" such as rights, liberties, self-respect, power, opportunities, income, and wealth; goods which form a "thin theory of the good" and are crucial for well being of individuals and society. Principles of allocating these should be general, intuitively recognized, universal, public, offer preferences to conflicting claims, and must be final. Determining these, principles start at the "original position", a hypothetical situation that could serve as a prior position before human sociality where members of the political community acted as free agents, equal, rational, self-interested, and ignorant of their position, or their preferences and religious beliefs. This does not mean that start with a blank slate because they have some general information and come with conflicting claims. Rawls argues that members could develop an overlapping consensus in a competing liberal context where they share values such as democracy and similar visions of the political economy. A broad consensus could ensure that "all social values—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth and the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone's advantage".[10] Justice for Rawls is undeniably part of a liberal social system

where the idea of equality is central to growth of individuals and members of the political community.

Some scholars who have responded to Rawls' position point out that Rawls theory presupposes and privileges western democratic liberalism and a capitalist society, and does not adequately address human rights since his theory emphasizes the social dimension of justice. Others argue that Rawls's theory does not consider gender and other social inequalities, and the notion that there could be some hypothetical situation devoid of preconceptions where the principles of justice could be initiated seems unrealistic.[11] Feminist scholars contest the view that justice can be a non-contextual dispassionate construction. Seyla Benhabib has argued that an ethic of justice must consider not only the concrete history of people, but also the "identity and affective-emotional constitution" of others in the community.[12] Kathryn Tanner has pointed out, "A just society is not simply a society that allows people to go their own way, a just society is one that actively cares for its members by providing the 'institutional conditions that enable people to meet their needs and express their desires'".[13] Carol Gilligan in her book, *In a Different Voice,* has argued for the notion of care as part of understanding justice.[14] Gilligan has argued women develop differently than men because their moral thinking is connected to an ethics of care. Concern for the good of others is not grounded primarily on principles and rules but caring as a virtue, which recognizes inter-human connectedness and one's views of justice also depend on human connectivity, and care.

Rawls' account remains significant because he argues: "justice as fairness assigns a certain primacy to the social", a view that does not ignore individual human rights.[15] In other words what Rawls describes, as "the profoundly social nature of human relationships" does not necessarily dismiss individuality.[16] The social context provides a broad environment for cultivating certain virtues, and human capacities for moral reasoning. In principle, many expect social structures and institutions to promote and be the arbiter of justice in different ways. For example, legal systems provide mechanisms for adjudicating disputes, contracts, and safeguards property rights which are connected to social harmony and hence the cultivation of justice in society. Social structures also provide a basis for thinking of individual and family life. These structures are necessary for people to think of their rights and responsibilities to others. Sociality offers a basis for equality and freedom for members to conceptualize justice, fairness, and develop the rational capacities for debating and articulating the principles of justice.[17] There is no doubt that Rawls' veil of ignorance which is integral to his notion of the original position is an ideal situation where bound by a social contract, members of a political community could arrive at fair principles; which given freedom and equality, would facilitate the promotion of a just society.[18]

Even if one were to grant as I do that Rawls does not rule out individual-

ity, the idealism embedded in his theory remains problematic because social groups have discrepancies emerging from or grounded on race, gender, ethnic origin, and religion. In addition to these, problematic issues, in some countries around the world, the difficulty of attaining what Rawls, proposed is constantly being undermined by political corruption. To overcome this deficiency Rawls redefined the original position, arguing: "among the essential features of this situation is that no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance."[19] This is hardly the case in most societies because people have more information about the behavior of others and their own than the theory allows.

The proposals of Rawls reflect arguments that could take place in an open society or what some would describe as a liberal political community. In the late 20th century, it became clear that not everyone shares the same enthusiasm about the virtues of liberalism. For example, Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre who himself has a passionate interest in virtues and justice has decried the absence of virtue in the modern world, a situation which has made it difficult for moderns to have a common consensus on justice.[20] In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre, has argued that the liberal society lacks a coherent account of justice because the liberal society is grounded on the misguided Enlightenment project out of which has come greater emphasis on individualism and a doctrine of rights.[21] MacIntyre prefers the articulation of justice found in the Thomistic synthesis of the Augustinian and Aristotelian traditions because in MacIntyre's view, modern approaches to justice are grounded on a rights approach and ignores the social and intellectual traditions that have provided humankind with ideas and practices of justice.

Many scholars recognize MacIntyre's passion for the virtues and justice but have misgivings about his dismissal of liberalism. Hence, one could argue that Macintyre assumes that there was always so kind of a coherent narrative on justice, which moderns lack because of their commitment to Enlightenment liberalism. However, in fairness to MacIntyre, one should point out that MacIntyre discusses the different positions on justice that existed in the Greek *polis,* giving rise to accounts of justice that were grounded in practical reasoning to arrive at a consensus on justice (*dikaiosune*)*,* or righteousness.[22] MacIntyre argues:

> The name the Greeks gave to this form of activity was 'politics', and the *polis* was the institution whose concern was, not with this or that particular good, but with human good as such, and not with desert or achievement in respect of particular practices but with desert and achievement as such. The constitution of each particular *polis* could therefore be understood as the expression of a set of principles about

> how goods are to be ordered into a way of life.[23]

In rejecting liberalism and dismissing the Enlightenment project, MacIntyre also fails to appreciate the view that:

> A (person) becomes fully human only when, instead of remaining subject to given needs and desires, he (she) shapes his (her) conduct by a law he gives himself, and morality is not only one form of such self-legislation, but also a necessary one for all humanity.[24]

The political ideals of a liberal state such as "liberty, equality, and fraternity" have contributed significantly to freedoms, human rights, and the search for a consensus and it would be a mistake to dismiss liberalism because of a past lofty tradition.[25] Second, even if one were to endorse MacIntyre's argument, it would be good to remember that even in the Aristotelian society, which MacIntyre discusses approvingly, individual agency was not completely lost because people excelled in different roles first as individuals and they brought those roles together to make the community function. Third, one would agree with Rawls that the liberal tradition, despite its limitations, offers a better political space and climate to address moral issues, especially justice than MacIntyre's preferred religiously influenced traditions.

Amartya Sen has argued that Rawls's justice as fairness articulates a transcendental perspective, focuses on the nature of a just society in contrast to a comparative approach to justice and fairness which offers alternative arrangements and makes room for the

view that some approaches are more or less just than others.[26] Sen claims that the comparative approach is compelling because it invites a consideration of social policies that might eliminate hunger and illiteracy and contribute to justice, but the implementation of such policies might violate the transcendental requirements of justice that include "equal liberties and distributional equity."[27] The comparative approach might be incomplete but thinking from a comparative perspective could highlight injustice at a time when many are destitute in a world of prosperity. Such an approach could also highlight practices that encourage the subjugation of women. Sen emphasizes that even where people have a specified view of justice, shared beliefs could provide partial ranking; making "evaluative incompleteness" relative to a theory of justice.[28] Finally, Sen argues that institutional requirements of the Rawlsian approach would be difficult to meet in the context of global justice, even with Rawls new starting point which emphasizes negotiation with different peoples and the giving of reasonable help to decent societies that may not be just.[29] Sen argues that what emerges is a silence that inhibits public reasoning about justice in the manner that Rawls has presented in his transcendental perspective. Rawls's view about a common starting point ignores the possibility of impartial arbitration, shared beliefs, and prejudices that might offer people an opportunity to examine issues from the perspective of other informed people who do not belong to the same society.[30]

Justice and Public Health at a time of HIV and AIDS

One area where justice is a major issue is health care. In many parts of the world, there are contentious debates about the availability of and accessibility of health care for all the members of the political community. The debates and contestations on health and healthcare tend to focus on public health, where the role of the state is central in the quest for justice[31]. Consideration of social justice and fairness in the context of public health is crucial in the African context and one could argue that it does not matter whether social justice is seen in the light of what ethicist call beneficence or not. This is the case because many now think that the state plays a crucial role in promoting and making health care available and affordable as a major political responsibility.[32] Many countries provide healthcare through government programs and the state establishes health care institutions and sets the rule that govern healthcare from the training of health care workers to acceptable standards for drugs.

The view that health care brings up the question of justice has gained traction in the debate in recent years to the extent that health has become a matter of rights which can be studied in light of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Although that declaration was adopted when almost all African countries were still colonies, nearly all African countries joined the United Nations and accepted the declaration on human rights and moved

in the late twentieth Century to adopt the African Charter of rights as well as joined global movements promoting women and children's rights.

The dominant role the state plays in healthcare does not rule out private healthcare providers in Africa, especially, religious communities. Even in the United States, many of the major hospitals are privately owned, have religious background or are incorporated businesses that do not receive any support from the State. In Africa, individuals and religious communities offer health care and run their own facilities. Studies carried out by scholars from South Africa and the United Stated through the African Religious Health Assets Program (ARHAP) has demonstrated that in many parts of Africa, religious institutions provide between 30 and 70 percent of the healthcare needs of some countries.[33] Globally, healthcare is a concern of organizations like the World Health Organization that works with over 190 nations. Other agencies of the United Nations are also involved in health care projects. The most well known example in the last three decades is the Joint United Nations Program to combat HIV AIDS (UNAIDS) that was formed to bring together information and strategies of preventing the spread of HIV AIDS and coordinate treatment around the world.

There is no uniformed understanding of what good health is, and there is no single approach that guarantees wellbeing. Instead, the standards, procedures, and moral perspectives that serve as a guide for public health vary and are negotiable. What constitutes the goals of public health varies, but one can generalize from the activities that are carried out and indicate that public health is the means by which states and other private stakeholders promote health as a public good. Public health is not restricted to medicalization, but includes preventive health care. Prevention methods and programs vary, but they range from the many attempts to eliminate injury, the taking of prophylaxis, and vaccination campaigns. Where the state encourages good prevention methods, the cost of healthcare is greatly reduced and members of the community live healthier lifestyle. Public health remains an important part of government responsibility even though there are many private agencies and faith based organizations that do health work and are important stake holders in the healthcare industry of several countries.

The view that healthcare demands justice is also clear from the fact that for many people the cost of healthcare is prohibitive. In many communities, it is the state that has the capacity and the resources necessary to meet the demands of public healthcare. Even where other organizations are able to provide public health care in an efficient manner, the government still plays an important regulatory role that could affect everything from drug acquisition to the type of drugs that are safe to use or set the basic standards needed for people to qualify as healthcare workers. Standards established by states and the careful use of regulatory systems to supervise health care offer opportunities to gauge the state of justice in health-

care. Many of the debates on healthcare are grounded in the quest for fairness, equal access, and availability of quality drugs.[34] Most of the debates on healthcare focus on justice and several scholars in the twentieth century have examined justice through an examination of ethical issues through several academic programs such as bioethics, biomedical ethics, medical ethics, medical humanities. Finally, although no single approach defines or indicates the scope of public health, it is also the case that the goals and programs carried out in the name of public health often reflect the desire to achieve quantity as well as quality of care for members of the political community. For instance in the 1978 Alma Ata declaration, the World Health Organization member states pledged that they would achieve health for all by the year 2000.

The search for what is fair in public health remains a central issue around the world. In addition to the cost of healthcare, many questions are unresolved such as the scope of public health itself. Is public health a common good? If it is defined as a common good, should everyone have access or if all have access to good medical care should the quality of that healthcare be the same for everyone in the political community? Is it possible then that the state can provide equal health care to all members of its political community? In other words, to what extend is healthcare public when it includes disparities in terms of access and quality of care? The provision of basic care to all members of the political community could go a long way in preventing future cost or overwhelming the healthcare system. That is why some have argued that a key way to achieve justice in publish health is to distribute the resources or burdens of healthcare among all the members of the political community.

If justice is an important virtue and if achieving it in the political community, its success depends on the political will of the community. The question is; what are the things that impede the attainment of justice especially in the area of healthcare in the African context. The issues in healthcare remain lack of accessibility, and lack of resources to pay for the medical needs of many people. This does not mean that Africa is devoid of health institutions; what is implied here is the view that healthcare is inadequate and always there is little quality healthcare for the majority of people in the community. Often decisions about health care are made by government bureaucrats who do not often consult with all the stakeholders. This is a region where long term militarization has depleted the economies and the long economic decline, which started in the 1970s, has not yet ended. Additionally questions remain about poor governance, and political corruption that has continued on a massive scale. The alleged scale of corruption has taken money that could be used to address health issues out of the countries in Africa. If one takes a look at the allegations and in some cases court papers filed in Western countries to recover what is believed to be illegally gotten wealth by politicians

and members of their families, it immediately becomes clear that such a diversion of public funds at a time when the region is hardest hit with a pandemic that is not letting down and ongoing struggle with illnesses such as malaria, all actions that divert money away from important programs like healthcare into personal bank accounts of the political elites constitutes injustice.

The literature on political corruption in Africa is full of accusations about corruption. For example, *Newstime Africa,* reported on October 29, 2011 that the United Sates Justice Department had finally made a move and seized a mansion in Malibu California, Gulfstream jet, Michael Jackson memorabilia that belonged to Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, the son of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea.[35] The US Justice Department also filed suit in a court in Los Angeles, alleging that Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mange who is also Minister of Agriculture in his father's government had plundered billions of dollars from his country "to buy flashy cars, racing boats, a $38 million Gulfstream jet and the $30 million Malibu mansion." Published reports indicate that the son of the President who is accused in the court papers has reportedly spent millions of dollars in a lavish playboy lifestyle in Europe. Other sources such as Global Witness alleged that banks such as Wachovia, Bank of America, and UBS bank might have done nothing to prevent Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mangue to transfer as much as $100 million into the United States to pay for these luxury items. Such alleged swindling of funds comes from a country, which until the discovery of oil, depended on foreign aid.

In Europe, the *Mail Online,* reported that several properties and expensive cars had been seized from the home of an African dictator in Paris. "The vehicles, which included two Bugatti Veyrons, a Ferrari 599 GTO and a Maserati MC12 are all registered to Teodoro Obiang Nguema, the president of Equatorial Guinea". At one of his residence on Avenue Foch, which is close to Arc de Triumphe, police also seized several luxury cars belonging to the Equatorial Guinean President. The vehicles "included an Aston Martin V8 600lm, Rolls-Royce Drophead Coupe, a Porsche Carrera GT, and a Ferrari Enzo, as well as various Bentleys". *Newstime Africa* also reported that the Obiang Nruema's are not the only politicians in Africa because the current President of Gabon, Ali Bongo reportedly has 39 properties and Denis Sassou-Ngeusso of the Republic of Congo is alleged to have about 16 properties.

One of the greatest health challenges in Africa today is the HIV and AIDS pandemic, an illness that is individual as it is social. How can one talk of justice in such context? Broadly stated, justice in the context of HIV and AIDS involves carrying out the obligations of human relationships at the individual and communal levels.[36] People relate to others as family, friends, professional colleagues, members of a religious community, different kinds of proximal relationships, or political configurations structured by constitutions and institutions. Globalization has created new

forms of proximities and extended the scope of obligations, opening a creative space for understanding justice which J. B. Schneewind calls "the habit of following right reason with respect to the rights of others".[37] Therefore, minimally, relationships imply a reasonable recognition of the rights of others for wellbeing. These rights include the right to be treated as equal partners of members of the community who deserve liberties, self-respect, opportunities to participate in the economic and political life of the community. Justice in this context involves activities that would enable members of the political community experience the common good. Justice then is civic praxis.

Individuals and members of the political community need a new dedication to the idea of a civic praxis rooted in human values. MacIntyre argued: "The underlying concept of goodness (which) has as its focus a conception of perfected excellence in a type of activity specific to a particular type of person. A virtue is a quality of a character necessary for the achievement of such a good. And justice is the key virtue because both the in the *psuche* and the *polis* only justice can provide the order which enables the other virtues to do their work".[38] The *polis* was not an equal space as we understand equality today, but what I stress here is the idea that members of a community can and should cultivate virtues, among which justice is central, because it enables the other virtues to work.

In context of HIV/AIDS, a civic agenda that could promote justice and fairness implies a number of practices that could help clarify a rational perspective of justice. First, members of the political community ought to understand the HIV virus, its spread, replication, and the illnesses that result from a weakened immune system. Thirty years after the discovery of the virus, religious and state leaders still have an obligation to educate people about the virus so that they can make informed decisions on the risks they face. Arriving at what to teach calls for constant dialogue by all interested parties. Second, understanding the situation calls for each person to assume responsibility in creating safe environments, where the most vulnerable people to HIV infections, women and children will feel protected and take responsibilities for their own sexuality. In addition to education on the virus, a sustained civic practice requires that the state provide resources to fight HIV and AIDS and depend mostly on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs).

Finally, promoting justice involves civic practices that involve advocacy for those living with the virus and those who are affected by it in different ways; either as caregivers, or members of the family who have experienced a decline in health and living standards because they care for someone living with HIV and AIDS. Civic activism and advocacy could change public and state obligations on HIV and AIDS. This has happened in several African countries, especially South Africa where members of the Gay, Lesbian, bisexual and transgender community have shaped the debate on HIV and AIDS and ac-

cess to life saving drugs. Civic activism demonstrates that health care is a social good for all members of the community. In several African countries politicians often have good health care at the expense of other members of the society. Religious communities and leaders could shape the debate on access to healthcare as a matter of social justice in such contexts. Thomas Ogletree has argued: "When some fare well and attain much, it is almost always at the expense of others, indeed, not infrequently by virtue of the domination and exploitation of those others. Excellence achieved at such a price is morally dubious at best. It takes on a morally negative cast insofar as it is a function of structural forms of social injustice".[39]

Dialogue and advocacy could be grounded on concepts and principles that have high purchase in the community. African scholars have appealed to *Ubuntu* as a concept that stresses a humane practice of relating, sharing, expressing hospitality, and enabling others to achieve the good in society. *Ubuntu* also promotes values of love, support, and respect for others in society. The concept is derived in the Southern African contacts from the *Isizulu* expression, "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,*" which means "a person is a person through persons". This definition is compelling and one could reject articulations of *Ubuntu* that compare it to the Cartesian cogito as several African scholars have done. Additionally, *ubuntu* is not merely a communitarian ethic that stresses the community at the expense of the individual. The concept includes both an individualist ethos and well as communitarian principles. It highlights individual subjectivity and the values shared by members of a community and as such offers an important conceptual tool for establishing intersubjectivity and prioritizing the rights of persons and communities. Finally, it is not correct to argue as Emmanuel C. Eze has claimed that *ubuntu* neglects reason, because reason in *ubuntu* prioritizes the person and community.[40]

The World Health Organization demonstrates that inequality exists in healthcare.[41] The claims of justice invite a stand against inequality in the political community.[42] The inequality that exists in African countries is measurable and there are remedies that could be applied to create a more just situation. Although religious communities carry a large share of healthcare in Africa, the nation state can ensure justice by setting healthcare policies that will promote the common good. Such policies should privilege equal access, affordability, and sustainability.

In addition to civic practices, one could approach claims of justice by critically examining policies of the state in light of primary healthcare which is seen by many health experts as a major preventative measure and tool that could reduce hospital based care. Primary healthcare does not need expensive healthcare facilities but involves interventions which are part of the social projects of every state such as good sanitation, safe and affordable drinking water, good communication infrastructure which would allow people have access to care in a hospital or dispensary should that become neces-

sary, and adequate women's care that includes family planning. To be fair to states, some governments in Africa have established a hospital or two in each district. However, many of those hospitals are poorly staffed and have no functioning pharmacies. These situations have compromised health care, especially for the poor who do not have access to expensive care and drugs.

Finally, the Christian tradition is involved in healthcare in several African countries. Doing good and searching for justice in healthcare is a long tradition in the Christian church. The search for justice in the Christian tradition is often grounded in the work of the Hebrew Bible proposition that human beings carry the image of God. This is a religious and partisan view that cannot be imposed on other partners in dialogue on justice, but it is important because it underscores that value of a common humanity, which also recognizes differences of opinion about the nature of the common good, and ways of achieving the good.[43] The idea of the image of God in humanity also emphasizes the people more than deserts or reciprocity. All people in any given social context then deserve justice in a context of competing views of the good without necessarily imposing a transcendental position by claiming that God has ordered the idea of justice? While the symbols used by the Hebrew prophets may generate a discussion about justice, religious communities have an obligation to establish open dialogue with other communities on achieving the common good and justice. People share a common humanity, basic desires, needs, and could collaborate to meet those needs more effectively.

Notes

1 See Martin Wight, "Why is there no International Theory?" in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the theory of International Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. 20; Brian Barry, *Political Argument: A Reissue with a New Introduction* (New York: Wheatsheaf Harvester, 1990), p. lxxiv. I have also benefited from recent discussions of justice. See: Michael Slote, "Justice as a Virtue", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta(ed.), URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/justice-virtue/; Samuel Freeman, "Original Position",The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta(ed.), URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/original-position/; Julian Lamont, and Christi Favor, "Distributive Justice",The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta(ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/justice-distributive/>

2 Charles R. Beitz. "Cosmopolitanism and Global Justice." *The Journal of Ethics,* Vol. 9 no. 1 and 2 (2005): 11-27; see also Michael Blake, "International Justice", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta(ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/international-justice/>.

3 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice.* (Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press) 1971, p. 3.

4 eenan has argued: "virtues are traditional heuristic guides that collectively aim for the right realization of human identity . . . The historical dynamism of the virtues applies . . . to the anthropological vision of human identity." Keenan, 2000, p. 74. Keenan has explored cardinal virtues and emphasized justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance. He has replaced

temperance with fidelity and self-care, Keenan 1995; See also, Elias K. Bongmba, *Facing a Pandemic, The African Church and Crisis of AIDS.* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007).

5 Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* 1129a3-11.

6 1130a32-b5.

7 1130a3-5

8 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Thomas Gilby ed. 1975, p. 31.

9 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* p. 7.

10 Rawls, 1971, p. 62.

11 See for instance critiques by John Langan

12 Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernisn in Contemporary Ethics.* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 158-70.

13 Kathryn Tanner, "The Care that Does Justice: Recent Writings in Feminist Ethics and Theology,' *Journal of Religious Ethics* (2001): 171-191.

14 Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). See also Kathryn Tanner has argued that feminists scholars have rejected the "dualism of moral orientation in public and private spheres...by a process of mutual critique, so that, for example, the family becomes a place of justice and public life an arena dedicated to nurture." Kathryn Tanner, (2001), p. 174.

15 John Rawls, CP, 339.

16 John Rawls, *Political Liberalism.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) p. 259

17 John Rawls, p. viii

18 John Rawls, p. 120.

19 John Rawls, p. 12

20 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); See also his *Whose Justice? Whose Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

21 MacIntyre, *After Virtue* p. 111

22 *Whose Justice* p. 33.

23 *Whose Justice* p. 34

24 Lamore, Charles. *Patterns of Moral Complexity* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p. 31

25 Richard Bernstein"Nietzsche of Aristotle? in *Philosophical Profiles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986) p.140

26 Amartya Sen, "What do We Want from a Theory of Justice?" Presentation at Rice University, Feb. 2006, p. 3.

27 Sen, p. 4. See also Amartya Sen, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare,* (San Francisco: Holden-Day, 1971).

28 See Amartya Sen and W. G. Runciman, "Games, Justice and the General Will, in *Mind,* 74, (September, 1965); See also Thomas Scanlon, *What we Owe to Each Other,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 5; Thomas Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism" in Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, eds., *Utilitarianism and Beyond,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); these references are taken from Sen, 2006, p. 18.

29 John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

30 Amartya Sen, "Open and Closed Impartiality," *Journal of Philosophy,* 99 (September, 2002)

31 Gopal, Sreenivasan, "Justice, Inequality, and Health",*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2009 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta(ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/justice-inequality-health/>.

32 Powers and Faden 2006, Institute of Medicine's Committee for the Study of the Future of Public Health 1988; Thomas 2002; Nuffield Council on Bioethics 2007.

33 See ARHAP Report

34 Childress *et al,* 2002.

35 http://www.newstimeafrica.com/archives/23046. This story was first reported by the *Wall Street Journal.*

36 Karen Lebacqz, "Justice," in *Christian Ethics: An Introduction, ed. Bernard Hoose, (*Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998, p. 169.

37 J. B. Schneewind, "The Misfortunes of Virtue." In *Virtue Ethics,* edited by Roger Crisp and Michael Slote, 178-200, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 183.

38 MacIntyre, *Whose Justice,* p. 74.

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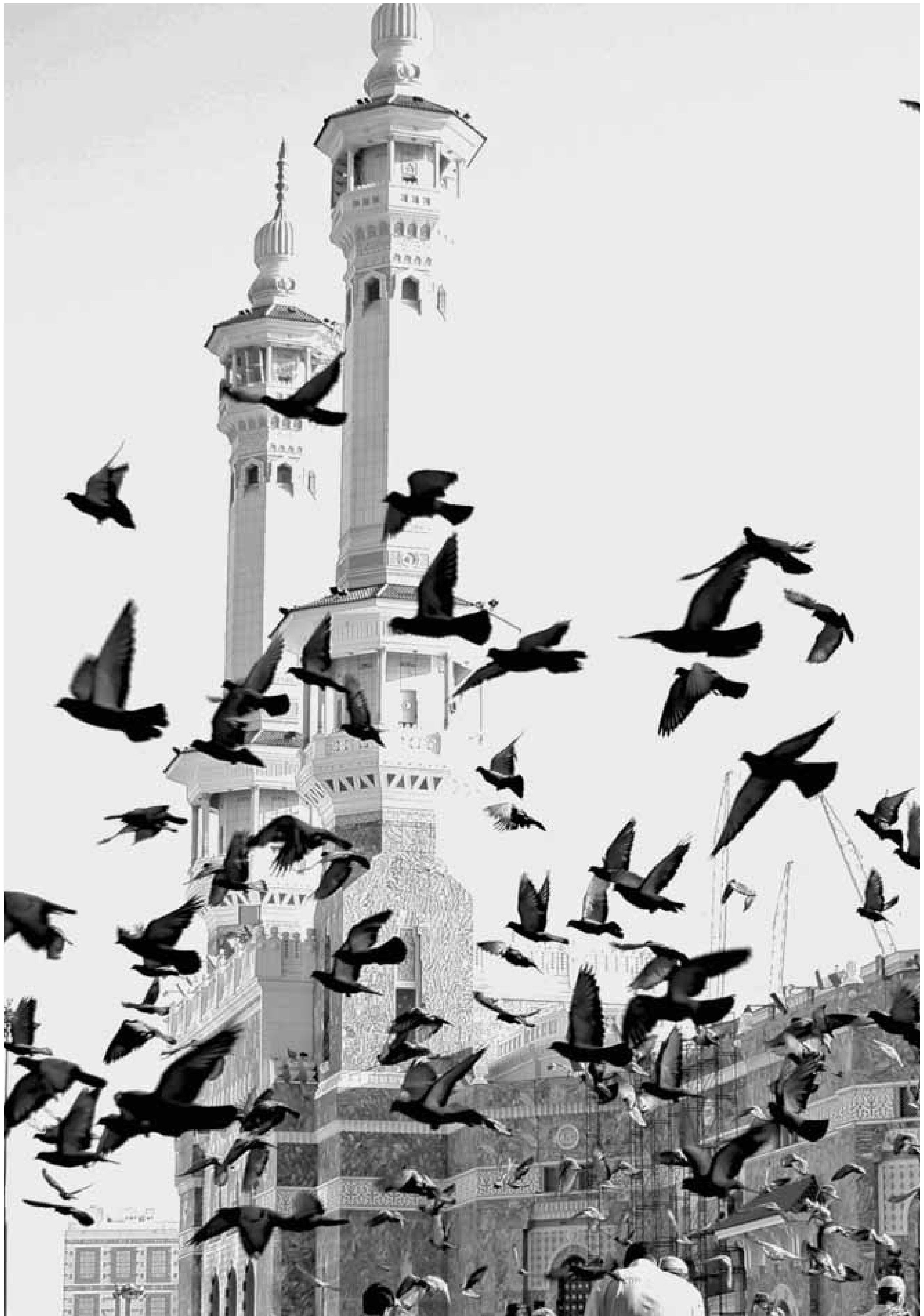

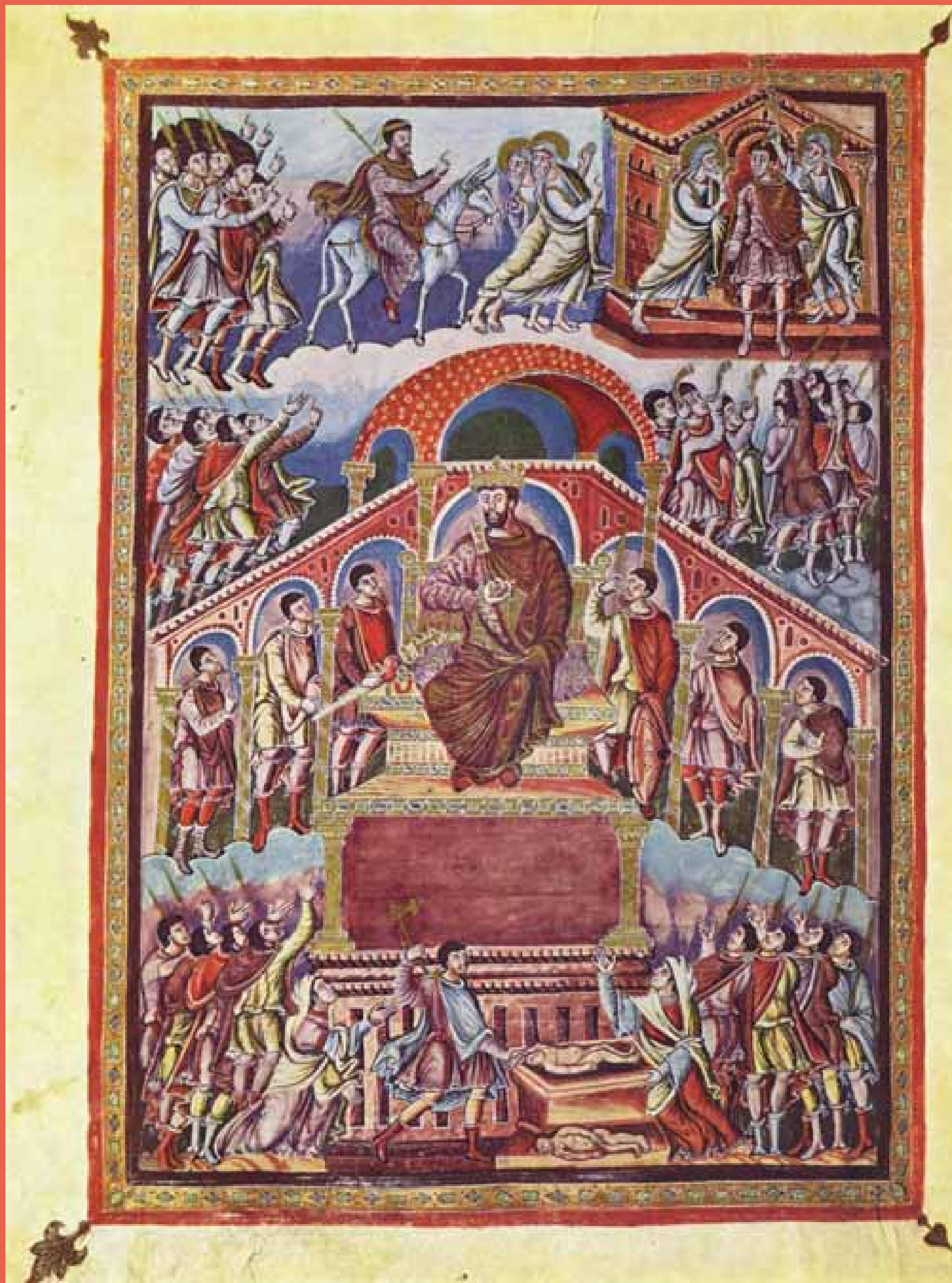

Competing for Abrahamic Justice

by Peter Ochs

Abrahamic Justice represents an alternative to modernity's "top-down" efforts to establish "universal" principles of human justice as well as to persistent efforts within each of the major religious traditions to universalize some regional account of what is "good and just". The result of these efforts is an unhappy competition between secular and religious universalisms. Each kind of universal is promoted as an alternative to the other, as well as to the "relativism" that would seem to be the only third alternative. "Abrahamic justice" refers, instead, to "bottom-up" activities of inter-Abrahamic scriptural study and reasoning for the sake of generating inter-Abrahamic measures of social justice. This kind of justice therefore emerges out of relational, rather than relativistic sources. The purpose of these activities is to generate neither "universal" principles nor merely local claims, but, rather, to generate whatever kinds of measure are called for to meet the urgent inter-Abrahamic and inter-national needs of the day.

Within these activities of study and reasoning, each participant speaks from out of a single religious tradition, but all participants are invited to share in study and commentary on all three textual traditions and to comment openly and respectfully on one another's readings and claims. Consistent with this process, I speak here from out of my own sub-tradition of Jewish scriptural study and rabbinic commentary, and I offer proof texts for my claims primarily out of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) and some rabbinic literature. Nevertheless, I hope to offer claims, however imperfect, that could potentially speak for participants from all three Abrahamic traditions. I therefore offer these claims in the expectation that they would be tested and revised by my colleagues in these traditions.

tsedek tsedek tirdof: ***"Justice, justice shall you pursue" (Deut. 16:20).***

This famous commandment initiates the argument for Abrahamic justice: that the Creator alone sets a universal measure for human justice. The human being is created finite and prone to error. The human voice of itself is incapable of measuring the conditions of justice for all humanity, let alone all creation. The term for "justice" is itself a challenge to finite human understanding. The Hebrew root *ts-d-k* connotes "righteousness", and appears to construct forms that appear contradictory to the finite human mind. There is *tsedekah,* commonly translated "charity" and associated with mercy (*chesed*) or lovingkindness (*rachamim*); and there is *tsedek*, commonly translated "justice". Commenting on this semantic tension, the rabbinic sages speak homiletically of the two names of God in formal address as reminders of the two wings of divine law. They suggest that the generic name "God" (*elohim*) refers to the divine attribute of justice, while the personal name "Hashem" (or "the Lord," *YHVH*) refers to the divine attribute of mercy. The point is that justice is present when mercy is as well, and mercy is present only when justice is as well. But no human judgment balances

these two. The exception comes, on occasion, in the behavior of the kind of saintly person the tradition names *tsaddik,* "a righteous one". But there is no social office for the *tsaddik,* nor is this one relied upon as an official measure of social justice. The *tsaddik* is there as a teacher of godly virtues and as a reminder of what they may look like. But a *tsaddik*, too, may err.

shoftim v'shotrim: "You shall appoint magistrates and officials for your tribes….You shall not judge unfairly…." (Deut. 16:18).

The commandment "justice, justice…," is offered in the context of instructions for setting up courts to administer the divine measures of justice. Human courts are established to repair the social and creaturely relations that human misunderstanding, error and sin have corrupted and broken. Justice measures how that repair is to be undertaken. Human societies, and certain institutions within them, are therefore agents of certain aspects of divine repair.

lo tateh mishpat: "You shall not judge unfairly, you shall not show partiality, you shall not take bribes" (Deut. 16:19).

But the societal agents are themselves finite creatures, prone to error and sin. The finite human mind and heart does not comprehend all that is contained in the divine measure of justice nor in the commands that deliver this measure. No single earthly agency of itself is to be entrusted with all the responsibilities inherent in a divine measure of justice. There are judges and courts, but there are also social agencies that watch them and procedures for limiting their power and repairing their breaches.

asimah alay melekh: "If you make the choice to declare 'I shall set a king over me', … then he [the king] shall have a copy of this Torah written for him… Let it remain with him and let him read in it all his life, so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God, to observe faithfully every word of this Torah as well as these laws. Thus he will not act haughtily toward his fellows nor deviate from these commandments to the right or to the left" (Deut. 17:14-20).

Societal institutions are also finite creatures, prone to error and sin and, therefore, subject to the same checks and balances. The measure of all checks and balances is the divine measure of justice.

Lo osif l'kalel od et ha-adamah: "Never again will I destroy the earth on account of human behavior, since the imaginings of the human heart are wicked from youth" (Gen. 8:22)…. "Everyone on earth have the same language… They said, 'come let us build the city and the tower with its top in the sky to make a name for ourselves…. The Lord came and said… Let us go down and confound their speech…. Thus the Lord scattered them over the face of the earth" (Gen. 11:1-7).

Humanity cannot be trusted to construct its own measures of social justice and of the political good. For this reason, there is no individual or society

on earth to serve as the single agent of divine justice. To seek to be such an agent is to seek to replace the infinite divine with a finite creature, and this is idolatry.

Humanity repeats the error of the Tower of Babel whenever it seeks, by dint of human reasoning, to construct universal principles of justice and of the societal good.

In service to the goals of the European Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant sought to identify universal, rational measures of the just and the good. There was no sin here of bad intentions. To the contrary, Kant was motivated by the goal of repairing conditions of societal disorder and injustice that seemed endemic to European civilization. In this way, his efforts appeared to serve the reparative goals of divine justice (I believe it is possible, furthermore, to claim that Kant's project served those goals). Nonetheless, modern and contemporary philosophers have molded a standard of "Kantian ethics" that defies the biblical standards, promoting "universal human reason" as a remedy to the competing claims of the monotheistic religions.

Two models of competition and of difference.

We arrive at the first of two defining distinctions within the argument of this essay.

From the perspective of modern philosophy, each Abrahamic tradition claims to have received the truly universal measure of divine justice; the traditions engage in a destructive competition whom God has chosen as agent of this measure. Modern philosophy assumes, in other words, that the Abrahamic religions play a zero sum game. If so, these religions must share modern philosophy's respect for the law of excluded middle: in this case, that humanity's measure of justice will either display a given characteristic or it will not. If the Abrahamic and philosophic traditions offer different measures of justice, these measures must compete in a winner-take-all way.

From the perspective of the Abrahamic argument I am recommending, modern philosophy's secular universalism risks replaying the idolatry of the Tower of Babel. Of course, this would sound like a meaningless threat to anyone outside the "language games" of the Abrahamic scriptures. But the threat can be translated into the consequentialist vocabulary of pragmatic and utilitarian philosophies: translating "idolatry" as the fallacy of attempting to replace a claim offered in a "three- or multi-valued logic" into the terms of a strictly two-valued logic. In other words, modern philosophy's universalism restricts measures of justice to a zero sum game according to which to claim Measure X is necessarily to disclaim Measure Y (where $X \neq Y$). It is therefore assumed that if Judaism, for example, measures justice by the standards of Torah, then Judaism necessarily contradicts measures judged by the standards of the Quran or the New Testament or Immanuel Kant. But this is not the case, since Jewish tradition, as grounded in the rabbinic literature,

identifies measures of justice according to biblical terminologies, whose empirical meanings are clarified only in context-related judgments. For this kind of rabbinic legal or ethical thinking, it would be a category error to voice context-specific judgments and universal measures in the same type of language.

Modern philosophers voice both empirical judgments and universal measures in clear-and-distinct claims, framed according to two-valued logics. For the rabbinic sages, however, only empirical judgments can be voiced in this way; measures of justice or of the good are named only in non-definite (or, in that technical sense, "vague") terminologies. A non-definite measure cannot be defined with respect to the either/or restrictions of a two-valued or binary logic, since, at a given time, we cannot predict whether or not such a measure will give rise to the context-related judgment A (*this* is just) or B (*that* is just) or something else.

For example, on a given occasion, the biblical command *lo tirtsach* ("do not murder") may or may not apply to a given act of killing. To say that the measure "do not murder" is non-definite is to say that, on any given occasion, human agents of divine justice have to scrutinize the matter carefully (*v'darashta hetev,* as in Deut. 17:4) and interpret whether or not, and what degree, the measure applies. Ironically, the measures of divine justice presuppose God's partnership with human jurists as their agents, while the universal measures constructed by philosophic humanists are most often delivered as if they "came down straight from heaven", in clear-and-distinct language that provides little or no room for local, human interpretation.

In rabbinic vocabulary, the value terms "justice" and "mercy" can be used to mark the difference between the "blind" or utterly general measure of justice (justice *per se*) and the "locally attentive" or context-specific measure of justice (mercy). Divine justice is present only when these two appear in balanced harmony. Individual human cognition is incapable of measuring this harmony, because the harmony pertains to a three-part relationship among the non-definite measure, the multitude of contingencies that define a local context of judgment, and the capacities of a juridical community to integrate these two. To say that the process exceeds the limits of individual cognition is not to throw one's hands up in the air and declare, "it's all in the hands of heaven!". It is to invoke a process of meta-individual reasoning that comes only by way of a community, tradition, and history of legal and ethical interpretation. There is nothing magical here. There is, however, the reality of what the scriptural traditions ascribe to the human-divine encounter, manifesting itself in the community's reception of divine measures and in the prayerful discipline that accompanies juridical processes of interpretation.

Competing for divine favor: "To each among you have We prescribed a law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He has given you: so strive

as in a race in all virtues" (Qu'ran Surah 5:48, Yusuf Ali trans.).

The Qu'ran offers a model according to which the Abrahamic traditions might compete for divine favor, but not in the way that modern Western philosophers might fear.

Muslim, Christian, and Jewish differences in modernity.

According to the testimony of the three Abrahamic traditions, each revealed scripture tends to disclose a unique family of divine measures. By the standards of modern philosophy, these inter-Abrahamic differences imply inter-Abrahamic contradictions and thus competition according to a zero sum game. Modern philosophy's perception is strengthened by at least three factors: (a) a degree of affection for Aristotle among medieval Abrahamic theologians, generating universalist-like accounts of the divine measures; (b) tendencies to mutual animosity, fear, and imperialism among the three traditions in the medieval and modern periods, generating competitions that appear to invoke standards of either/or thinking; and (c) late modern and contemporary Jewish, Christian, and Muslim tendencies to ingest the binary logics of the modern West, generating forms of Abrahamic religion that do indeed mimic the either/or universalisms of modernity. The result is an unhappy, four-way competition: among three sorts of Abrahamic universalisms and a variety of modern secular universalisms.

Muslim, Christian, and Jewish differences in the future.

According to the argument of this essay, this four-way competition is a competition among four humanly constructed sets of universalisms. The Abrahamic universalisms must be humanly constructed, because they restate scriptural measures in a clear-and-distinct language that is foreign to Scripture (My Abrahamic colleagues will, of course, need to test this claim, and I expect some challenges, particularly from Christian and some Muslim colleagues. But I shall ask them, first, to be sure they are not importing medieval or modern tendencies to assimilate scripture to the terms of classical or modern philosophy). If the only source of universal justice is a humanly constructed measure, then human justice will remain inseparable from the either/or logic of finite human reason. Take any parameter, then human justice will apply it in the terms of a strict dichotomy that favors now one side, now the other: now, for example, states' rights over those of the international community and then vice versa; now strict standards of justice, now context-specific mercies; now the plight of these people in the past two years, now the plight of those people for a decade before that. Jurists in the modern West would tend to defend this dialectic as the inevitable outcome of life in the real world.

If, however, Abrahamic measures are released from the constraints of human construction, they can then be articulated in non-definite forms appropriate to the vocabularies of scriptural Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic. In this case, the competition among them

can be reframed in terms closer to the Qu'ranic model of Surah 5:48: racing to do good! The three traditions are each to strive, since receiving God's word does not guarantee one will live up to it. The race, through the end of time in this world, determines not only who wins but also what it means to win: that is to say, what God's word means. But putting it this way still makes it sound like one will win and one will lose. The traditions offer a partial explanation: except for the utterly evil, everyone wins since everyone of a good heart will follow the Messiah and the truths disclosed in the messianic time. Until the end time, moreover, no one can say who will win, while many can devote themselves to striving for the victory. Unlike the human universal, the divine one allows for degrees of proximity to the truth, even in the end time. In the divine economy, moreover, that which is universal is not therefore less local.[1]

But what does this say about the standard we may seek for universal justice? It says:

> The universality of our measure for justice is not reduced, but it is manifest only by way of its local expressions, most of which appear different one from the other. This localization is what the Jewish tradition calls the dimension of *chesed*, or mercy, in divine justice: the absolute measure must appear differently in different contexts. But, if so, what relief is there for citizens in a corrupt locality, where justice is perverted? The relief from local corruption will be the form of justice that manifests itself locally in a way that those in authority choose not to see. Such "non-seeing" characterizes local arbiters of enlightenment principles as much as of divine measures. The difference lies in how to find justice.

This essay's second defining point of distinction comes here. It is that the majority of sages within each tradition have not yet taken the next step in Abrahamic justice. Our argument therefore turns to a possibility latent within these traditions but not yet publicly realized: that the three traditions could indeed "compete together" across the table of scriptural studies. The second, defining claim of this argument is that such a competition honors each tradition's legislation and, even though most Muslim, Christian, and Jewish religious leaders have not yet taken this move, it is permissible within the bounds of traditional commentary and religious law.

Our argument ends with a practical syllogism: that, since this move to "compete across the table" is urgently needed and permissible, there is therefore urgent reason to make this move. Since this is a new move, and since traditional religions describe themselves as changing very slowly (however much evidence there is to the contrary), the move cannot be made overnight. Our practical syllogism therefore turns to prudential and strategic judgments:

"Competing across the table" should be undertaken, initially, as in experiment and laboratory in inter-Abrahamic theo-political reasoning.

One such experiment has already been underway for the past twenty years. Therefore, the most efficient

way to begin a laboratory in "competing across the table" is to examine this ongoing experiment.

The experiment is called Scriptural Reasoning (SR). I conclude this essay with a brief description of ongoing work in SR.[2]

Appendix: A Brief Introduction to Scriptural Reasoning

The Society for Scriptural Reasoning, Inc. (SSR) was founded in 1994. After experimentation, SSR arrived at a form of shared Abrahamic scriptural study that was neither that of the modern university nor of any of our denominational "houses". Participants called it "scriptural reasoning" (SR) for two reasons. First, SR is based on small-group study of texts from each of the Abrahamic scriptures. Second, participants discovered that, after hours of studying scriptural texts together, their dialogue tended to display certain patterns of interpretation that belonged to no one of the traditions, alone, nor to the participants' academic disciplines: these patterns seemed to reflect a particular SR group's mode of reasoning at that particular time. Such reasonings may generate forms of theo-political reasoning that cut across the borders of the three traditions and of modern disciplines of inquiry as well.

Overall, SSR is inspired by the primary hypothesis that, contrary to the persistent assumptions of most researchers and leaders in international policy, the Abrahamic Scriptural traditions are untapped resources for peace and mutual understanding. SSR meetings have been surprisingly successful, generating camaraderie and deep friendship as well as intellectual productivity. Participants have discovered that the three traditions share as many interpretive rules and strategies as they do not share and that the closer their readings come to intimate belief in God, the more closely they seem to understand each other and the more deeply they are moved by similar passions and hopes.

By 2011, there are several hundred participants in SR study groups and about seventy academics trained to teach the practice. Two academic centers for SR research have been established at Cambridge University (http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/) and the University of Virginia (http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/jsrforum/). As indicated on the websites of these centers, SSR engages in a variety of activities, including regular international conferences, educational programs in schools, community centers and universities, and SR scholars generate an expanding number of books and journal essays on the methods and consequences of SR. Among the purposes of SSR are to nurture: A method of scriptural study that is enriched by both academic disciplines and patterns of reading and commentary within the Abrahamic religious traditions; a mode of reasoning that is not limited to the work of individual minds, but that emerges through shared dialogue, text study, and purpose-driven teamwork; a method and practice of "reasoning across differences"; a practice of interfaith fellowship, relationship building, understanding, and public service; and

a practice of inter-Abrahamic conflict resolution and peace building.

But how will SR contribute specifically to the work of articulating and promoting Abrahamic justice? On one level, it already has, since, according to the argument of this essay, the conditions for divine justice are introduced when agents of the Abrahamic scriptural traditions seek to "compete across the table" for the sake of divine justice. Participants in SR have begun a second level of work by nurturing SR study groups devoted to specific issues of societal repair (and remembering that such repair is the goal of divine justice). On a third level, SSR must call its members to new and urgent work in service to international efforts at conflict resolution and peace building. In this work, they would join a broad range of efforts, well underway, to turn to the religious traditions as yet untapped resources for peace. A few of many examples include the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue; the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame; The Center for World Religions, Citizen Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University; the ACHOLI Religious Leaders Peace Initiative in Northern Uganda; The Community of Sant'Egidio, and many more.

Notes

1 But this universality is not that of Enlightenment, for which: "universal reason is local to every individual on earth who possesses it". In such a formula, there is still an unbridgeable difference between having that reason and not having it. In the divine economy, the universal word is "general" in a collective and not a distributive sense. This means that the divine word is not displayed in one place in all its perfection and then distributed out to all those who seek it. The word is, instead, made known in and through all the particular ways that it appears on earth. This is what the Hebrew Bible terms *kavod hashem*, "the glory of God".

2 This essay extends the argument of an earlier study that appears as "Abrahamic Theopolitics: A Jewish View," in eds. William Cavanaugh and Peter Scott, *the Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, Oxford: Blackwells, 2004: 519-534.

Poverty, Wealth and Social Justice in Africa

by J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

This article examines from an African Christian viewpoint, the interface between wealth and poverty on one hand and issues of the church and social justice on the other. Christian presence in Africa has increased tremendously since the middle of the 20th century. The result of this growth in Christianity over the years is that the majority of Christians in the world are now found living in contexts of poverty, although it must be admitted, they do not all share in personal poverty (Bediako 1995:128). This makes mainstreaming discussions on social justice in relation to the work of the church in Africa imperative. The reason is because significant numbers of those who profess Christianity in Africa live within conditions of political uncertainty, internecine ethnic conflicts,

social and cultural abuses, deprivation, marginalization and general underdevelopment.

The essay looks at the meanings of wealth and poverty, select significant causes of poverty, and the responses of the church in Africa to life-negating situations arising from the unfair distribution of wealth. Conditions of poverty and wealth in any society have implications for social justice, which remains a major concern of the gospel. Social justice, in this context, refers generally to situations in which the resources of communities and states, legal systems and power structures in all their forms, are consciously and systematically deployed for the benefit of all members of the community without discrimination. The idea is to ensure fairness and the protection of fundamental human rights. This means social injustice exists when there are conditions that are considered to be below acceptable standards or expectations as far as human welfare is concerned. Social injustice amounts to a state of being inferior in quality or insufficient and being denied access to those material things that ensure basic human survival and justice for all.

Colonialism, corruption, unfair international trade practices, and the processes of globalization have conspired in perpetuating poverty in Africa in the midst of her enormous material and immaterial wealth. However, certain aspects of the religious cultures of various African societies, environmental degradation, corruption and the wrong uses of political power are to various degrees also implicated in the entrenchment of poverty and the denial of social justice to people. In recent times, certain teachings of Christian new movements in Africa, such as the prosperity gospel of the new Pentecostals, have also tended to skew the message of the gospel in favor of the rich, famous and powerful of society. The message of prosperity within contemporary Pentecostalism, for instance, has often treated poverty as arising out of the curse of non-payment of tithes and offerings, a teaching which leaves the materially poor constantly wondering whether they still matter in God's economy as revealed in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mindful of the fact that issues of social justice are not marginal to Old Testament prophecy and the ministry of Jesus Christ, this essay proceeds on the premise that in Christian teaching, the church is called into being to ensure that the world is a fair and just place. It is not simply a political, but also an important religious obligation to ensure that there is enough to eat, that there is justice especially for the poor and marginalized, and that all persons are treated with dignity as God's people and created in his image. As an extension of the continuing work of God in creation, the church is mandated not only to get directly involved in the provision of appropriate material interventions in people's lives as needed, but she is also required to use her prophetic voice to challenge conditions of systemic poverty caused by the abuse of power and misuse of resources that lead to social injustices in Africa. Placing the issues of poverty and wealth on

the agenda of the church in Africa must therefore be seen as a logical consequence of the growth in Christian presence on the continent. This is because for the poor, faith could be the foundation of their sense of community, and the basis of their hope, especially in African countries where religion is often a strategy for survival (Belshaw, Calderisi, and Sugden 2001: 3).

Wealth, Poverty and Religion

Wealth refers to conditions of material abundance and the ability to fend for oneself and community without unnecessary difficulty and hassle. In that sense wealth is the opposite of poverty. In material terms a person or community is described as poor when due to lack of money, resources or support, its members live in situations of systemic need, hunger and deprivation. Those who lack the basic needs of humankind, that is, adequate food, clothing and shelter, and who have no legitimate means of securing such necessities of life, could be described as being materially poor.

In traditional African societies wealth was related to the ownership of farmland, domestic animals, or even slaves. In the colonial era, African economies became dependent on such cash crops as Cocoa and mineral wealth including gold, diamonds and bauxite. These were exported for foreign exchange but in large parts of Africa such natural resources have been over-exploited leading to environmental degradation such as pollution of rivers and the desertification of arable lands. Unfortunately the resources accruing from this exploitation of natural resources in Africa have also been misused by political authorities to the disadvantage of the citizenry. The processes of globalization means Africa has had to join modern economies in which wealth is usually conceived of in terms of money, investments and properties that generate considerable returns. Situations of wealth and poverty could be relative because they depend on a number of factors including cultural values, social standing, and the standards of living in particular societies.

Wealth, which basically implies possessing more than many others, can lead to individualism and the blind pursuit of selfish interests at the expense of those others. To ensure equity, land in particular which enabled people to eke out a living was not supposed to be sold for money in traditional African society. It belonged to the ancestors who as its custodians were keen to ensure that those with large swathes of it did not deny the poor access to land for economic survival. Modern economies and urbanization have not done much to help such African communal values that enabled people to care for each other. This has heightened and aggravated poverty and deprivation on the continent. The misuse of the wealth of the various countries by their leaders has only worsened the situation leading to aggression and conflict in Africa such as we find in the oil rich regions of Nigeria. The faces of poverty as encountered in Africa have come to include hunger, disease, and the development of conditions of squalor

that lead to dehumanization and social injustice (Adeyemo 2001: 33). In the context of religion, it is generally held that the idolization and inappropriate uses of wealth could lead to attitudes and lifestyles that may be at odds with genuine spirituality.

Thus conditions of wealth and poverty may have spiritual connotations as we learn from the Beatitude 'blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.' Even in traditional African societies, wealth is not always conceived of in material terms. It encapsulates good health, vitality, the power of procreation and communal well being. A wealthy individual who does not pursue communal interests is considered a worthless person and such people are not even 'beatified' as ancestors when they pass away. In contradistinction to this state of affairs, we live today in a world in which the rich are celebrated for their individual wealth because it brings them to public attention and gives them access to that which may be denied to the materially poor. With the breakdown of traditional communal systems of care, respect for ancestral values regarding the use of natural resources and in the modern context, disregard for fundamental human rights, wealth in Africa has led to the abuse of power and corruption, particularly in politics.

Material poverty also has a way of perpetuating itself in ways that lead to emotional and spiritual poverty. This is because the stresses and hardships that material poverty brings is what leads people to channel their energies into crime and emotionally disturbing behavior such as drugs and prostitution. In Africa, the factors contributing to poverty would include: rapid population growths and high levels of spatial mobility and dislocation. All these have taken place within contexts of economic stagnation, recurrent political crises, spiraling debt burdens and the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programs (Oppong 1997: 158). Poverty also accounts for the prevalence of the HIV AIDS pandemic and such infectious diseases as tuberculosis. The emotional and spiritual types of poverty however, do not affect only the materially poor. The rich may also, as a result of other problems in life, dissipate their wealth in abusing alcohol, drugs and other forms of immorality that creates disconnections between a person and the spiritual anchor of his or her life. It is to those people that religion often addresses its message by inviting them to come for fulfillment (cf. Isaiah 55: 1ff.).

Africa: the Christian and Socio-economic Contexts

The fact of Christian growth amidst the persistence of poverty in Africa is what has led international non-confessional bodies like the World Bank to collaborate with churches on the continent in articulating responses to poverty and the use of wealth in ensuring social justice. In the foreword to one of the publications resulting from these efforts James D. Wolfensohn then President of the World Bank and George Carey the then Archbishop of Canterbury acknowledged the common ground between faith and development because

"in most developing countries, religious leaders are close to the poor and among their most trusted representatives", and that "spiritual ties are often the strongest in societies otherwise rent by ethnic discrimination, conflict over resources, and violence" (Wolfensohn and Carey 2001: vii).

The increasing pauperization of the human person and society constitutes the biggest challenge not just to the agenda of African traditional and economic communities but also to the mission of the church on the continent. The failure of political leadership and economic systems to deliver the expected relief from material poverty and ensure social injustice means that increasingly, people look to religious leadership in Africa for a sense of purpose and direction. In this vein it must be noted that poverty poses a significant challenge to Christian affirmation, fidelity, and stewardship in Africa and as Ogbu Kalu of Nigeria notes, poverty and its alleviation may become core factors in the future of Christianity in Africa (Kalu 2008: 58).

In Zimbabwe for example the African independent churches have led the way in the reclamation of devastated land through a program of tree-planting. These African churches have developed a remarkable prophetic earth-keeping ministry that is helping Zimbabwean society recover for the purposes of agricultural land that has been over-exploited. Their efforts have been described as an "environmental ministry" that relates directly to African Christian peasant perceptions and experience of ecological deterioration such as deforestation, water pollution, drought, and depleted wildlife resources (Daneel 2007: 47). Unfortunately there have also been great failures in love on the part of the church in certain parts of the continent, especially Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Rwanda where the proverbial African traditional sense of community and care for neighbors broke down and church buildings became locations of ethnic cleansing instead of places of refuge and protection for those under attack.

African Indigenous Perspectives of Wealth and Poverty

There are a number of reasons why poverty is prevalent in non-Western contexts like Africa. First, in Africa, poverty is as much a cultural fact as it is an economic one and so its meaning is embedded in the language and culture of the people (Kalu 2008: 59). Kalu suggests that a collection of the vocabulary around a certain subject matter—in this case poverty—"will enable a reconstruction of the social systems that communities employ in negotiating the continuities amidst the invasion of change agents" (Kalu 2008: 60). How this cultural understanding works in practice deserves some attention. Among the Igbo of southern Nigeria for example, Kalu explains, a persistent lack of material things is *ubiam.* It is used in situations where an individual does not produce enough to exchange for what he or she lacks. A more sustained or structural form of deprivation is expressed as *ogbenye* and implies that a person is so poor that he

or she cannot afford daily bread. But it has other implications besides being a description for abject poverty. *Ogbenye* is also used when an individual lacks kinship support, relations, family network, and social security. This makes the presence of kinship and community networks such an important part in the understanding of wealth, the elimination of poverty and the institutionalization of social justice. In the words of Kalu: "Poverty is a combination of the lack of material things, knowledge, skill, dignity, sense of well-being, political voice, and the social support system of family. …A person is not regarded as poor as long as the kinship system with its coterie of extended family remains functional" (Kalu 2008: 62, 63).

Second, although poverty could also result from natural catastrophes outside human control, it is fundamentally a matter of distribution of the adequate provision that has always been there (Hughes 2008: 12). Floods, droughts, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions could all get out of control and bring in their wake poverty, epidemics and deprivation. These natural catastrophes may be understood to be caused or aggravated by human exploitation of the environment. This has led to conflicts over land leading to ethnic cleansing with its attendant dissipation of energies and material resources that has created refugee camps around the globe. In traditional Africa, there is not such a wide distinction between natural and supernatural causes of calamity. The environment, for example, is seen as being enchanted with the presence of the supernatural. Natural and ecological disasters may therefore be attributed to breaches of the moral code of the ancestors such as the shedding of innocent blood in conflict situations. As a result of this cosmological idea the earth-keeping movement has built into its environmental recovery program a process of confession of ecological sins as part of Eucharistic celebrations. Thus part of the prayer said during tree-planting states: "Let us make an oath today that we will care for God's creation; so that he will grant us rain. An oath, made not in jest, but with all our hearts; admitting our guilt, appeasing the aggrieved spirit by offering our trees in all earnest; to clothe the barren land" (Daneel 2007: 54).

Third, in spite of the strong sense of community part of the root of poverty in Africa lies in certain socio-cultural practices which have survived colonialism, the forces of modernity and the process of globalization. Although the sacred laws governing the enchanted environment play a role in preservation, they could at the same time hamper the productive uses of land because sometimes the rules could be so rigid that they prevent people from working on the land even for productive purposes. The treatment of women through religious and cultural taboos is another source of impoverishment in Africa. Ghanaian theologian Mercy Oduyoye has pointed out for example that African women are impoverished through powerlessness and the inability to influence the decisions that conditions one's life (Oduyoye 2002: 60-61). Widowhood rites, for instance, can be very dehumanizing in African

societies leading in some cases to long term emotional scars and material deprivation. The threat to a widow is the tendency to treat her as if she was the cause of her husband's death through witchcraft. Elom Dovlo explains how witchcraft and poverty may be related by noting that powers attributed to witches include the ability to inflict material loss through fire, theft, crop failure, or poor spending. Witches are also believed to cause sterility, impotence or diseases such as leprosy. They are held responsible for addictions such as drunkenness, for poor performance by school children, or for insanity, death, and other misfortune (Dovlo 2007:68).

Unfortunate as the phenomenon is, far more women are also accused of witchcraft than men and widows in

particular are treated as outcasts based on accusations that they kill their husbands for their wealth. When that happens, widows are maltreated and deprived of any share in the estate of their deceased husbands. If a widow is not fortunate enough to have her own biological children to take care of her, she could be consigned to serious poverty and denied social justice. Other cultural practices that contribute to poverty in traditional society include domestic slavery which arose from ethnic wars, and pawning. Domestic slavery conferred stigma that stuck through generations. The systems of domestic slavery have been outlawed in Africa and yet even today those perceived to be of slave ancestry are stigmatized in families and denied access to resources. The *Osu* caste system of the Igbo of Nigeria and the *Trokosi* practiced among the Ewe of Ghana are traditional shrine slavery systems that kept people away from society and deprived them of the benefits of formal education, social integration and the opportunity to live lives as full human beings.

Divine Rule, Human Rule, and a World of Need

The power that causes or prevents poverty is human power, Dewi Hughes notes in his book, *Power and Poverty*. In his words: "The vast number of human beings in our day who suffer because of poverty is overwhelmingly the result of the ungodly use of power by other human beings. Among those who use power to the detriment of others, rulers are the most culpable" (Hughes 2008:12). The sub-title of Hughes' work, *Divine and Human Rule in a World of Need,* is most instructive. In the Christian context, there is peace and contentment, when human will and power are subjected to God's rule and used in the service of others. In both the Christian and traditional African cultures when human will and greed are elevated above divine will, there is poverty, disenchantment, exclusion and marginalization. The result of such human greed on the people of Africa is summed up by Nobel Laureate for Literature, Wole Soyinka as he speaks of his native Nigeria: "The health services of that nation are nonexistent; mothers die in childbirth for lack of the most basic drugs and a hygienic environment for labor. Infant mortality has reached epidemic proportions. The simplest, easily curable diseases, worsens for lack of treatment and kills" (Soyinka 1996: 123). The accomplices to the crime of the raping of the resources of Africa are Western nations that create secret bank accounting systems that enable the leadership to stash away cash in anonymous foreign accounts. In this vein, one World Bank report states as follows:

> The extent of corruption is largely determined by the example set by a country's leadership. And once bad habits have become entrenched, they are hard to undo. Unfortunately foreign aid has greatly expanded the opportunities for malfeasance exacerbated by the venality of many foreign contractors and suppliers. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been si-

phoned off to private bank accounts outside Africa. The cost is not just the waste of funds, but also more seriously the profound demoralization of society at large (Geschiere, Meyer and Pels, 2008: 33).

Fifth, there are also those who are poor on account of various personal disabilities such as ill health and old age. The HIV AIDS pandemic, for example, has rendered many people poor because of lack of access to health care, stigmatization and marginalization by society. Thus if wealth brings power and influence, poverty is alienating, demeaning and dehumanizing and therefore an issue for social justice. HIV and AIDS Commissions in several African countries have recognized the important roles that the churches play in the lives of people. Thus in Ghana and Nigeria for example, churches have encouraged to undertake aggressive HIV and AIDS educational programs with the assistance of resources from the World Council of Churches in order to help stem the impact of the pandemic in societies.

We have noted that situations of wealth and poverty in relation to social justice are issues that concern religion. In the conversation between God and Abraham on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, God tells Abraham that 'the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great' (Genesis 18: 20). What is meant here is the cry for justice of the victims of those wicked cities and presumably, their rulers. Thus as Hughes points out, it is right that Sodom and Gomorrah have been held up as supreme examples of moral putrefaction, "but it is the cry of those poor people who were being oppressed and exploited so that others could indulge their lusts that was God's priority" (Hughes 2008: 37). The point is that God's priority was to help those who were crying for help within the context of the wickedness of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the biblical and Christian contexts wealth is expected to be shared or used in the service of others, especially those in need such as the Samaritan who fell among robbers in the Gospel narrative.

In Jesus Christ, God simply gave his best to the world and right from the stories of Abraham through the parables of giving that Jesus narrated, divine rule is seen at its best when those who believe in Jesus Christ and his mission of care for the poor emulate his example by doing something about the poverty and deprivation around them. Jesus also pursued social justice for the marginalized such as for the woman with an eighteen year old hunchback who was healed on the Sabbath but whose healing is challenged by the synagogue rulers on account of the fact that it took place on a sacred day. There was another woman with a twelve-year old hemorrhage who was excluded from community on the basis of a menstrual condition that rendered her ritually impure. The point is that in the Christian context, the revelation of the power of God, which brings justice and the elimination of poverty in its wake, reaches its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Jesus touched the untouchable, drove out unclean spirits, fed the hun-

gry and restored those marginalized by culture and tradition into society as full members.

African indigenous knowledge and philosophical thought systems demonstrate great awareness in responding to modern social problems such as poverty. This is where the church in Africa needs to take a cue from the society in which it exists to provide social safety networks for her people. In dealing with the issues of social justice, for example, the sacredness of human life and a sense of community, that is, the importance of the 'other' are central. Julius Nyerere, the post-independent leader of the East African country of Tanzania is quoted to have argued that "in African primal culture, 'nobody starved, either for food, or human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth; he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member" (Kalu 2008: 56). Wealth is therefore seen in terms of fulfilling one's social, moral, and biological obligations (Appiah-Kubi 1983: 261). Thus although African social thought recognizes the value of individuality it makes the interest of the community the focus of individual actions (Gyekye 2004: 56; Magesa 1997: 65; Mbiti 1989: 2).

Wealth, Poverty, and the Global World Order

The conquest of weak nations through slavery, colonialism and continuing economic exploitation through unfair trade practices has in certain respects, turned globalization into a curse rather than the blessing of the nations. Thus in the non-Western world the process of globalization has become a major cause of poverty and social injustice. Daniel Carroll, writing on the theme "The Challenge of Economic Globalization for Theology", draws attention to the need for wealthy nations to respond to the cries of the poor ones:

> There is a need to see and move close to that greater part of the world's population, its unfortunate masses, as human beings and as theologians. Their plight prods us to seek how globalization might acquire a kinder face as well as to expose its capacity for evil; they remind us that globalization is a finite creation by fallen creatures in a fallen world and that our ultimate hope lies beyond and above this economic system, in the kingdom of God's Son (Caroll 2006: 11).

We live in an integrated world in which projects, transactions, and economies are no longer bound tightly to national boundaries. For those in non-Western contexts these changes in economic arrangements usually under the orders of the Breton Woods institutions have led to socio-economic dislocations and the pauperization of the masses. In his address to the Board of Governors of the World Bank in 1972, Robert McNamara the Bank's President, is quoted as saying that governments exist to promote the welfare of all their citizens and not just that of a privileged few. He called on governments of developing countries then to reorient their development priorities in order to directly attack the personal poverty of

the most deprived 40% of their populations. Governments of developing nations, McNamara suggested, must give greater priority to establishing growth targets in terms of essential human needs. Some of which needs he named as: nutrition, housing, health, literacy and employment. This must be done, he notes, "even if it be at the cost of reduction in the pace of advance in certain narrow and highly privileged sectors whose benefits accrue to the few" (Geschiere, Meyer and Pels 2008: 27).

Robert McNamara did not place the onus to mitigate the effects of poverty entirely on the poor and underdeveloped nations whose peoples bear the brunt of it. He also called on the political leadership of the wealthy world to match the resolve and courage of developing nations "with a greater commitment to equity between their own affluent nations and the grossly disadvantaged developing nations" (Geschiere, Meyer, Pels 2008: 27). "All the great religions" McNamara noted, "teach the value of human life" and so he suggested that "we now have the power to create a decent life for all men and women" (Geschiere, Meyer and Pels 2008: 28).

In response, there has been a massive transition by the African churches from just building religious organizations to providing refuge for witches banished from their traditional communities, HIV AIDS counseling centers, the provision of water wells in deprived communities and other such schemes that are helping to mitigate the effects of poverty. The causes of poverty and access to wealth could be explained in diverse ways but it is striking that even the President of the World Bank, which to all intents and purposes is a secular organization, did recognize the importance of religion in the response to the effects of poverty. Christian organizations such as World Vision have stepped in to alleviate poverty in many parts of the world, especially those parts torn apart by war and strife.

Wealth, Poverty, and the Prosperity Gospel

The historic Christian churches have often been accused of preaching a gospel that equates poverty with spirituality. In response, contemporary Pentecostalism now preaches material success with health in particular as a sign of God's blessing and favor. This is what has come to be known as the Prosperity Gospel. According to this Prosperity Gospel also known as the Faith Gospel, "God has met all the needs of human beings in the suffering and death of Christ, and every Christian should now share the victory of Christ over sin, sickness and poverty" (Gifford 1998: 39). Some of its proponents teach that "no believer should be ill, no one should die of sickness, and anyone who drives a mere Chevrolet rather than a luxury car has not understood the gospel" (Gifford 1993: 147). Although its origins are thought to lie within North American televangelism, the prosperity gospel has also gained currency in the non-Western world where biting poverty has become endemic. For many who have embraced this new type of Pentecostalism, it understandably offers the

best hope of rising from the ash heaps of poverty even though in most cases, the promised paradise through "name-it-and-claim-it" prayers, positive confessions, and the principles of "sowing" tithes and offerings and reaping rewards in material goods remain an illusion.

The interpretation of one Ghanaian charismatic pastor of Genesis 1: 29-30 is that "God never planned for [us] or any of mankind to have sickness, fear inferiority, defeat, or failure" (Duncan-Williams 1990: 102). Rather "the Word of God is a tree of life that will produce riches, honor, promotion and joy" (Duncan-Williams 1990: 58). The world operates on certain spiritual laws, according these teachings and God, it is taught, has given us the choice "to implement the laws of poverty, or to implement God's spiritual laws of prosperity" (Duncan-Williams 1990: 72). In this new type of Christianity, "believers no longer retreat among themselves in order to maintain the purity of their beliefs and their moral rigor…Salvation is now resolutely this-worldly and the evidence of new life has become as much material as spiritual. Moral rigor and strict personal ethics have not been superseded, yet the notion of transformation has been broadened to include the possibility of material change in everyday life" (Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001 :7).

There is nothing wrong with having material things in this life. The Prosperity Gospel has partly caught on in African countries such as Africa because part of its worldview resonates with the understandings of religion in these contexts as a survival strategy. Indigenous African religion, as Blakely (1994: 17) and others point out, is often a means to an end. Religion aims at health, fertility, rain, protection, or relational harmony. There are a number of reasons why prosperity preaching may be problematic and two will suffice for our purposes. First, it leads to the exploitation of the poor by giving them the impression that they do not receive from God because they do not give enough. Second, the focus of the neo-Pentecostal prosperity gospel gives it a materialistic orientation to life which almost all religions caution, could turn human hearts away from that which is ultimate to them in terms of reality. It is a message that further marginalizes the poor, the vulnerable, and the weak because their deprived status does not reflect the material orientation of the message preached. This means the Prosperity Gospel demonizes the poor and turns poverty into a curse rather than see it as resulting from an unjust economic, social, political, and moral order.

Wealth, Poverty, Immigration, and Justice

The impoverishment of society, we have seen results not simply from lack of natural resources and a so called inability to claim prosperity but through socio-economic and political systems and arrangements that simply do not favor the weak. In much of Africa, poverty in the rural areas has led to mass migration to the urban areas and these movements have put further pressure on socio-economic resources leading to

increasing figures in crime and prostitution. Women and children suffer a great deal in the processes of urbanization as they are forced to ask young children to do petty trading at traffic crossings in urban Africa.

Wealth, poverty, religion, and immigration are also connected at the international level. Intolerable levels of poverty in the Third World have led to mass migrations of young people to Europe and North America in search of greener pastures and opportunities. Nearly impossible visa processes also mean that a majority of economic migrants are undocumented. The implications of these are that first, many of them spend their time undertaking menial jobs with very little remuneration from employers who exploit their undocumented status; second, illegal immigrants have no access to healthcare; and thirdly, they cannot seek justice for their conditions.

New religious communities have been formed in those contexts to help people deal with the problems. Compared to the kinds of private religious practices that North Americans are familiar with, non-Western religion is group-related and less individualistic. The lives of immigrant communities are full of uncertainties but community support through the churches helps them keep hope alive. In the precarious immigration environment in the Western world religion is for many immigrants an outstanding way of coping with difficult surroundings (Asamoah-Gyadu 2008: 63-64).

Conclusion

That God cares about poor people is a challenge that must be faced by Christian witness in Africa today. In spite of what contemporary prosperity preachers think, for example, Christianity does not make material wealth the ultimate aim of life. Indeed, to gain wealth wrongly including gaining it at the expense of the poor and weak is considered a grievous sin against God. The Bible further condemns irresponsibility in the use of wealth that shows itself in profligate expenditure and lack of concern for the plight of others. Thus in the context of both traditional religion and Christianity, the denial of social justice and the unwillingness to do anything about it are both unacceptable. Barclays concludes *in Ethics in a Permissive* Society that "no person or nation has a right to live in luxury while others live in poverty…The simple fact, platitudinous as it may sound, is that no man has the right to live like the rich man while Lazarus is at his gates" (Barclay 1971: 158).

The calling of the church in Africa as elsewhere is to be an instrument of intervention in lives that are all created in the image of the God who is righteous and who seeks social justice for all people. At the heart of poverty, we have noted, is the ethics of power—which may be evident in the wrong applications of culture, economic systems or the pursuit of materialism. Materialism, that is making pursuit of material things an end in itself, places things above the welfare of people—and so when those who have power over oth-

ers use it to benefit themselves, poverty results. The role of the church in these circumstances would be "to seek, judge, decipher the causes that engender suffering, seek their cultural roots and tentacles in the ideology of power and act in solidarity, protest and denunciation" (Kalu 2000:49).

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The Responsibilities of Implementing Justice: The Role of Muslims in History and Today

by John B. Taylor

With the traumatic fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258, the Abbasid caliphate with its unifying vision for the Islamic world came to an end. However the Islamic world had already in fact fallen apart with independent caliphates and dynasties. The Mongol invaders' destruction can be seen in terms of the formal end to aspirations for a unifying Arab political control and the opening of ways for Spanish and Egyptian dynasties to feel still more independent, and then for new dynasties to emerge in Turkey, Persia, the Indian sub-continent and Africa. Furthermore the definition of caliphate need not only to be measured in terms of central political power and empire but, as increasing numbers of thinkers and writers had been urging for several centuries, in terms of the responsibility, delegated from God to humanity, for moral authority and good government, for demonstration of spirituality, for resistance to injustice and for promotion of ethical values.

The theologian al-Ghazali had enjoyed the patronage of Nizam al-Mulk, the Persian Grand Vizier to the Saljuq sultans who were already making a Turkish challenge to the decadent rulers of Baghdad. Nizam al-Mulk[1] wrote between 1086 and 1091 a remarkable treatise "The Book of Government, or Rules for Kings"; while there is much fascinating detail about road systems and spy networks, the essential message is the primacy of justice and charitable generosity. Nizam al-Mulk tells the story of the great 'Abbasid caliph, Harun al-Rashid, who heard the complaint of a group of indigent people and, after comparing with his wife the dreams they had had about their answerability on the Day of Judgement, opened their public and private treasuries to be made over to the poor, not only in Baghdad, but across their empire. He also evoked the story of the pious caliph 'Umar, who heard the complaint of a poor woman, and himself prepared food for her two starving children.

Such pious counsels were not always heeded and social and distributive justice were as elusive in mediaeval Islam as in mediaeval Christendom; the same may be said for our contemporary societies, where widening income gaps between rich and poor nations and rich and poor citizens show how far we are from applying the principles of our inherited religions. While modern democracy, in various forms, has brought to many parts of the world progress in, for example, political representation, expansion of education and health infrastructures, promotion of human rights and reduction of poverty, it is a very incomplete picture as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals indicate.

The history of the mediaeval empires of Islam, as of its early history, is too often told essentially as a series of military conquests with little interest for the struggles for social justice; but the rich ethical literature, the epic poetry or the mystical leaders' inspiring preaching and exemplary lives provide a refrain of aspiration for justice on earth as well as at the Last Day. While many works carry flattering praise of the ruler who is their patron, it is his qualities of justice that are most significantly praised, and there is ample illustration of how administrative and fiscal justice should be achieved not only for Muslims but for *dhimmis*, the "protected" non-Muslims who often held high office or were left to administer their own communities.

The Mongols, despite their military prowess, are remembered for their pagan violence and injustice, whereas the succession of dynasties which began to exert authority in the following centuries, Turkish Ottomans, Indian Mughals or Persian Safavids, are remembered for their achievements in peaceful maintenance of order, in efficient and fair administration, and in magnificent cultural patronage, including educational, medical and social welfare institutions. They may not have attained the intellectual or cultural vigour of Abbasid Baghdad or of distant Spain but they provided remarkable political cohesion and economic stability over long periods when Europe was still experimenting with political and social models.

It was to be several more centuries before the Ottoman Empire lost its pan-Islamic pretensions and became "the sick man of Europe"[2]. Other Islamic empires pre-empted further territorial expansion and, thereby, the convenience of making the payment of soldiers and officials with land titles. Furthermore a combination of corrupt provincial administration and decadent court life could not resist the economic devaluation of the silver currency of the Ottomans, subsequent to the influx of silver from the New World. Social cohesion was undermined by resentment among minorities of a *dhimma* system which was perceived as discriminating against them rather than protecting them and by a *devshirme* system which "rewarded" conversion to Islam by offer of public office. There were numerous attempts during the 19th century to evolve towards a constitutional monarchy but the Second World War brought final defeat. Combined with the secular revolution of Kemal Atatürk, this led inexorably to the abolition of the caliphate in 1924.

It was in India that the largest Islamic empire was established by the Mughals from 1526 to 1858, building upon the powerful Delhi sultanates and upon the successors of the invader Timur. There were remarkable achievements in administrative organization as well as feats of exquisite artistic expression. However the empire slid into decline, despite the unifying vision of the Emperor Akbar, who died in 1605, with his "divine religion" conceived as an attempt to create a certain unity between Muslims and the large Hindu majority. Counter-offensives from Hindu rulers and the eventual stranglehold of the East India Company and the Brit-

ish Raj left many Indian Muslims with a sense of humiliation, disappointment and frustration, but also, in the following century, with aspirations to recreate Islamic states in the sub-continent[3].

The hallmark of Islamic empire was the ability to apply Islamic jurisprudence/*fiqh*. Obeying laws was more important than upholding doctrines in the construction of these societies. One may recall the cultural diversity provided by the development of different theological schools and mystical orders, but there was also a world-wide diversity in preferences for schools of jurisprudence. The Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi'i and Maliki schools/*madhahib* (all of them Sunnite), as well as the Shi'ite law schools, were expressions of a basic law/*shari'a*. They differed in the detailed dispensations of family law, affecting the status of women, inheritance, etc. and sometimes reflected cultural variations across the vast expanse of the Islamic world.

The formal prescriptions for the payment of the alms-tax of *zakat* was not widely applied, but freewill offerings and humanitarian assistance, usually at a lower percentage of disposable income, remained a feature of Islamic society. An ethic of distributive justice (including prohibition of usury) remained an ideal of Islamic societies. A huge system of charitable endowments/*awqaf* was developed and sometimes prevented the break up of large estates, sometimes protected the property rights of women, and frequently enriched religious, medical and educational institutions. Banking and money-lending, as in Europe, were often in the hands of religious minorities. The evidence and heritage of Islamic empires is thus often to be seen more in the social, commercial and cultural conditions than in a surviving political or legal framework. Absolute monarchy which might have been a corollary of some early forms of caliphate was modified by parallel power structures based on military control, trade, land ownership and, notably in the Shi'ite world, religious institutions.

The communal solidarity which is experienced and displayed in shared worship, effective almsgiving and during the month of fasting may be seen as one of the reasons why Islam spread so widely, often independently of military and imperial expansion. Demographically, the parts of the world where there are most Muslims living today are countries of Africa, South Asia and South East Asia, where Islam was mainly propagated by merchants and mystics whose personal example of self-discipline and social cohesion were probably more appealing than the coercive pressures exerted by armies and empires. In societies scarred by slavery or caste discrimination there was increasing admiration for the expressions of human dignity and equality to be seen in the simple, common practices of Islam: prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

The African and Asian expansion of Islam goes back to the earliest centuries, as some of the very first persecuted converts to Islam took refuge in Ethiopia, and then as armies swept across North Africa, initiating a process of Islamization of pagan tribes[4]. Armies and merchants were also reaching the Indian sub-continent within the first de-

cades of Islam. However, it was in the subsequent centuries that Islamic influence spread into West and East Africa and it was in the second millennium of Islam, usually well ahead of European trading and colonizing, that some of the greatest demographic gains were made for Islam in South East Asia, but also in China and deeper into Africa. The political expansion of Islam across the world was not centralized but can be measured by the spread of independent sultanates over many centuries across Africa and Asia long before European expansion and colonial control.

In the 19th century, within and beyond the Ottoman Empire, it was the reformers Jamal al-Din Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan who challenged their contemporaries to a renewal and reform of Islam, building on the past but also aspiring for just governance for the present and future. Jamal al-Din Afghani and Muhammad Abduh met in Paris in 1884 and organized a secret society to work for the unity and reform of Islam; their influential publications addressed external imperial threats but also inner weaknesses of decadence and corruption within Islam.

Although he had spent time in exile, often in Beirut, Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) concentrated on the reform of the great Egyptian university of Al-Azhar and of a modern legal code. He urged that the essential elements of Islam be safeguarded, using reason to select what is compatible with this in modern life, while recognizing that some matters of faith cannot be elucidated by reason; a just society, based on Islamic principles and reason, could unite the Muslim world, which had suffered from corrupt rulers and required reform from within. He approved and emulated the abolition of slavery in the West, but he warned against uncritical imitation and innovation. The door to *ijtihad* (responsible reasoning) must never be closed[5].

The expansion of Muslim populations across Asia and Africa, using pious example, good trading practice and education as their "invitation" to new converts, and frequently without establishing firm juridical or political control, belies the adage that Islam was simply spread by the sword and illustrates the wide varieties of cultural and social models, often reflected in the choice of a law school which is more or less accommodating to local '*ada* (custom). However, such Islamic societies, which constitute the vast demographic majority of the Islamic world compared with the Arab heartlands, did not easily resist more brutal mercantile and military colonization from the West, and sometimes from the East. The resultant frustration of feeling that a once proud, prosperous and innovative civilization has been exploited and humiliated has, for some people, sown seeds of desperation and violence; others have dreamed of reviving the caliphate, even if the institution which Kemal Atatürk dissolved had by then no more than symbolic significance.

For others the challenge includes honest recognition of past and present failures but also a determination to seek values and strength for political reform and social renewal. Instead of

being crippled by a sense of being victims of colonization and violence there has been growing over the last century a search for independent and self-reliant prosperity and dignity, but without falling prey to new temptations and idolatries of materialism and hedonism. Such visions and values, strengthened by principles of distributive justice or non-violent resolution of conflict, can be stimuli for self-respecting and self-critical Muslims and Christians, with others all over the world, to be more mutually supportive in building peace with justice, locally and internationally. Moral, cultural and even ritual expressions of Islam, which help to motivate political and economic reform and social justice, are far more powerful manifestations of Islamic solidarity than are caliphates or oil cartels.

The longing for dignity, peace and justice, is not nostalgia for mediaeval or pre-modern times. It was an inspiration for the 20th Century and is now for the 21st. With the demise of Ottoman power and with continuing colonial expansion, the fate of most Muslims across the world (but also of many Christians, Jews and others) was no less humiliating throughout the first half of the twentieth century. A new wave of self-confidence was emerging as Arab nationalism challenged the mandates which Europeans had offered themselves across the Middle East. The British relinquished Palestine in a still unresolved partition, but Egypt was still regarded by some as fair prey up to the 1956 Suez War; French withdrawal from Tunisia and Morocco was relatively orderly but Algeria became a bloodbath. Even independent countries like Saudi Arabia were heavily dependent on Western partners for their technology and economic development. Asia and Africa have countless analogous stories to tell, affecting far more Muslims. In the middle years of the century Muslims were increasingly involved in independence struggles throughout Asia and Africa.

The greatest shifts away from colonialism and imperialism towards independence for Muslims occurred in the sub-continent and in South East Asia. The choice of partitions into India and Pakistan and then into Pakistan and Bangladesh illustrates the strength of regional as well as religious identities. It should, however, never be forgotten that secular India still has one of the largest Muslim populations of the region[6]. Indonesia took a different route with a state founded on five principles of mutual tolerance, but this did not prevent periods of dictatorship and deepening polarization with hardline Muslims, notably in Aceh with its aspirations for a mini-Islamic-state and in the Moluccas where Muslim immigrants still fail to share society harmoniously with animist or Christian inhabitants (with faults and instances of violence on both sides). Still in Asia, the violent legacy of Spanish and American rule in Mindanao has continued with successive Filipino governments' military, economic and cultural policies, most of which have failed to win over the Moros' spirit of independence and Islamic identity, supported in recent decades by Libya, Malaysia and other Islamic states[7].

Probably the deepest trauma for the whole Islamic world, in the twentieth and now the twenty-first centuries, has not been the demise of the caliphate, but the apparent loss of Jerusalem in the partition of the British mandate by the United Nations into Israel and Palestine. The city was associated not only with Jewish and Christian history but also with the miraculous night journey of the Prophet Muhammad and his ascension into heaven from the "Further Mosque" there. Although the United Nations plan proposed a divided city and although there have been many calls, not least from the Vatican, for an international control of Jerusalem, it has fallen under Israeli control since the Six Day War in 1967. While Muslims (and Christians) have some controlled access to their holy places (which is more than can be said for Jews' access to theirs when the city was under Jordanian control) the social and political fabric of Muslim and Christian Arabs' lives has been dislocated by occupation, new settlements and finally a dividing wall.

The unresolved and sometimes scarcely recognized fate of displaced Palestinians over several generations and scattered across many countries remains a festering sore on the international conscience, as does the failure to support a secure homeland for the Jewish people after all that they suffered especially during the Holocaust. Attempts at violent solutions variously described as "terror gangs", "state terrorism" or "suicide bombing" have provoked, from whichever side they came, only further spirals of violence and resentment which have spilled out across the whole Muslim world.

The continuing Israel-Palestine conflict remains the greatest cause of resentment by Muslims all over the world against the West. This situation also pours the most fuel to ignite Islamophobia, as rocket attacks and suicide bombers destroy much of the sympathy that Palestinians had slowly earned, even as Israelis have forfeited sympathy by their policies of punishment and revenge. One of the greatest challenges for Muslims today is to avoid provoking Islamophobia in their neighbours, but also for Muslims to avoid imagining a generalized Islamophobia on every side.

The symbol of Jerusalem as the city of peace is far from being realized. The unanimity which is aroused among all Muslims who aspire to its return to Muslim control is essentially a shared frustration. Nor can true unanimity and common vision be achieved on other fronts. The Arab world, from Yemen to Morocco, had once developed even under Ottoman domination an increasingly strong sense of unity which included Muslims, Christians and Jews and matured into an Arab nationalism which then stood up to successive colonial or mandate holding governments. But narrow nationalisms quickly took over and the Arab world became fragmented. The second half of the twentieth century saw the influence of new ideologies ranging from secular socialism to revived pan-Islamism. The twenty first century has seen a new wave of longing for reform, social justice and democratic governance.

The growth of Shi'ite identity after the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran has had a further divisive impact, not least in Iraq, and has further embittered relations with much of the Western world; recent reformist bids for dialogue have been rebuffed or made implausible by newly- elected firebrand politicians. Iran has had the financial means to spread its influence throughout Asia and Africa and has even eclipsed Arab influence in some places. Unfortunately it has not been the Iranian heritage of spirituality that has been exported, the greater *jihad,* so much as a popular fanaticism of violent xenophobia and of lesser *jihad*.

One Muslim country, Turkey, emerged from discredited imperialism and military defeat at the beginning of the twentieth century, and took a new course in terms of secularism. Time has tempered the ruthlessly applied anti-clerical measures and anti-traditional regulations imposed by Kemal Atatürk, and the country has developed into an increasingly democratic and pluralist model, but there are still deep, unresolved problems, notably with the Kurdish minority and with denials of responsibility for the Armenian "genocide" a century ago. Prospects of entry into the European community are under active negotiation, despite some reticence on both sides.

Europe is already home to over 30 million Muslims, not only in the Balkans and Eastern European and Caucasian countries, but in the large immigrant and settled populations of Western Europe[8]. Where Muslims live as minorities, as they also do across the Americas and in Australia, they are still more likely to feel that they are direct victims of Islamophobia. This has contributed to making too many young people vulnerable to extremist web-sites and preachers; these prey on their isolation and frustration and in the worst instances recruit a few to plot and commit violent protests of flag-burning or desecration, and even indiscriminate or deliberate murders. Tragically Islam is too often associated in popular presentations with violence rather than with its true message of social justice and inter-racial solidarity.

Current events in Afghanistan[9] remind one that, even where imperialism has always failed to establish its hold, there can be new forms of ideological control and terror. Some of these were associated with atheistic Soviet invasion, and some with the Taliban's religious fanaticism which violated so many human rights once they had shaken off the American support that they had enjoyed in opposing the Soviet occupation of the 1980s. Western powers had also cultivated Saddam Hussein's Iraq as a bulwark against threats from Iran. These intractable problems, complicated if not created - and certainly far from solved - by Western interventions, are today being addressed by strategies of so-called "peace-keeping" and by attempts at very partial "democratization". These strategies are themselves often perceived as deeply compromised, by their original reliance on preemptive recourse to violence, and by implementation methods that have too often neglected or even trampled upon

human rights and failed to make a priority of establishing social justice for all, for women no less than for men, for young people no less than for elders.

The violent rhetoric and actions typified by the late Osama bin Laden have alarmed both the Muslim and the non-Muslim world, not least in his focus on violence rather than justice. Al-Qaeda was at first seen as a loosely-connected group of extremists who opposed the perceived decadence of Saudi monarchs as much as that of Western civilization, and who were sheltered by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Today Al-Qaeda shows a more tenacious and pervasive capacity to infiltrate both privileged and underprivileged youth across the Muslim world and to prey on their frustrations as well as on their ignorance of or blindness to Islamic teachings which reject aggressive violence and suicidal attacks.

The events of 9/11 and the attacks in Bali, Istanbul, Madrid, London and elsewhere, have often been claimed by and sometimes formally traced to Al-Qaeda; they have created revulsion among non-Muslims but also among Muslims throughout the world. Such attacks have served to strengthen Islamophobic suspicions and stereotypes about all Muslims. Some media, which give full voyeuristic coverage to gun-toting protests and horrible suicide bomb attacks, do not sufficiently report that such attacks have been condemned not only by Westerners but also by many Muslims and Arabs. However, anti-Islamic feelings are now as deeply engrained world-wide as are the resentments in the Islamic world about Westerners.

Muslims' phobias about the West have been fomented for many years in extremist Muslim circles. However they have been further strengthened as a result of the provocative scandals of Iraq, Lebanon or Gaza. Attitudes are hardened to the point of hatred when Muslims see the shocking pictures of the human rights violations of Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo Bay, or when they hear the condoning by some Western leaders of the so-called collateral damage caused by coalition forces in Iraq or by Israel's targeted assassinations and invasion of Lebanon.

The so called "war" on terrorism has led to erosion of civil liberties in many countries to a point where it seems that the terrorists paradoxically and cunningly exploit the situation, shifting attention away from their own inexcusable actions. Public opinion in the Muslim world is rightly preoccupied with the damage caused on all sides by terrorism but is distracted from addressing other issues such as social problems, excesses committed by police or military and other miscarriages of justice. Muslims may best succeed in re-establishing their self-respect and their credibility in the eyes of others when they are vigorously ensuring that Muslims do respect and protect the Islamic and universal principles of human rights for all.

Muslims' neighbours across the world will only exacerbate the situation when academics and journalists make generalized and polemical accusations of "Islamofascism"[10], or when freedom of expression is misused, whether by some authors, artists, or cartoonists,

to cause deliberate hurt rather than to provoke legitimate discussion. Harm can be done by politicians who make condescending or censorious statements, albeit with good intentions, as in the recent discussions on head-coverings and "multi-culturalism". Further damage and offence has been caused by some fire-brand Christian preachers and tele-evangelists who rival (and further provoke) the most rabid polemics of some *imams.*

The agenda of Christian-Muslim discourse should not be determined by manifestations of extremism or exclusivism. Nor can dialogue be conditional upon immediate reciprocity, especially when the demand may well sound hypocritical. For centuries the Islamic world was more hospitable to Christians and Jews than so called Christian Europe to Jews or Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad invited the Christians of Najran into the mosque at Medina and the caliph 'Umar allowed Christians to continue to worship in Jerusalem and Damascus.

The main purpose in looking back to learn from history both in terms of ideals, achievements and failures in securing social justice is to avoid repetition of errors or failures in the future. As Muslims ensure appropriate and relevant education and understanding about their own faith and culture, as well as explaining these to their neighbours, they may move beyond prejudices and animosities which paralyze too many people in their communities and too many of their neighbours. As Muslims, together with their neighbours, promote respect for all dimensions of human rights in personal and domestic life, as well as in communal life and global community, we may all hope to re-establish mutual respect and trust. By exploring and celebrating the spiritual and cultural riches of Islam, whether in a climate favourable to spirituality or in an often increasingly secular and hostile context, we may all help to re-establish peace and justice and the qualities of mercy and selfless service which bless both giver and recipient.

A house that is supported by pillars of faith and trust, of service to God and humanity, is a house that will stand firm against onslaughts of hatred and fear from outside or from within. In the struggle in the twenty first century against Islamophobia, whatever form that struggle takes, and in parallel struggles against all analogous xenophobia, it is to be hoped that Muslims will work with all people of good-will, and all people of good-will will work with Muslims, in order to build peace and justice for all.

Notes

1 For Nizam al-Mulk see Hubert Darke's translation and Reuben Levy's introduction in *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1960.

2 See Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford University Press, 1961. The complex political, social, economic and literary history of the Ottomans can be reviewed in the 40 pages under "Othmanli" in the New Edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* which gives extensive bibliographical references.

3 A convenient overview of Mughal achievements is Aziz Ahmad, *An Intellectual History of Islam in India,* University Press, Edinburgh, 1969; the Vidyajoti Institute of Religious Studies published *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries, Vol I, The Akbar Mission and Miscellaneous Studies,* Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1982, edited by Christian Troll, the author of *Sayyid Ahmad Khan, A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology,* New Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1978. A recent scholarly study by an author who has made great contributions to Christian-Muslim understanding is by William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and the Fall of Delhi, 1857*, Bloomsbury Press, London, 2006.

4 For a condensation of a series of his more detailed works on Islam in Africa see J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa,* Longmans, London, 1968; for a special case study of the emergence and wide influence of a clerical tradition in wide areas of West Africa see Lamin O. Sanneh, *The Jakhanke,* International African Institute, London, 1979.

5 See Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1962 for background to contemporary politics; comparisons between the Arab and Asian contexts are found in E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Islam in the Modern National State,*, Cambridge University Press, 1965.

6 A study written within the ferment of approaching independence was Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India,* Lahore, 1943; this work was elaborated in the same author's *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton University Press, 1957; many of his warnings about Islamic separatism were prophetic. The solidity and maturity of Indian Islam is well shown by his student Mushir al-Haq, *Islam in Secular India*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1972, writing before he was assassinated by extremists in Kashmir. But Pakistan also emerged from periods of narrow confessional nationalism and produced many scholars who wrestled self-critically with the challenges of becoming an Islamic State.

7 The early period of Indonesian independence is well described and documented in B.J.Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia,* Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1970. A saddening comparison of Spanish and American methods in the Philippines is found in Peter Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos 1899-1920*, Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, Quezon City, 1977.

8 Roger Ballard, "Islam and the Construction of Europe" in *Muslims in the Margin: Political Responses to the Presence of Islam in Western Europe*, edited by W.A.R Shahid and P.S. van Koninsveld, Kok Pharos, Kampen, 1996.

9 For nineteenth century background to Afghanistan's resistance to foreign (formerly mainly British and Russian, but now American / NATO led) intrigues and invasions see Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia*, Oxford University Press, 1990.

10 The pejorative term Islamofascism was used by the Marxist thinker Maxine Rodinson to condemn the Iranian revolution of 1978. It is now frequently (and often loosely) used in many contexts to describe totalitarian exploitation of Islamic identity. *Wikipaedia* has articles both approving and deploring the use of this term: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamofascism.

In Search of a Perfect World: The Jewish Quest for Justice

by Rabbi Jill Jacobs

The Jewish passion for justice begins with the insistence that a better world is possible. The Jewish Bible (the *Tanakh*) is bookended by two visions of perfection: the Garden of Eden of the Book of Genesis, and the vision of a rebuilt Jerusalem and the renewal of a divine covenant in the Book of Nehemiah.

In the Book of Genesis, God completes the process of creation by forming a human being, created in the image of God, and placing this human being in an earthly paradise, to "guard and tend it".

This paradise doesn't last long. In short order—within a day, according to rabbinic interpretations—Adam and Eve disobey the divine command and find themselves expelled from the Garden of Eden. From that point forward,

human beings inherit a system of laws and values intended to guide us toward the establishment of a perfected world.

Traditional Jewish interpretation of the Adam and Eve story does not necessarily see their sin as an entirely bad thing. Rather, the sin allows humanity to realize our potential as creations in the image of God. As reflections of God, we have the wisdom to make choices about what kind of world we create, and the power to become partners with God in completing the work of creation.

Much of the rest of the Bible, as well as the legal and narrative tradition that follows, concerns itself with how to go about creating a society reflected of the divine vision of a perfected world. This tradition is encapsulated in precise laws that outline every aspect of how employers and workers should behave toward one another; how to create a fair system of justice; how best to steward our financial resources; and how to protect the most vulnerable.

From these many laws, stories, and teachings, we can distill a few basic principles that guide the Jewish approach to justice:

Human beings are creations in the image of God.

Laws should protect the most vulnerable, and prevent the powerful from gaining too much power.

History imposes obligations on future generations.

The fate of Jews is intrinsically connected to the fate of all other people.

Individuals have the responsibility to partner in the work of creation.

In the next few pages, I will examine each of these principles, with attention both to the origin of the principle and to its application in Jewish communities of the past and present.

Human beings are creations in the image of God

Before creating the first human being, God sets the following intention: "Let us create humanity in our image, and in our likeness" (Genesis 1:26).[1] A few chapters later, the Torah introduces the first genealogy with the words, "This is the book of the generations of Adam; in the image of God, God created humanity" (Genesis 5:1).

The statement that human beings are creations in the divine image is not meant to be a mere metaphor. The Torah itself translates this principle into a law: Whoever sheds the blood of another human being, by a human hand shall that person's blood be shed; for in the image of God, God created humanity (Genesis 9:6). In connecting the prohibition of murder with the principle of creation in the divine image, the Torah emphasizes that the murder of any individual person constitutes a diminishment of the divine presence. In killing another person, the murderer effectively kills off a piece of God as well, and therefore is punished by having his or her own divine self wiped out. I should note here that even though the Torah allows for capital punishment for murder and a few other major crimes, the rabbis of the Talmud (codi-

fied around the seventh century CE) effectively legislated capital punishment out of existence. There is no historical evidence that Jewish communities ever practices capital punishment, and the Talmud and later legal codes make it virtually impossible to practice capital punishment.

Two rabbinic parables from around the second century CE offer further evidence about how we are to understand the concept of creation in the image of God. In the first of these statements, the rabbis ask, "When a human being suffers, what does the Divine Presence say?". The answer: "My head hurts; my arm hurts" (Mishnah Sanhedrin 6:5). That is to say that when a human being suffers physically, God suffers as well. Human beings are, then, an extension of the divine being. Per this text, any human suffering lessens the divine presence in the world, and anyone who causes such suffering diminishes this presence.

A second text from the same period offers perhaps an even more radical reading of the portrayal of human beings as creations in the image of God:

> Rabbi Meir used to say: What is the meaning of [the biblical statement] "One who is impaled is a curse against God?" (21:23). It is like the case of twin brothers, identical to one another. One ruled over the whole world, and the other took to highway robbery. After a while, the robber was caught, and was crucified on the cross. All passers by said: the king is on the cross, for this reason, the Torah says, "One who is impaled is a curse against God" (Tosefta *Sanhedrin* 9:7).

To understand this parable, we first need to know that the rabbis considered crucifixion to be the most humiliating form of execution. The king in this story does not suffer physical pain as a result of his brother's crucifixion. But he does suffer deep humiliation. Everyone in the kingdom believes, if only for a moment, that their king has been tried and hanged. This text depicts human beings not as an extension of God, but actually as a mirror image of God. Thus, any actions by or toward a human being can and should be perceived as actions by or toward God.

The concept of creation in the image of God does not only inform how we understand human suffering; this idea is also meant to be an empowering invitation to participate in the creation of the world. As creations in the divine image, human beings have the power—previously reserved only for God—to create, destroy, and determine the future of the world.

Jewish social justice starts with the belief that human beings are created in the divine image for two reasons: First, if we believe that human beings are reflections of or manifestations of God, then any injury to a human being takes on cosmic importance. Second, this belief enables potential advocates for justice to believe that human beings have both the responsibility and the power to create a better world.

Laws should protect the most vulnerable

The Torah takes dozens of opportunities to dictate special protections for

widows, orphans, strangers, and the poor. To give just a few examples: "If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, do not act toward them as a creditor; exact no interest from them. If you take your neighbor's garment in pledge, you must return it to him before the sun sets; it is his only clothing, the sole covering for his skin. In what else shall he sleep?" (Exodus 24-26)[2] "When you reap the harvest of your field, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the Lord am your God" (Leviticus 19:9-10).[3] "You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow countryman or a stranger in one of the communities of your land. You must pay him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets, for he is needy and urgently depends on it; else he will cry to the Lord against you and you will incur guilt" (Deuteronomy 24:14-15).[4]

God not only commands the people to care for the poor and the vulnerable, but even threatens divine retribution against those who disobey. For example: "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan. If you do mistreat them, I will heed their outcry as soon as they cry out to Me, and My anger shall blaze forth and I will put you to the sword, and your own wives shall become widows" (Exodus 22:20-21) "If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kinsmen in any of your settlements in the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman. Rather, you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs. . . [lest] he will cry out to the Lord against you, and you will incur guilt" (Deuteronomy 15:7-9).[5]

The message here is clear: Just as God, according to the Torah, heard the cries of the oppressed Israelite slaves and redeemed them, God will similarly respond to the cries of other oppressed peoples. Lest the newly-liberated people begin to see themselves as the rulers of the world, God warns them that oppressive behaviors will carry a price. Divine sympathy ultimately lies with the vulnerable, rather than with any religious or ethnic group.

In a few places, the legal tradition specifically prescribes different laws for people of different means. A Talmudic conversation about whether day laborers, hired as farm workers, can quit in the middle of the day comes to a somewhat surprising conclusion. One might think that once a person is hired for a full day of work, that s/he should not abdicate this responsibility mid-day. Instead, the rabbis conclude that, the majority of the time, workers have the right to quit whenever they want, and to collect wages for the time they have worked (Talmud, *Bava Kamma* 116b). The rationale for this law comes from the biblical verse, "For the children of Israel are my servants", to which the rabbis add the comment, "and not servants to servants". That is to say, a person should never fall into a posi-

tion that looks like enslavement to another human being. Therefore, workers preserve their right to quit, lest the relationship between them and their employer begin to resemble the relationship between a slave and master. In the words of Rabbi Shillem Warhaftig, one of the foremost scholars of Jewish labor law, "The purpose of [these laws] is to protect the weaker side in these relationships—the worker who is exposed to injustice and exploitation by the stronger party—the employer. We can say that the labor laws attempt to correct the socio-economic discrimination that exists in society against workers by instituting a legal discrimination against employers".[6]

There are some exceptions, though, to this general permission regarding quitting mid-day. If the crop is likely to spoil, and if no other workers are to be found, the worker must complete his or her service. That is, the law favors whichever party occupies the more vulnerable position. In the usual case, the low-wage day laborer holds less power, and therefore may quit when s/he likes. However, in a situation in which there is more work than available workers, and when the crop is on the verge of spoiling if not picked, the law grants additional provisions to the employer (Talmud, *Bava Metzia* 77a-b).

Given this attention to the needs of the poor, it may be surprising that Jewish law does not mandate equal distribution of wealth. Famously, the sabbatical year (observed in the land of Israel every seven years) includes a provision for canceling all debts. This practice constitutes a sort of national bankruptcy, in which anyone who has accumulated debt during the previous six years can start again at zero. It is important to note that this is not a redistribution of wealth—the person who owes money before the sabbatical year begins will still be poor after his or her debt is canceled. S/he will just not have a negative balance, and therefore will have a better chance of pulling him or herself out of poverty. Similarly, in the Jubilee year, any land that has been bought or sold during the preceding forty-nine years returns to its previous owner. This, too, does not amount to a fair redistribution of property, but only an adjustment to correct wild imbalances.

Jewish law, then, does not mandate equal distribution of wealth, nor does it forbid becoming wealthy. Rather, there is an acknowledgment that class differences will always exist, combined with an attempt to correct gross inequalities. Adherence to these laws would result in a highly-controlled capitalist system, in which the wealthy cannot oppress the poor in pursuit of riches, and in which absolute destitution disappears.

History imposes obligations on future generations

In the Torah, the Israelites are no sooner liberated from slavery than God presents them with a series of laws that seek to create a civil society. In this initial list, we find the commandment, "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:21). Just a few verses later, the Torah repeats, "you shall not oppress a stranger, for

you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 23:9). Later on, the Torah twice links a command to "love the stranger" with the experience of coming out of Egypt (Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 10:19).

In the biblical context, the stranger—*ger* in Hebrew—is a sojourner who has left his or her own land for some undefined reason, and now lives among the Jewish people. The biblical scholar, Jacob Milgrom writes:

> How does the *gēr* differ from other persons in Israelite society? He is neither the Israelite native (*'ezrāh*) nor the foreigner (*nokrî*). True, the *gēr* is also of foreign origin, but there the distinction ends. The foreigner is either a visiting merchant or a mercenary (2 Sam. 15:19); he is attached to his homeland and intends to return to it. The *gēr,* however, is a resident alien; he has uprooted himself (or has been uprooted) from his homeland and has taken permanent residence in the land of Israel. . . [7]

The *ger*, then, is a permanent stranger. This person does not have roots in the community where he or she now lives, and for whatever reason cannot or will not return to his or her place of origin. According to biblical law, this person is subject to some, but not all of the laws of the Jewish people among whom he or she lives.[8] As a result of his or her lack of family connections, the *ger* may find him or herself vulnerable to the whims of his or her more powerful neighbors. The Torah therefore reminds the Jewish people of their own experience as unprotected sojourners, and exhorts them to care for those in a similar position.

It is not a foregone conclusion that the experience of oppression should lead to kindness toward—let alone love for— the most vulnerable. It is more common to hear the opposite: a child who is abused at home, and takes out his anger on other children in the schoolyard; an adult neglected as a child who neglects her own children; a sex offender with a history of being sexually abused in his past. One might expect a people who had suffered through slavery for four hundred years to feel justified in taking their anger out on others. Instead, the Torah demands that the memory of oppression should lead to love and protection for strangers—even explicitly for Egyptians (Deuteronomy 23:7).

These laws emphasize the obligatory nature of history. Rather than being simply a description of what happened in the past, history sets a precedent for what should happen in the future. This concept has trickled down to contemporary justifications for Jewish involvement in social justice work. Many Jews who do social justice today explain their involvement by reference to the history of their families or to the Jewish community in general. For example, writing in the *Forward* Newspaper, Gideon Aranoff, CEO of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society comments, "We have a long history as a people of migration, and we know that generous and effective immigration policies have often made the difference between life and death, between grinding poverty and the opportunity for success" (May

27, 2011). Dr. Judith Rosenbaum argues that the legacy of Jewish women's activism should inspire today's activism: "Given our historical legacy as pioneering activists for reproductive rights, and our unique position as Jews to support these rights from a religious standpoint, the Jewish community should prioritize reproductive rights among the human rights we actively and vociferously promote".[9]

The fate of Jews is intrinsically connected to the fate of all other people

Several commentators on the Torah ask why the text does not begin with the first commandment given to the Jewish people—namely, "This month will be to you the first of months" (Exodus 12:2). This instruction, given to the Israelites as they leave Egypt, establishes a new timeline for the Jewish people. Rather than following the calendar of their oppressors, the people now establish their own framework for keeping track of time.

The commentators' question is really one about the nature of Torah. The particular question about where the document begins points at two bigger questions: First, "Is this a book of law or of narrative?" And second, "Is this a book about Jews, or about the world". If the Torah is a book of law, then it should begin with the first law, and not with a long series of stories. And, if the Torah is a book about the Jewish people, then it should begin with the first Jew—Abraham, and not with Adam, Eve, and the generations that follow.

The response, of course, is that the Torah is a book of "the generations of Adam," per the verse quoted earlier. That is, the Torah is about human beings, but with a particular focus on the Jewish people. From the beginning of their history, Jews acknowledge that the history and purpose of the Jewish people is deeply entwined with the history of every other people.

In many instances, concern about the other constitutes a means of self-protection. Famously, the prophet Jeremiah has God declare, "Seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper" (Jeremiah 29:7). This verse is often quoted as evidence of an altruistic concern for the cities in which Jews live. In context, though, these words also reflect a pragmatic understanding that only if the city as a whole prospers will Jews be able to live safely there. The history of anti-Semitism bears out this concern. In moments of economic collapse, Jews have often found themselves scapegoated, as the majority population takes out their anger against the minority group.

The traditional laws of *tzedakah* (care for the poor) specify the obligation to give monetary and other support to the non-Jewish poor, to bury non-Jews, and otherwise to extend the same care to non-Jews as to Jews. Often, justification for these instructions comes through the words "for the sake of peace". This phrase has alternately been read as an altruistic concern for the other, and a pragmatic worry that the majority population will harm the minority if the Jews refuse to support

poor members of the non-Jewish population.[10] Probably, both readings are equally valid. The deeply-held principle that all people are creations in the divine image obligates Jews to care for all people equally. At the same time, the very real fear of persecution by the majority population may, at many moments in history, be the stronger motivator.

The fact that discussions about the responsibility to non-Jews are so often couched in phrases like "for the sake of peace" points to a major question for contemporary Jewish social justice. Today, most Jewish social justice activists speak about the Jewish responsibility toward the world as a whole. However, most Jewish texts concerning *tzedakah* (support for the poor), relations between employers and employees, responsibilities of landlord and tenant, criminal justice, and other areas of civil law assume a homogeneous Jewish society in which both benefactor and recipient, employer and employee, landlord and tenant, and accused and judge are Jewish. Some choose to read this phenomenon as prescriptive. According to this view, Jewish civil laws only concern relationships among Jews and have no bearing on relationships between Jews and non-Jews. However, a more accurate reading might be to understand these texts simply as reflections of a reality in which Jews could only control civil law issues internal to the Jewish community, and in which Jews could only depend on one another for support. In most places where Jews have lived throughout history, the Jewish community could—at best—hope to be left alone by the majority population. At worst, the community would experience discrimination, forced conversion, persecution, and even mass murder. Today, in places where the Jewish community enjoys relative stability, the pragmatic concerns about safety may not apply. For this reason, many Jews who identify as social justice activists now read the relevant Jewish texts to speak about responsibility toward the world as a whole, and not simply toward other Jews.

Individuals have the responsibility to partner in the work of creation

According to the Bible, God creates human beings and charges them with being stewards of creation. This task entails both protecting the created world, and improving upon it. One rabbinic story offers a parable about a king who gives two servants wheat and flax for safekeeping. One carefully preserves the raw materials and returns these to the king in their natural form. The other transforms the wheat into bread and the flax into clothing and brings these to the king. Naturally, the king prefers the bread and clothing to the raw wheat and flax (*Eliyahu Zuta,* chapter 2).[11]

This responsibility for partnership in creation is best captured by the concept of *"tikkun olam"* "repairing the world," which has become a catchphrase of the Jewish social justice movement. Today, *tikkun olam* has come to refer to almost any efforts to create a better

world, whether through advocacy, legal change, or community service.

However, *tikkun olam* has a long and rich history that speaks to the expectation that human beings will not accept the world as we have found it.[12] In the Talmud, the concept of *tikkun olam* is invoked to justify changes in the law that result in a more just and functional society. For example, in one case, a Talmudic rabbi notices that the letter of the law sometimes leads to a situation in which people avoid lending money to one another. Realizing that the economic system will collapse if lending and borrowing stops (as the rest of the world learned in the 2009 economic collapse), he changes the law to encourage lending.[13]

In the Jewish mystical tradition, *tikkun olam* takes on cosmic proportions. According to the mystical beliefs developed by Isaac Luria and his circle in the sixteenth century, the world as we know it originated through a process of shattering the original divine perfection. The Lurianic myth depicts God creating the world by emanating aspects of the divine being through vessels designed for this purpose. When these vessels shattered, evil entered the world along with the divine sparks. The first human beings had the opportunity to repair the world, but instead sinned. This original sin led to an even more profound disruption both in the universe and in the human soul. According to these mystics, each generation of humanity inherits the responsibility of *tikkun* (fixing)—that is, returning the sparks to their origin by way of *mitzvot* (commandments), prayers, and other spiritual practices. Every positive act, these mystics believed, brings the cosmos a bit closer to perfection.

This mystical touch adds divine purpose to the Jewish mandate for social justice. The vision of *tikkun* offers hope that efforts to respect the dignity of every creation in the divine image, to protect the most vulnerable, to learn from the lessons of history, and to take responsibility for the well-being of every person will ultimately lead to a complete perfection of our world.

Notes

1 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

2 Translation Jewish Publication Society *Tanakh* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985)

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Rabbi Shillem Warhaftig, *Dinei Avodah b'Mishpat ha'Ivri* (The Laws of Labor in Jewish Law) vol. 1, p. 2

7 Jacob Milgrom "Reflections on the Biblical *GER*" *Leviticus 17-22* (New York: Doubleday, 2000) 1416-1417

8 The category of the *ger* is a biblical one. The Bible does not allow for conversion to become a Jew, and therefore leaves the *ger* in limbo—living among the Jews, and yet unable to become a Jew. Once the rabbis of the Talmud establish a process for conversion, they redefine the category of the biblical *ger*, as this category no longer makes sense once it becomes possible for non-Jews to convert to Judaism. While the principles regarding the treatment of the *ger* remain important for Jewish thought, there have not been actual people classified as *gerim* since at least the biblical period.

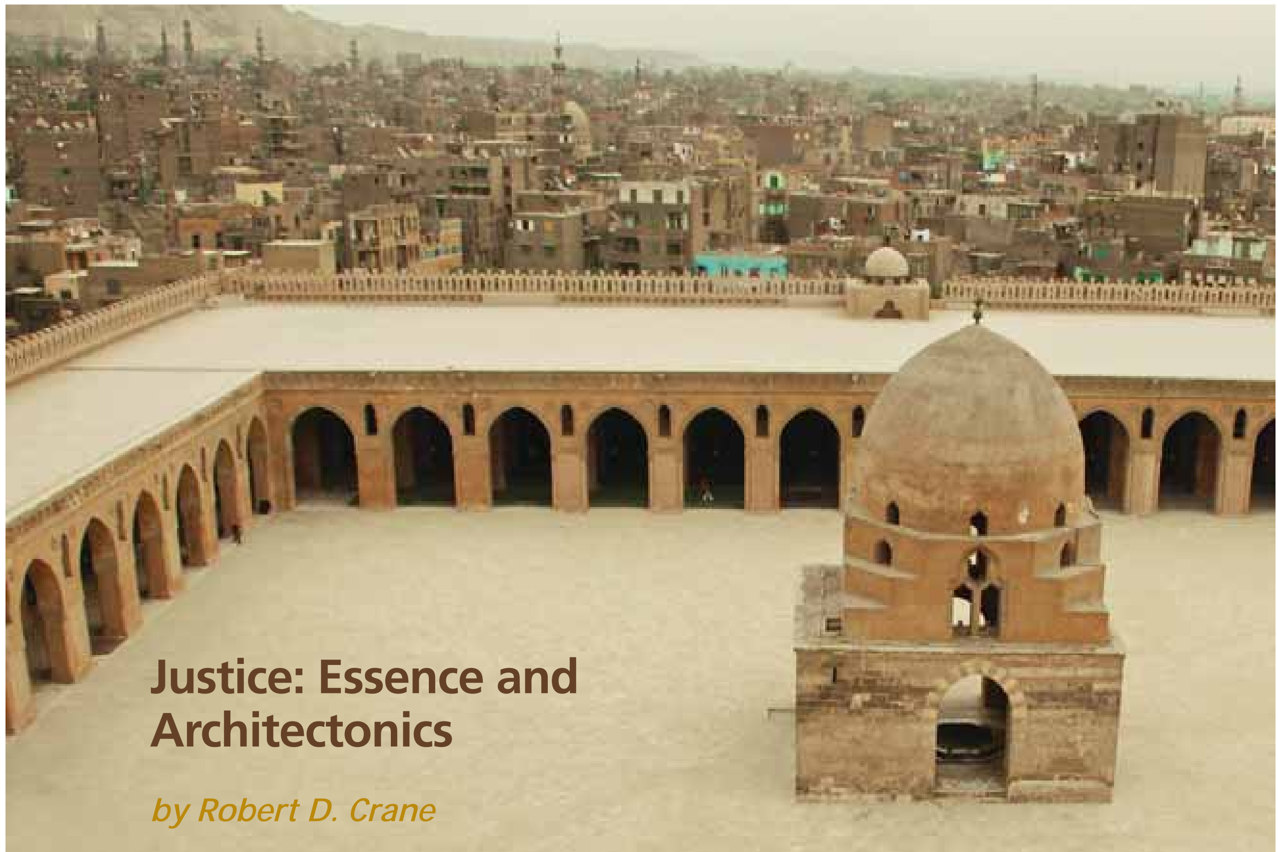
9 Dr. Judith Rosenbaum, "Judaism and Reproductive Rights" in Or N. Rose, Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, and Margie Klein, ed, *Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice.* Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights, 2008.

10 For a full discussion of this phrase, see Jonathan Crane, "*Mipnei Darkhei Shalom and Mipnei Eivah: Reasons to Do the Right and the Good*" (Hebrew Union College Senior Rabbinical Thesis, 2003).

11 This midrash is intended also as a parable about the need for human beings to interpret the Torah.

12 For a full discussion of the history of *tikkun olam*, see Rabbi Jill Jacobs, *There Shall Be No Needy: Pursuing Social Justice Through Jewish Law and Tradition* (Jewish Lights, 2009) 25-40.

13 *Mishnah Sh'vi'it* 10:3



Justice: Essence and Architectonics

by Robert D. Crane

I. Essence

A. Paradigm Management

As a professional long-range global forecaster for both governments and industry, my instincts are that the Arab Spring may have permanent significance by popularizing a long building paradigm shift from the increasingly bankrupt search for stability through material power as an end in itself toward an amorphous search for justice, if only because the old paradigm legitimized what increasingly has been felt to be a rapidly growing accumulation of injustices.

It is human nature to understand injustice, whether it consists of a political system that denies human dignity by denying both personal freedom and community self-determination, or is evident in an economic system that denies equal opportunity to own productive capital by basing credit on past wealth accumulation rather than on future profits from individual investment in the trillions of dollars of wealth that the age of technology and capital intensivity inevitably will produce, unless civilization collapses from the failure to actualize the potential for a fundamental paradigm shift.

More difficult than merely revolting against injustice, which is a negative phenomenon that can boomerang to devour its protagonists, is to develop or flesh out a paradigm of justice based on common understandings of its essence and practical applications, that is, the architectonics of translating higher purposes, goals, and objectives into programs of action.

This normative task of inducing higher norms or principles and then deducing from them the goals and objectives needed to implement the higher purposes requires recognition that there is such a thing as a higher essence of truth that must be perpetually sought. The alternative is for those with power to declare what is true as a means to acquire more power, together with all of its attendant injustices.

The highest level of expertise today to shape the future of the world may be known as paradigm management, because we are now in a new age where even the concept of a paradigm or intellectual prism for understanding reality is becoming universally understood not only in scientific thought as proposed by Thomas Kuhn almost half a century ago but in the "un-scientific" thought of human values.

In the age of modern management know-how, academicians in universities around the world have now begun consciously to recognize the power of paradigmatic thought to influence the media as the fourth branch of government and to shape the agendas of think-tanks as the fifth branch, other than the legislative, executive, and judicial, so that the well-funded think-tank community can shape public policy.

B. Transcending the Immanent

What is reality? Is there an essence in anything, or is everything relative to time and space? This issue has been the focus of philosophy, religion, and warfare since the days of the first caveman. Can one see and measure reality or is it beyond human understanding.

If one requires quantitative measurement to determine the limits of existence, then by definition nothing beyond the immanent can exist. If one is more open-minded, then the challenge becomes vastly greater, because man is not the master of the transcendent. He did not create it nor can he subjugate it to his own will.

The search for truth or the absolute is a task of hermeneutics. It can be experiential as in the sometimes problematic case of mystics, but it often starts at the beginning of the intellectual process by asserting basic premises, which then must validate themselves.

Perhaps the most profound premise was expressed in a statement by the leader of Western traditionalists, Russell Kirk, who published a shelf of books during the last half of the 20th century reviving the profoundly spiritual understandings of the Scottish Enlightenment that gave rise to the Great American Experiment in establishing and maintaining a republic as distinct from a democracy. In his book, *Rights and Duties,* he writes, "At the dawn of civilization, people unite in search of communion with a transcendent power, and from that religious community all the other aspects of a culture flow - including, and indeed especially, a civilization's laws"[1]

The premise is that the first human community was formed not for purposes of mere survival or to prosper by hunting animals more effectively but in response to the human spiritual impulse, which in Maslow's revision of

his original priorities of human drives comes before all the others.[2]

This basic premise about the individual as a member of a community and as its foundation was addressed by Pope Benedict XVI at the beginning of January, 2012, in his equivalent of a "state of the world" message. He expressed his concerns about the future of Christians in the Arab world as a result of the unpredictable nature of the Arab Spring. He noted that the initial enthusiasm following the revolutions had waned and that these countries were now in a state of uncertainty and transition.

He advised: "It is essential that co-operation between Christian communities and [Arab] governments favor progress along the path of justice, peace, and reconciliation, where respect is shown for members of all ethnic groups and all religions. … The best way to move forward is through the recognition of the inalienable dignity of each human person and of his or her fundamental rights. Respect for the person must be at the centre of institutions and laws".

On March 28th, 2012, during the first visit of a Roman Pontiff to Communist Cuba since John Paul II in 1998, Pope Benedict XVI spoke truth to power even more universally. "The truth", he exclaimed, "is a desire of the human person, the search for which always supposes the exercise of authentic freedom". He decried "those who wrongly interpret this search for truth, leading them to irrationality and fanaticism; they close themselves up in 'their truth', and try to impose on others".

Perhaps a still more profound teaching on the essence of truth, human nature, and justice was formulated by Hussein Nasr in his article, "The Sacred Foundations of Justice in Islam", which appeared in the December 2008 special issue of the popular journal, *Parabola,* devoted to the concept of justice in all of the world religions.

He writes, "To be fully human is to have an innate sense of justice and a yearning for justice. … We have the intuitive sense of putting things aright and in their appropriate place, of reestablishing a lost harmony and equilibrium, of remaining true to the nature of things, of giving each being its due." Professor Nasr continues, "If justice means to place everything in its place according to its nature and in following divine cosmic and human laws, then the Divine Nature is pure justice in the highest sense, being the One without any parts that could be out of place."

As all wise people in every religion attest, in the words of Professor Nasr, "In all traditional religious and sapiental traditions justice is associated with truth, while truth itself *is* reality in the metaphysical sense. Again, this fact is made clear in the double meaning of the Arabic term *al-haqq,* which means both truth and reality. To be just is to conform to the nature of the Real, and not to the transient and illusory. In a sense it might be said that injustice is related to ignorance of the truth and real nature of things, while the practice of justice is impossible without truth, which would enable us to know beings in their reality. And since that is not possible in this period of history to achieve by itself, revelations have been sent to guide man in the understanding of truth, of what is real, and of justice".

This spiritual premise of essence in respecting human responsibilities and the resulting human rights is shared equally and entirely by the greatest traditionalist thinkers in both Christianity and Islam, as well as in Judaism. They recognize a direct relationship of the person with God and therefore conceive of human rights as sacred, including the right of persons and communities to a government that is limited by the sovereignty of God.[3]

If one's personal relation of loving submission to God, which Muslims call *taqwa,* is the essence of higher religion, then the human right known as freedom of religion is axiomatic. The ultimate freedom is when one's only desire, as Thomas Merton once put it, is to become the person that one is, in other words, to become the person that God created one to be. This includes the freedom not to do so.

This spiritual premise and perspective or paradigm, which raises human rights to the sacred level as ultimate ends of existence, necessarily implies also the opposite. Any perspective that raises an ideology of power to the practical level of an ultimate end and rejects justice even as a concept in foreign policy inevitably will lead from cosmos to chaos.

C. The Common Destiny of America and Islam

The Founders of America recognized the different levels of reality and priority in the interdependence of the immanent and the transcendent by their use of Edmund Burke's tripartite emphasis on the interdependent pursuit of order, justice, and freedom. There can be no order without justice, and no justice without freedom, just as there can be no freedom without justice and no justice without order. They immortalized their mentor's system of thought in the Preamble to the American Constitution, which reflected the traditionalism of the minority Whig Party in the English Parliament. This was based on the spiritually informed Scottish enlightenment, which was the absolute opposite of the secularist French revolution and its twentieth-century progeny.

The Preamble reads as follows: "We, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish Justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." First comes justice as a universal goal and highest priority, then order, then prosperity, and finally, as a product of the first purposes, liberty.

As stated on the back dust-cover of my book, *Shaping the Future: Challenge and Response,* published in 1997, "We may accept the basic thesis that civilizations as the highest form of human self-identity will be increasingly important in the 'global village' during the century ahead. … All the revealed religions contain a universal paradigm of thought. Muslims call this Islam. It is based on affirmation that there is an ultimate reality of which man and the entire universe are merely an expression, that therefore every person is created with an innate awareness of ab-

solute truth and love, and that persons in community can and should develop from the various sources of divine revelation, a framework of moral law to secure peace through justice. Recognition of this paradigm is the essence of wisdom.

The demise of Communism was merely the first step in a profound transformation of the world. The demise of this atheistic movement reflected the rise of spiritual forces worldwide and the beginning of civilizational renewal in America so that the American people can provide the moral leadership in a new age, in cooperation with people of all religions everywhere in the world.

In a generic sense, some Muslims call this renewal the Islamization of America. This does not mean that all, or even most, or even necessarily a great many Americans, will accept a formal creed, but rather that in its metaphysical and moral essence America will be functionally Islamic by thinking and acting Islamically in promoting peace through justice in the world. Regardless of the terminology, this has been the American destiny since we were founded as one nation under God."

D. Collective Guilt versus Community Reconciliation

The opposite of love and forgiveness designed to bring out the best in everyone in the present in order to build a better future for everyone is the ascription of collective guilt to another community because of the sins of some of its members. This leads to war.

The Qur'an specifically condemns collective guilt as the origin of politically inspired *hiraba*, which is the closest Arabic equivalent to "terrorism." Collective guilt is used as the justification for blowing up Jewish babies and "driving the Jews into the sea." Of course, extremists among Jews would like to do the same to all Palestinians in response to the perceived collective guilt of the entire world for the *shoah* or holocaust. And extremist Christians would like to nuke Mecca now rather than later as retaliation against the incineration of thousands of innocent people in the towers of the World Trade Center. But one crime of collective guilt does not justify another in an unending chain of destruction.

In the universal principles of Islamic jurisprudence the right to life is next in importance to freedom of religion, so much so that both the Jewish and Islamic scriptures compare slaying another human being to killing all of humanity. As in the holocaust, quantity becomes somewhat irrelevant compared to the evil of the crime, which in the *shoah* was unprecedented in human history. Near the beginning of Surah al Ma'ida, 5:32, we read, "If anyone slays a human being – unless it be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading corruption on earth (*fasad fi al 'ardi*) – it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind."

Long before the beginning of international law in Europe, Islamic scholars developed a sophisticated set of criteria for the just war similar to that now

universally accepted at least in theory throughout the world. Islam does not preach pacifism because the Prophet Muhammad warned his sometimes reluctant followers that under certain conditions one must oppose aggressors with force, because otherwise not a single synagogue, church, or mosque would remain standing. A permanent state of war, as advocated by many Muslim extremists today, however, is forbidden.

The limits of just war are the same as the limits for the *jihad al asghar* or Lesser Jihad. The aims must be approved by legitimate authority and must be limited to the defense of human rights for oneself and others. The amount of force must be held to the minimum required for victory in order to avoid harm to non-combatants and property. "Fight in the cause of God [to defend justice] against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits, for God does not love transgressors" *Surah Baqara 2:190.* Furthermore the expected benefit from war must be greater than its inevitable harm. And all measures short of war must have been exhausted in the search for justice.

Among the measures short of war are the other two forms of jihad. These are the *jihad al akbar* or Greatest Jihad in an effort toward self-purification and the *jihad al kabir* or Great Jihad, which is the intellectual effort of a "third jihad" to understand and apply the first two, the *jihad al asghar* and the *jihad al akbar*, in pursuit of justice. The greatest jihad to purify oneself spiritually and the lesser jihad to defend the human rights of oneself and others are found explicitly only in the hadith or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, not in the Qur'an.

The great jihad, which was emphasized by the Grand Mufti of Syria, Samahatu Shaykh Ahmad Kuftaro, when I lived in his home for a month in 1995, is the only one mentioned specifically in the Qur'an (*Surah al Furqan 25:52*). It reads, *wa jahidhim bihi jihadan kabiran*, "strive with it (divine revelation) in a great jihad." This intellectual jihad is needed especially during times when one's soul and body are relatively secure. This is the struggle of *tajdid* or societal renewal in order to promote greater justice at all levels of human community, since injustice is the major cause of war.

Grand Mufti Shaykh Ahmad Kuftaro, who headed one of the Naqshbandi Sufi orders until his death at an advanced age, taught that, "The Great Jihad is to acquaint ourselves and others with our Lord, with His greatness, wisdom, justice, mercy, and love. It is to reflect all of His attributes, as we can conceive of them, in our own lives so that we become instruments of His purpose. And the Great Jihad is to acquaint ourselves and others with the models of Allah's attributes to be found in the Prophets and Messengers of Allah and in their common message in all its purity and fullness in the life of the Prophet Muhammad."[4]

Essential to reconciliation and cooperation on behalf of justice is the Qur'anic emphasis on the coherence of the universe to be found in the diversity that points to its Creator. If uniformity were the norm, there would be only

one standard tree, one standard cloud, and one uniform sunset all over the world. Furthermore, we are directed to see that all beings are created to form pairs and with a nature that seeks community. This communal nature applies also to religion.

Sur'ah al Ma'ida 5:48 reads thus: "To you have we given the scriptures, just as we have given scriptures to people before you. We have protected your scripture [the Qur'an] in its entirety. So, judge among people from what knowledge has come to you, and do not be carried over by your vain desires. Unto every one of you We have appointed a [different] governing system of law (*shir'ah*) and a [different] way of life (*minhaj*). If God had so willed, all humanity would have been a single community. God's plan is to test you in what each one of you has received [in both scriptures and inspiration]. So strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of all people is to God. God [alone] will tell you the truth about matters over which you dispute".

This is why the immediately preceding verse, 5:47, states: "Let, then, the followers of the Gospel judge in accordance with what God has revealed in it, for those who do not judge in the light of what God has bestowed from on high are truly the iniquitous". In other words unity in diversity can come only when the diverse paths are respected as legitimate in the plan of God, even though the most comprehensive expression of truth may be found in the Qur'an, after which Muslims believe that no further revelation is necessary.

II. Architectonics

Beyond the premises of thought and the essence of justice is the normative system of justice designed for application in accordance with its own essence. This system consists of three aspects, the general characteristics, the general norms, and the specifics of implementation through management by objectives.

A. Characteristics

The four essential characteristics of justice as developed in the Islamic system of normative law are a product of ijtihad as derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. Over a period of four centuries, the greatest and wisest Islamic scholars engaged in this intellectual effort to understand the meaning and coherence (*nazm*) of the Qur'an and of both the sound ahadith and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. They produced what they called the *shari'ah* as a set of principles or *maqasid* that spell out precisely the human rights that some skeptics have asserted do not exist in Islam. This higher framework guides the *'Usul al Fiqh,* "roots of the fiqh", which is a system of specific laws, rules, and regulations designed for enforcement, but valid only to the extent that they reflect and conform to the highest principles.

The system of normative law, known as the *shari'ah,* has been explored by literally hundreds of scholarly treatises in all languages especially since 9/11 and since the advent of the latest era of Islamophobia. Perhaps the world's leading scholar on this traditionalist or classical understanding of the Qur'an

and hadith is Professor Jasser Auda, who is the Deputy Director of the new Research Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics. He perceives the possibility and need to revive the best of the traditionalist or classical past of the Islamic civilization from its third through eighth centuries and to project it in the present through a universal prism of human responsibilities and rights to promote peace, prosperity, and freedom for future generations in all civilizations.

The *maqasid* or higher normative principles of the *shari'ah* are designed to both inform and guide the regulatory system or *fiqh,* which includes not only the set of punishments specifically mentioned in the Qur'an for deterrence and with strict evidentiary rules for application, but unfortunately also many man-made rules and punishments that have developed in various cultures to which Islam as a religion spread. For example, the contention of some Muslims that a husband may beat his wife, or that an adulterous should be stoned to death, or an enemy should have his throat slit have no basis in the Qur'an, hadith, Sunnah, or Sirah. Such punishments are strongly condemned by the great Islamic jurisprudential scholars, but remnants of such cultural practices survive even today.

The higher guidance that should guide the understanding and applicability of the *fiqh* was spelled out by two of the greatest Islamic scholars, Shamsuddin ibn al Qayyim (who died in 748 A.H., 1347 A.C.) and his mentor Imam Ahmad ibn Taymiyah (d. 728). Ibn Qayyim wrote, "The Islamic law is all about wisdom and achieving people's welfare in this life and the afterlife. It is all about justice, mercy, wisdom, and good. Thus anything that replaces justice with injustice, mercy with its opposite, common good with mischief, or wisdom with nonsense, is a ruling that does not belong to Islamic law".

The governing principles of the *shari'ah* have their own essence reflected in its four characteristics, as presented and developed in the present author's writings over a period of decades.[5]

The first characteristic is its holistic ontology embodied in the term *tawhid*, according to which the entire created order exists in unitary harmony. The things and forces we can observe are real, but their existence comes from God. They do not exist independently of His purpose.

The second premise is aesthetic. The nature of transcendent reality, and of all being, is Beauty, which precedes and is independent of cognition. The flower in the desert is beautiful even if no person sees it. Beauty, and necessarily therefore Islamic law, consists of unity, symmetry, harmony, depth of meaning, and breadth of applicability. The greatest beauty is the unitive principle of tawhid itself, because without it there could be no science and no human thought at all. This is of controlling importance in the shari'ah, because it means that the ideal system of law should be simple, symmetrical, deep, and comprehensive.

The third premise is epistemological. All knowledge is merely a derivative and an affirmation of the unitary harmony inherent in everything that

comes from God. All creation worships God because He is One. Every person is created with a need and a corresponding intuitive capability to seek and to know transcendent reality and to submit lovingly to God in thought and action. This epistemological premise reinforces the first two, because it indicates that Islamic law serves to give meaning to everything man can observe. And meaning comes from God, Who gives purpose to everything He has created.

The fourth and most easily understood premise of Islamic law is its normative or purposive, goal-oriented nature. In their "Universal Principles of Human Rights," Islamic scholars over the centuries have identified several irreducibly highest principles. These are known as the *maqasid* or purposes, as the *kulliyat* or universals, and as the *dururiyat* or essentials of justice.

B. Norms

This sub-section on the architectonics of justice advances the following eight irreducible principles, though the greatest scholars taught that the *maqasid* as a product of human reason may be understood as requiring either less or more. Both the higher architectonics and the lower ones are flexible. Their only limits are the extent to which they reflect the principles of human responsibilities and the corresponding human rights.

Respect for Divine Revelation

The first principle, known as *haqq al din,* is the duty to respect divine revelation Classical Islamic scholars interpret this to require freedom of religion which means that each human has the right freely to seek truth. This primary belief in divine revelation provides the framework for the following additional principles of human rights in Islam.

Respect for the Human Person and Life

The second principle, necessary to sustain existence, is the duty to respect the human person and the duty to respect life. This principle provides guidelines for what in modern parlance is called the doctrine of just war.

Respect for Family and Community

The next principle is the duty to respect the nuclear family and the community at every level all the way to the community of humankind as an important expression of the person. This principle teaches that the sovereignty of the person, subject to the ultimate sovereignty of God, comes prior to and is superior to any alleged ultimate sovereignty of the secular invention known as the State. This is the opposite of the Western international law created by past empires, which is based on the simple principle of "might makes right."

Respect for the Environment

This principle of the *Sunnat Allah* is known as *haqq al mahid* (from *wahada*) or respect for the physical environment. The issue of balance in the *maqsad* of *haqq al mahid* concerns the relative priorities in protecting the environment versus protecting the other essential purposes of human life. This is part of the broader problem of relating

the spiritual and the social as foci in a single paradigm of *tawhid.*

Respect for Economic Justice

This requires respect for the rights of private property in the means of production, which is a universal human right of every human being.

Respect for Political Justice

This principle requires respect for self-determination of both persons and communities through political freedom, including the concept that economic democracy is a precondition for the political democracy of representative government.

Respect for Human Dignity

This principle states that the most important requirement for individual human dignity is gender equity. In traditional Islamic thought, freedom and equality are not ultimate ends but essential means to pursue the higher purposes inherent in the divine design of the Creator for every person.

Respect for Knowledge

The last universal or essential purpose at the root of Islamic jurisprudence is respect for knowledge. This can be sustained only by observance of the first seven principles and also is essential to each of them. The second-order principles of this *maqsad* are freedom of thought, press, and assembly so that all persons can fulfill their purpose to seek knowledge wherever they can find it.

This framework of Islamic principles for human rights is at the very core of Islam as a religion. Fortunately, this paradigm of law in its broadest sense of moral theology is now being revived by courageous Muslims determined to fill the intellectual gap that has weakened the Muslim *ummah* for more than six hundred years. This renewed effort for a spiritual renaissance in all faiths can transform the world for the good of all humankind.

C. Management by Objectives

The normative principles of the *shari'ah* lend themselves well to representation in the form of a chart or charts that show the four levels of specificity in spelling out the principles of justice. These four levels are:

Primary *Maqasid* or Purposes: The highest level of generalization consists of purposive principles that cannot be reduced to still higher principles other than justice as the highest principle. These maqasid spell out the meaning of justice by providing paradigms of thought to identify still more specific sub-paradigms.

Secondary *Hajjiyat* or Goals: The next highest level of generalizations consists of a secondary level of goals that spell out the meaning of their parent principle and, in turn, provide a more specific paradigm for breaking each objective down into still greater specificity.

Tertiary *Tahsiniyat* or Objectives: The third level of specificity consists of objectives that spell out the meaning of their parent goal and provide guidelines for specific programs of action. The *tahsiniyyat* come from the term *hasan,* which means good and is often trans-

lated as "embellishments". Another less common but more accurate term is *takmiliyat,* which comes from the term *kamil* or perfect and means to enhance the higher purposes by perfecting them in application.

Fourth-Level *'Amaliyat* or Programs of Action: The lowest level of guidance in spelling out the meaning of justice and applying it in action is known as '*amaliyat* from the word *'aml* or action (plural *'amal*). Each such program, in turn, may be broken down into individual projects.

Although the *maqasid al shari'ah* originated as a framework of purpose for use in developing jurisprudence for legal decision-making, they serve also as guidance for good governance and public policy. This broader purpose results because the purpose of the law in the Islamic view of life is to encourage

Chart 1

Universal Principles of Human Rights and Responsibilities

1. **Respect for Divine Revelation**

PRIMARY (*Maqasid*- Purposes)	SECONDARY (*Hajjiyat*- Goals)	TERTIARY (*Tahsiniyyat* - Objectives)	ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS (A'mal)
1. **Respect for Divine Revelation** (*Haqq al Din*)	**Belief in One God**	**Islam** **Arkan al Islam ………… →** **(Pillars of Islam)……….. →** Submission to the Will of God, the first level of faith.	**The Five Pillars of Faith:**
			- Declaration of Faith (*Shahadatain*)
			- Prayer (*Salah*)
			- Charity (*Zakat*)
			- Fasting (*Saum*)
			- Pilgrimage (*Hajj*)
		Iman **Arkan al Iman ('Aqida)…→** **(Creedal Principles of Faith)** Practicing pure faith with sincerity in one's heart thus achieving the second level of faith.	**'*Aqida* or Belief in:**
			Existence of God *(Tawhid)*
			Angels *(Mala'ika)*
			Divine Scriptures *(Kutub)*
			All the Prophets *(Nabi, Rusul)*
			Day of Judgment *(Qiyama)*
			Absolute Power of God *(Qadr)* *See note on Shi'a Aqida.*
			Other Elements of Iman:
			- Loving Awe of God *(Taqwa)*
			- Love of God *(Hubb)*
			- Reliance on God *(Tawakkul)*
(*continued…*)		**Ihsan** Achieving perfection in worship based on one's personal awareness of God's presence, love, and compassion. The Prophet Muhammad said, "[Ihsan is] to worship God as though you see Him, and if you cannot see Him, then indeed He sees you". (Hadith of Gabriel.)	

Chart 1 (… continued)
Universal Principles of Human Rights and Responsibilities

1. **Respect for Divine Revelation**

PRIMARY (*Maqasid*- Purposes)	SECONDARY *(Hajjiyat*- Goals*)*	TERTIARY *(Tahsiniyyat - Objectives)*	ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS *(A'mal)*
(...continued) 1. **Respect for Divine Revelation** *(Haqq al Din)*	**Freedom of Religion**	Spiritual Purification (*jihad al akbar*)	Personal relationship with God (*Taqwa* and *Hubb*)
			Repentance and forgiveness (*tauba* and *ghafr or maghfirah*)
			Kindness and softness with others (*haina wa laina)*
			Peaceful reconciliation
			Good deeds (*a'mal al salihat*)
		Unity in Diversity	Equality in human dignity
			Universal conditions for salvation
			Equality of prophets
			Diversity of legal systems: *shar'*: universal principles of normative law (*maqasid*) for all communities; *shar'ah / minhaj*: individual communities, e.g., separation of church and state; and *shari'ah*: for Muslims only, including specific punishments

creative thought designed to identify and solve problems and to educate the citizens of a polity in pursuing good order, general prosperity, and freedom through responsible self-determination.[6]

If the law has to be enforced then the law has failed in its purpose. This contrasts with the positivist law taught in Western secular law schools, whereby law exists only to the extent that it is enforced.

The following two charts are the first of eight that illustrate a set of eight fundamental norms in an Islamic system of management by objectives as presented in Chapter 5, "The Shari'ah: Universal Principles of Human Responsibilities and Rights", of the two-volume, 800-page textbook by Muhammad Ali Chaudry and the author, entitled *Islam and Muslims.* This is scheduled to be published in 2012 by The Center for Understanding Islam, of which the authors are respectively the President and the Chairman, and the Qatar Foundation, where the present author is Director of the new Center for the Study of Contemporary Muslim Societies.

A chapter is devoted to each of the eight in the author's book, *Rehabilitating the Role of Religion in the Modern World: Laying a New Foundation on the Interfaith Harmony of Normative and Compassionate Justice,* scheduled for publication in 2013, but first made available electronically in May and June, 2009, in www.theamericanmuslim.org.

Chart 2
Universal Principles of Human Rights and Responsibilities
2. Respect for the Human Person

PRIMARY (*Maqasid*- Purposes)	SECONDARY (*Hajjiyat*- Goals)	TERTIARY (*Tahsiniyyat* - Objectives)	ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIONS (*A'mal*)
2. Respect for the Human Person (*Haqq al Nafs*)	Respect for the Human Soul (*Haqq al Nafs and Haqq al Ruh*)	Personal spiritual renewal	
	Peace Making and Peace Keeping	Societal renewal (*tajdid*)	
		Peace through justice (*jihad al kabir*)	
		Conflict resolution	
	Respect for Life (*Haqq al Haya*)	Doctrine of the just war (limits on the use of violence to protect the human rights of self and others)	Just Cause and Intent
			Violence only in self defense
			Legitimate authority
			Last resort (attempts at conflict resolution must precede use of violence)
			Probability of success (realistic assessment of the threat and consequences)
			Benefits must exceed the harm
			Minimize civilian casualties
			Cessation of hostilities on offer of peace
		Protection and return of prisoners of war	
		Avoidance of vengeance after war	
	Duty to Protect the Unborn	Recognizing that God provides for all. Recognizing the rights of the unborn. Stressing the role of marriage and family	Abstinence education to prevent pregnancy outside of wedlock
			Guardianship

These eight are generally recognized by Islamic scholars in discussing the role of the shari'ah in the world today, but they derive also from the author's lifelong specialization on comparative jurisprudence and the role of justice in the past and present of the world's religions and civilizations, including his J.D. dissertation at Harvard Law School in 1959 on comparative legal systems.

The above charts give a bare outline of the universal principles of normative Islamic jurisprudence, known as the *maqasid al shari'ah.* The ethical framework of the guiding principles in Islam is the good of the community, known

as *maslaha mursala*. These principles originate from human reasoning in the form of induction from what Islamic jurisprudents consider to be the three sources of knowledge, often known as the *'usul al fiqh* or roots of legal reasoning. These are *haqq al yaqin*, which is the sum of all the divine revelation to all of the prophets throughout human history, *'ain al yaqin,* which is scientific observation of the material world, and *'ilm al yaqin,* which is the use of human reason to understand the first two sources.

An even higher paradigm of normative law beyond the maqasid al shari'ah is sometimes known as metalaw. This is based on reversing the Golden Rule, which is found in all the World Religions based in each case on an original context of intra-civilizational rather than inter-civilizational interaction. This original Golden Rule reads, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Under the moral guidelines of a still higher metalaw, the Golden Rule might read, "Do unto others as they would have done unto themselves". This could provide guidelines for new disciplines in the study of peace, prosperity, and freedom through faith-based, compassionate justice.[7]

In the face of conflicting forces best illustrated by the Arab Spring and similar "springs" throughout the world, this framework could serve as a blueprint for actions required to establish just societies, provided that there is real desire to do so as crystallized in the following parable of the two wolves.

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about the battle that goes on inside people. He explained, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all".

"One is evil - it is anger, envy, jealously, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego".

The other comes from God - it is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith".

The grandson thought about this for a minute and then asked his grandfather: **Which wolf wins?"**

The old Cherokee replied, **"The one you feed".**

Notes

1 Russell Kirk, *Rights and Duties: Reflections on Our Conservative Constitution* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 147-148, quoted from Robert D. Crane, *Metalaw: An Islamic Policy Paradigm",* Islamic Institute for Strategic Studies, Washington, Virginia, May 2000, pp. 23 and 49.

2 See Robert D. Crane, "Maslow and the Fourth Jihad", www.theamericanmuslim.org. 09/30/06.

3 This comparison of classical Christian thought and classical Islamic thought is treated at some length in the author's book, *The Natural Law of Compassionate Justice: An Islamic Perspective* (Fort Washington, MD, Scholars Chair, 2010, 224 pages), Chapter 1, "The Universal Spiritual Paradigm of Natural Law", pp.15-42.

4 Those who might be bothered by this hagiographical statement are referred to the author's book, *Islam: What It Is and What It Is Not,* published jointly in 2012 by The Center for Understanding Islam and the Qatar Foundation as a reprint from the author's book, written in 2007 and published in January 2010 by Scholars Chair, entitled *The Transcendent Law of Compassionate Justice: An Islamic Perspective,* as well as to the two-volume, 800-page textbook, *Islam and Muslims,* prepared by the President of the Center for Understanding Islam, Muhammad Ali Chaudry, and the author as its Chairman, and also published jointly with the Qatar Foundation.

5 See Robert D. Crane, Part III, "The Search for Justice and the Quest for Virtue: The Two Basics of Islamic Law", in *The Sun Is Rising in the West,* Muzaffar Haleem and Betty (Batul) Bowman, Amana, Beltsville, Maryland, 1999, 317 pages, pp. 145-166.

6 See the author's book prepared for the U.S. Department of the Treasury when he was Deputy Director of the U.S. Saudi Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation, entitled *Planning the Future of Saudi Arabia: A Model for Achieving National Priorities,* published in 1977 by CBS/Praeger. This was used as his basis for preparing five year plans also for Jordan in 1976 and for Bahrain in 1977.

7 See Robert D. Crane, "Metalaw: The Ultimate Challenge," in *Humanomics: The International Journal of Systems and Ethics,* vol. 25, no. 5, 2010, which was shortened for electronic publication in www.theamericanmuslim.org. December 20, 2009.

The Crucible of Faith: Justice and Liberation in the Work of Engelbert Mveng

by Akintunde E. Akinade

> For when language is seriously interfered with, when it is disjoined from truth… horrors can descend again on mankind.
>
> Chinua Achebe

> The church's role as the voice of the voiceless is extremely dangerous… It has made many of us martyrs.
>
> Fr. Prosper Abega

> We cannot become the inheritors or administrators of a Christianity that simply continues on its way, passing by the victim lying in the ditch (Luke 10:30-32). How can a *credible* Christianity be created while so many factors are tightening a noose around Africa's neck? This is a decisive question.
>
> Jean-Marc Éla

Introduction: Speaking Truth to Power

This paper examines the thought of Engelbert Mveng, a Cameroonian artist, philosopher, historian, theologian, poet, an ordained Catholic priest, and the founder of the Movement of African Catholic Intellectuals (M.I.C.A.). He led a vigorous fight for the liberation of every day people, was labeled as an irredentist by many powerful forces in the country and was brutally murdered in his own home after celebrating mass in 1995. It seems to me that his theological vocation provides a useful lens for understanding the relevance of the Christian faith within the African continent. Among African church leaders, no one has done this with greater authority of historical and theological profundity as Mveng. He was an African Christian intellectual who unrelentingly brought his largeness of mind and soul to bear on the African condition and predicament. His writings required that we get beneath the surface of scholarship---- its facile and often superficial assumptions--- and engage the various human responses to the unsavoury circumstances that people experience in many countries in Africa. He brought a particularly vigorous style to his critical reflections on the relevance of the Christian faith in Africa. He was an African Christian intellectual who wrestled with the meaning of gospel within the African context. His academic training in the Congo, Louvain, Paris, and Lyons equipped him with the necessary tools to engage issues that were relevant to theological discourse in Africa.

Mveng's advocacy for a prophetic Christianity in Africa challenges the form of Christianity that is uncommitted to the plight of the poor and supports the status quo. His vision underscores a form of Christianity that affirms the yearnings of the people to breathe free in the midst of oppression, injustice, and terror. Africa's social, cultural, economic, and political realities demand a prophetic paradigm that confronts the forces of death that perpetuate oppression. Uncompromising and unrelenting in his call for an *ecclesia reformada,* Mveng's theology takes into consideration the circumstances and challenges of the African context. It is also a theology that is oriented towards a future that is replete with positive transformations in church and society.

The Theology of the People

Africa's theology of liberation takes the circumstances and conditions of African people seriously. It is a theological exercise that stems from praxis and critical engagement with the conditions that put people in bondage and oppression. The experience of the people become the *fons et origo* (source and origin) for theological reflection and engagement. This theological orientation is deeply rooted in the ghettos of human experience and condition. It is sustained by faith and by the constant yearning of the people to experience some of the aspects of the abundant life. Jesus' prophetic proclamations were not mere rhetorics deployed to pacify the political elites of his time; rather, they were courageous affirmations of the liberative power of the Gospel. This understanding of the Gospel is a constant motif in the works of Mveng. His understanding of the themes of justice and contextual application provide appropriate perspectives for understanding the essence of the Christian faith within the African context. According to him, African theology

> "expresses the faith and hope of our oppressed people. It illustrates the experience of the living Christian communities in Africa. It is therefore not an academic theology, even if some of its promoters move in university circles."[1]

When people raise eyebrows about the linguistic medium of this theological engagement, Mveng responded that

> "When the objection is made that this theology is not written in native languages, we reply that it is lived in native languages, in the villages and in the neighbourhoods, before being translated into foreign languages by its own rightful heirs, the African theologians."[2]

This radical epistemological break with the traditional method of doing theology resonates with theologians from the third world. These theologians place a lot of emphasis on their close connections with the "grassroots ecclesial communities." In the words of the Brazilian theologian, Leonardo Boff,

> "Liberation theology had defined another place in which theology is 'done': not so much the university or institute and more the community and in service to the community… Those who do this theology are not so much individual theologians as the communities who bring their problems, solutions, actions and thinking to be taken up and worked on by theologians."[3]

The theology of the people affirms the dignity of African people in the midst of anthropological annihilation which Mveng described as more frightening than anthropological impoverishment. Anthropological poverty "consists in despoiling human beings not only of what they have, but everything that constitutes their being and essence ---- their identity, history, ethnic roots, language, culture, faith, creativity, dignity, pride, ambitions, right to speak."[4] The African Report further echoed some of the sentiments in this analysis:

> "The social underdevelopment of Africa represents a fundamental aspect of the anthropological pauperization of the African person. If we define pauperization as the fact of becoming poor, namely being deprived of all that we have acquired, all that we are and all that we can do, we shall recognize that Africa is subjugated to structures which result in complete pauperization: political, economic, and social. When it is not a matter of being deprived of all that we own, but rather of all that we are--- our dignity, our rights, our hopes, and our plans--- then pauperization becomes anthropological. It then affects religious and cultural life at its very roots."[5]

The Currents of Contextualization

The theme of contextualization is a very useful heuristic tool for understanding the strident stirrings of theological autonomy and creativity that features prominently in the work of Mveng. Contextualization takes seriously the environment and context in which the Gospel is appropriated and interpreted. In the words of Regunta Yesurathnam:

> "The term contextualization includes all that is implied in indigenization or inculturation, but also seeks also to include the realities of contemporary secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice…. Contextualization both extends and corrects the older terminology. While indigenization tends to focus on the purely cultural dimension of human experience, contextualization broadens the understanding of culture to include social, political, and economic questions. In this way, culture is understood in more dynamic and flexible ways, and is seen not as closed and self-contained, but as open and able to be enriched by an encounter with other cultures and movements."[6]

By focusing on contextualization, Mveng presented a bold critic of western arrogance and imperialism even in theological matters. He makes the claim that the West cannot speak for others when it comes to issues of faith. Mveng urged African theologians to move away from the tyranny of dogma and embrace a theological construct that speaks to the real experience of the people. In his reflection on the future of African theology, Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, a Jesuit theologian from Nigeria concluded that "the challenge facing theology lies in the extent and manner in which it speaks authentically and credibly to our experience today… we must continue to interpret, deepen, and appropriate for our day and age the meaning and implications of the word that became flesh and lived among us."[7] Theologians must avoid the false dichotomy between theory and practice, reflection and action, word and praxis. By thinking about the context of faith, African theologians can re-define the meaning of faith, orthodoxy, and expand the framework of theological thinking. It is a task that calls for diligent discernment, rigorous reflection, meaningful engagement, and careful contemplation. For Mveng, theology is thought and speech about God that is generated out of historical and cultural situations. The discourse about God in Africa cannot be separated from the

African historical experience and the advocacy for justice and liberation.

Mveng cautioned Western theologians to be wary of the temptation to speak for other people. The notion that theology is always contextual cannot be treated with disdain by theologians. In fact, when theology is divorced and disengaged from human experience and context, it becomes utterly deceptive and vacuous. Paul Ricouer has instructed us that "there is no general hermeneutics, no universal canon of exegesis, but only disparate and opposed theories concerning the rules of interpretation."[8] The need to do theology from the underside of history led to the formation of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) and the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians. EATWOT is an association of men and women committed with the struggle for the liberation of Third World peoples by promoting new paradigms of theology for social justice and peace. EATWOT members take the Third World context seriously. They offer an alternative voice for the marginalized and exploited people of the world. They also stress the active agency of the colonized and the oppressed as historical actors in the formation of their own religious, social, and political structures.

Mveng rejected the notion of a universal theology. He disapproved of theological arguments that pretend to give monopoly to Western intellectual perspectives in Christian theology. For him, universal theology is a product of Western fantasies and simply represents the penchant of the West to control and manipulate academic discourse.

Beyond Empire: Christianity in Post-Colonial Africa

Mveng's theological reflection provide a critical perspective for understanding the role of the gospel in relation to the discourse on liberation and justice in Africa. Through his theology of holistic engagement, he was able to identify and address issues that are germane to the African context. He was a Christian intellectual who consistently wrestled with the African existential condition and crafted an African theology of liberation. My thesis is that Mveng's theology of liberation provides more comprehensive perspective for understanding the depths of the struggle for liberation in Africa. In conjunction with other theologians like Jean Marc Éla, Eboussi Boulaga, and Meinrad Hebga from Cameroon, he made a compelling case for the relevance of the Christian message within the African context. His perspective on the quest for anthropological dignity resonates with theologians from South Africa such as Simon Maimela, Takatso Mofokeng, Desmond Tutu, Itulemeng Mosala, Bonganjalo Goba, Allan Boesak, and Manas Buthelezi. Mveng offered a caustic critique of theologies and Christian practices that legitimize social systems of oppression and constructed suffering and argued for a praxis-oriented African theology that challenges the status quo. African theologians within the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians have affirmed that:

> "Among the Third World continents, Africa appears essentially as a land of domination and exploitation, quar-

> tered, torn apart, divided, atomized, trampled under foot. It is the continent where frequently the people have no dignity, no rights, and no hope. These challenges are becoming more intolerable considering that natural catastrophes—which are desperately repeated—are added to evils caused by human mischief and injustice."[9]

By drawing his inspiration from a biblical theological vision which portrays God as the liberator of the oppressed, Mveng provided an alternative theological vision that can resist the extreme demands of what he described as "anti-evangelical" forces. Mveng's theological perspective encourages and empowers oppressed people to become the subjects of their own liberation and creators of just and humane social structures. Mveng used a sound hermeneutics of suspicion to unmask the reality of oppression and the ideological mechanisms that underpin and morally justify the social forces that foster and perpetuate the domination of African people.

Towards a New and Credible Ecclesiology

Mveng affirmed that a sound understanding of the church must begin with sociological analysis of how the church relates to the realities such as poverty and social class. Social analysis helps identify the church's implication and complicity in the evils of the world. It is important for churches and their members to continuously ask whether their ways of living and operating in the world point in the direction of God's reign of justice and love or basically conform to sinful ways of the world. The church must also be a community of liberation. The responsibility falls upon the church as a nurturing haven of freedom within an oppressive society and as a community dedicated to transforming that oppressive society. Mveng called on the church to engage in a radical reassessment of the political and economic order and structures of sin within the African continent. In order to be the harbinger of new life and hope in Africa, the church must become a credible agent of change. In light of the plethora of problems that African Christians have to contend with, the church must become the voice of the voiceless and the beacon of hope for the hopeless. In his reflection on the future of Christianity in America, Cornel West makes a distinction between prophetic Christianity and Constantinian Christianity.[10] Prophetic Christianity valorizes the subversive spirit that seeks to unveil the forces of injustice and oppression in the world. Constantinian Christianity on the other hand exhibits all the oppressive trappings of empire and imperial hegemonic order. It is characterized by an insidious justification of oppressive ideologies. Mveng affirmed that such framework for domination is sustained by grand deception and duplicity. According to him,

> "it is a discourse that claims to tell the truth and produces lies, that claims to speak life and produces death, that claims to speak freedom and produces oppression, that claims to speak equality and produces inequalities, that claims to utter justice and produces injustices."[11]

Mveng urged the churches in Africa to confront and challenge all the forces of lies and chicanery that have contributed to the pillage and exploitation of the African continent. The church must present an agenda of unalloyed commitment to justice and liberation. In the words of Jean-Marc Éla, "only a church in solidarity with these men and women around us who have been left 'half-dead' (Luke 10:30), stripped by so many mechanisms of pillage and exploitation, can restore all its relevancy to our faith in Jesus Christ in today's Africa."[12]

The Courage and Power to Hope

The gospel of Jesus Christ is essentially about hope, justice, love, and liberation. The Christian gospel affirms that the goal of solidarity is to participate in the ongoing process of liberation through which human beings can become active agents in the realization of the reign of God. The main obstacle to this prophetic vision is our estrangement from God and from one another. This estrangement has been described in theological circles as both personal and structural sin. Mveng recognized these two dimensions of sin in his own theological analysis. He believed that in order for African people to win the constant battle against injustice, sin, and oppression, they have to tap into the best resources in their culture and within the Christian tradition. African communities are based on what Kwesi Dickson has described as "communal equilibrium." According to him:

> "A society (community) is in equilibrium when its customs are maintained, its goals attained and spirit powers given regular and adequate recognition. Members of society (community) are expected to live and act in such a way as to promote society's (community's) well-being; to do otherwise is to court disaster, not only for the individual actor but for the (community) as a whole. Any act that detracts from the soundness of a (community) is looked upon with disfavour, and (the community) takes remedial measures to reverse the evil consequences set in motion."[13]

The African philosophy and ethos of *Ubuntu* (humanity) undergirds the African ideal of community and mutual interdependence. Communality and connectedness undergird the African mode of seeing and being in the world. To be fully human is to live in community and work for the total well-being of that community. Although Western industrial capitalism has eroded some aspects of the traditional African sense of community, there must be a renewed effort to regain and reclaim the African model of redemptive harmony. Mveng believed that a new sense of faith (*sensus fidei*) must be well grounded in African traditional ideas and ethos. This was an important aspect of his theological creativity and conviction.

Mveng also maintained that God is always with the oppressed in the fight against injustice. In Jesus Christ, God takes sides with the forgotten and faceless people of the world. In Christ, God provides the power of life over death. "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Jesus Christ is the

embodiment of God's justice. Jesus affirmed in words and praxis that the primary purpose of his mission in the world was to give life in abundance and fullness to everyone. Jesus came into the world to bring dignity to the outcast, to set free the oppressed, and to fight the forces of darkness. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5). The cross symbolizes the clash with the powers of this world. It also reveals the battle between the world system of exploitation that inevitably creates constructed suffering and the kingdom of God--- a confrontation that becomes liberating for the poor and the oppressed. In the words of Jean-Marc Éla, "nothing can blind us to the brutal fact: *Africa today is crucified*. An African theology that rereads the Bible in terms of this fundamental locus will have to be a theology of the cross."[14] Mveng believed that African liberation theology is anchored in the amazing assurance that the power of God will overcome and dismantle the principalities and powers of this world. He called for a radical faith that compels people to transcend their selfish agendas and engage in the liberation of the poor and ordinary people. It is imperative for the Christian community to be at the center of the struggle against the wretched of the earth. The Christian faith, which is a gift of God's grace, must go beyond the soporific solidarity with the victims of injustice and become the quintessential expression of resistance against fatalism, misery, and death.

Any Christian theologian is compelled to ask an important question: What's the role of the good news amid the situation of injustice and misery? Is it possible to envisage or conceptualize any symphony of hope out of the cacophony of terror within the African continent? Mveng advocated a theology of hope in spite of the horrendous experiences that challenge people's dignity and wholeness. This perspective is not a fatalistic eschatological hope expressed in the by and by. On the contrary, it is grounded in the subversive joy that compelled him to work for the transformation of the society in the here and now. This is a form of realized eschatology that connects to the hopes and aspirations of the people. The bold declaration concerning the Kingdom of God that is proclaimed in the Beatitudes affirms a vision of justice, love, peace, and wellbeing. It deals with a new dispensation that must be inaugurated in the here and now. It is not about sullen resignation or forlorn expectation; rather, it is the fulfillment of justice and liberation for all. The spirituality of the Beatitudes challenges the wanton oppression and injustice that reduce the children of God to mere commodities and objects of corrosive derision. According to Mveng,

> "The poor of the Beatitudes are not blessed because they are poor, but because the Reign of God is theirs (Matt. 5:1-12). The Lord has not come to institutionalize and beatify misery, but to deliver us from it. That is what Zechariah sings at the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel (Luke 1:68-79), that is what the Magnificent proclaims (Luke 1:47-55), that is what the charter of the Beatitudes promulgates (Matt. 5:1-12), and that is what the Lord himself

reveals in the synagogue at Nazareth, as he inaugurates his public ministry (Luke 4: 18-20)."[15]

Conclusion: A Clarion Call for Mutuality

Mveng provided a unique analysis of the African reality. As a student of history, he had an acute awareness of the toxic legacy of colonialism in Africa. His philosophical perspective provided a nuanced understanding of the existential absurdities within the African continent. His theological convictions allowed him to speak and write with prophetic acumen. His poetic sensibilities allowed him to write like a sage with deep convictions. He was not interested in leading his readers into the darkest labyrinths of abstract theological ideas; rather, he advocated for a theological engagement with concrete issues and matters that affect people on a daily basis.

On a critical note, Mveng's tendency to isolate the African experience from other global experiences may raise some concerns and questions. He overlooked the connections and affinities that African people share with other groups of people. His work would definitely benefit from a dialogue with other important advocates of Liberation Theology from other perspectives. For instance, his writings failed to take into account how African feminist theologians have grappled with the issues of poverty and justice within the African context. This point underscores the fact that the African landscape is fraught with ambiguities and complexities. It does not lend itself to easy generalizations. It is extremely important for African theologians to find areas of affinity and solidarity with other peoples from all over the globe that are experiencing various forms of injustice, alienation, and oppression. In his reflection on the African reality, Kwame Anthony Appiah said that "we will only solve our problems if we see them as human problems arising out of a special situation, and we shall not solve them if we see them as African problems, generated by our being somehow unlike others."[16]

Whatever the questions we may raise about his work, no one can dismiss his profound contributions to decolonizing theology within the African context and his efforts to make the African religious heritage and the Christian faith come together in a meaningful, enriching, and deeply satisfying way. Mveng's thought underscored the importance of indigenous agency, the capacity of Africans for self-affirmation, and the recognition of the collective humanity of African people. He weaved together historical, theological, and philosophical categories in his tireless effort to create an African Theology of liberation. His interdisciplinary approach expands the frontiers of theological thinking and adds more depth to the discipline. The task of responding to Africa's complex realities and understanding the public role of African Christianity calls for our continuous interdisciplinary reflections and collective wisdom. His thought and writings on African theology compel us to be wary of facile dichotomies that may prevent us from understanding Africa's holistic reality and context. His theological engagement maintains veritable connections between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, theory and action, re-

flection and actual involvement with the concrete concerns of oppressed people. Mveng's theology of the people is also a telling testimony to the fact that an experience of faith that holds itself aloof from people fighting to escape the horrors of injustice poses a grave risk to the future of Christianity in Africa. The creative paradigms of a prophetic theology in Africa must not be considered as abstract theological rhetorics, but as veritable tools for instituting the reign of God here on earth.

Notes

1 Engelbert Mveng, "African Liberation Theology," in *Third World Theologies—Convergences and Differences*, eds. Leonardo Boff and Virgilio Elizondo (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 18.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Leonardo Boff, "What are Third World Theologies?," in *Third World Theologies—Convergences and Differences*, eds. Leonardo Boff & Virgilio Elizondo *op. cit.*, 13.

4 See *Irruption of the Third World* (Maryknoll,NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 220.

5 The "African Report" in *Third World Theologies: Commonalities and Divergences*, ed. K.C. Abraham, ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990), 47.

6 See Charles Van Engen, "Toward a Contextually Appropriate Methodology in Mission Theology," in *Appropriate Christianity* ed. Charles H.Craft (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2005), 194.

7 Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), 152-153.

8 Paul Ricoeur quoted in Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993), 54. Ricoeur also defined interpretation as "an exercise of suspicion" in his *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 32-36.

9 The "African Report" in *Third World Theologies: Commonalities and Divergences* ed. K.C. Abraham, *op. cit.,* 28.

10 See Cornel West, *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 147-150.

11 Engelbert Mveng, "Impoverishment and Liberation: A Theological Approach for Africa and the Third World," in *Paths of African Theology* ed. Rosino Gibellini (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994), 154.

12 Jean-Marc Éla, "Christianity and Liberation in Africa," in *Paths of African Theology*, Rosino Gibellini, ed. *op. cit.*, 151.

13 Kwesi Dickson, *Theology in Africa* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984), 62.

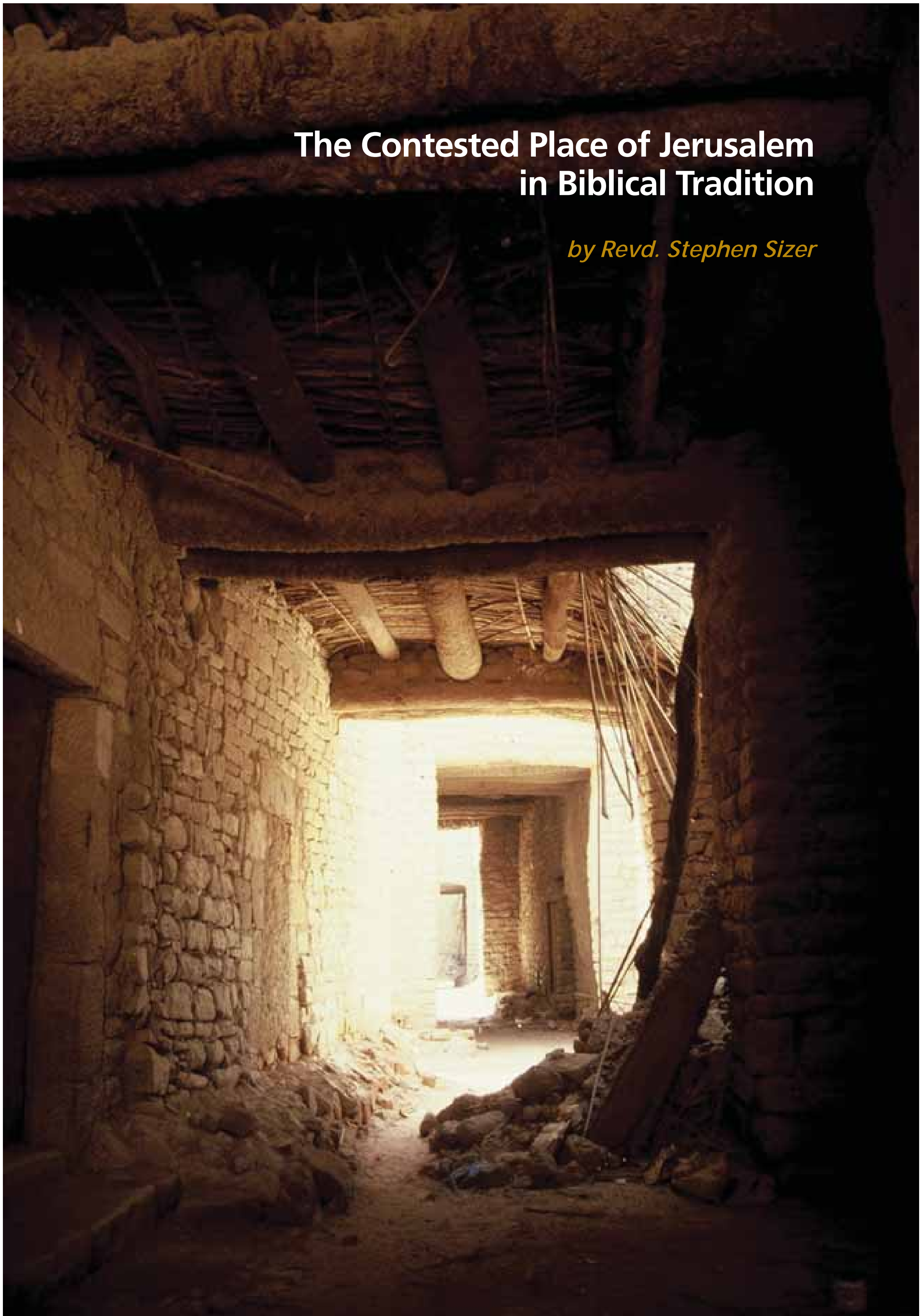
14 Jean-Marc Éla, "Christianity and Liberation in Africa" in *Paths of African Theology* ed. Rosino Gibellini, *op. cit.*, 146.

15 *Ibid*, 163.

16 Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 136.

The Contested Place of Jerusalem in Biblical Tradition

by Revd. Stephen Sizer



Introduction

Many Christians, especially in the United States of America, accept unthinkingly the Zionist mantra that Jerusalem is the exclusive, undivided and eternal capital of the Jewish people. However, Jerusalem existed before the time of the Israelites. Today, Jerusalem lies at the heart of three world faiths – Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Israelis regard it as their capital. Palestinians do so also. Attempts to reach agreement in the wider Arab-Israeli conflict have partly stumbled over the contested status of Jerusalem. Jewish Zionists and their Christian supporters are strongly opposed to joint sovereignty or the recognition of East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. It seems time is on their side. The annexation of the Old City, the aggressive and illegal settlement programme, the systematic demolition of many Arab homes and the construction of the Separation Barrier have all created 'facts on the ground' in Jerusalem. Christian and Jewish Zionists also claim a higher mandate for this agenda – the Word of God.

This paper will refute these views conclusively and demonstrate from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures that Jerusalem was always intended to be an inclusive city of peace for all who acknowledge the one true God. Practical steps will be offered for ways in which people of faith can work together to resolve the present conflict.

1. The Passion for Jerusalem: The Problem

Following the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 and the capture of Jerusalem, in June 1971, a conference took place in Jerusalem of over 1,200 evangelical leaders from 32 different countries. Welcomed by David Ben Gurion, the conference was billed as "the first conference of its kind since A.D. 59". The capture of Jerusalem was portrayed as "confirmation that Jews and Israel still had a role to play in God's ordering of history" and that the return of Jesus was imminent.[1]

The wider international community saw things rather differently. In protest at Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the United Nations passed Resolution 242, calling on Israel to withdraw its troops to the June 1967 borders and end the occupation. Refusing to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the few remaining government embassies were closed and relocated to Tel Aviv.

In 1980, however, the International Christian Embassy (ICEJ) was founded in Jerusalem, to express solidarity with Israel and to recognise a divine blessing in the 'Reunification' of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. At the International Christian Zionist Congress in 1996, some 1,500 participants signed the following declaration.

> Because of the sovereign purposes of God for the City, Jerusalem must remain undivided, under Israeli sovereignty, open to all peoples, the capital of Israel only, and all nations should so concur and place their embassies here ... the truths of God are sovereign and it is written that the Land which He promised to His People is not to be partitioned.[2]

In 1997 the ICEJ also gave support to a full page advert placed in the *New York Times* entitled, 'Christians Call for a United Jerusalem'. It was signed by 10 evangelical leaders including Pat Robertson, chairman of Christian Broadcasting Network and President of the Christian Coalition; Oral Roberts, founder and chancellor of Oral Roberts University; Jerry Falwell, founder of Moral Majority; Ed McAteer, President of the Religious Roundtable; and David Allen Lewis, President of Christians United for Israel:

> We, the undersigned Christian spiritual leaders, communicating weekly to more than 100 million Christian Americans, are proud to join together in supporting the continued sovereignty of the State of Israel over the holy city of Jerusalem. We support Israel's efforts to reach reconciliation with its Arab neighbors, but we believe that Jerusalem, or any portion of it, shall not be negotiable in the peace process. Jerusalem must remain undivided as the eternal capital of the Jewish people.[3]

They called upon fellow Christians to 'Join us in our holy mission to ensure that Jerusalem will remain the undivided, eternal capital of Israel', 'The battle for Jerusalem has begun, and it is time for believers in Christ to support our Jewish brethren and the State of Israel. The time for unity with the Jewish people is now'.[4] They believe this will be achieved by the implementation of the Jerusalem Embassy Act, which legislates for the return of the US embassy back to Jerusalem. Funds have already been allocated. However, for more than ten years, successive US Presidents have vetoed the legislation for reasons of national security. Mike Evans, an outspoken critic argues,

> Each time the national security waver is signed, we are saying to terrorists and bigots, 'You win'. America needs the blessings of God more than the favour with Arab bigots. Mr. Bush needs to send a signal to all the would-be Osamas that the party is over. No longer will America allow terrorists to threaten our nation into choosing political expediency over moral clarity.[5]

John Hagee, pastor of a 20,000 member church in San Antonio, Texas, says that the special status afforded the Jewish people by God supersedes the rule of international law:

> A shared Jerusalem? Never! A "shared Jerusalem" means control of the Holy City would be wrested away from the Jewish people and given, at least in part, to the Palestine Liberation Organisation. I say "never" … because the Word of God says it is God's will for Jerusalem to be under the exclusive control of the Jewish people until Messiah comes … God doesn't care what the United Nations thinks … He gave Jerusalem to the nation of Israel, and it is theirs.[6]

In 2003, the Jerusalem Summit, sponsored by the Unity Coalition for Israel, issued their 'Jerusalem Declaration' in which they called upon the international community to recognise:

> Billions of people believe that Jerusalem's spiritual and historical importance endows it with a special authority to become a center of world's

> unity. Israel's unique geographic and historic position at the crossroads of civilizations enables it to reconcile their conflicts. Israel's unique spiritual experience enables it to find a golden mean between the fault lines dividing civilizations: between tradition and modernity, religion and science, authority and democracy. We call upon all nations to choose Jerusalem, the eternal and indivisible capital of Israel, as a center for this evolving new unity. We believe that one of the objectives of Israel's divinely-inspired rebirth is to make it the center of the new unity of the nations, which will lead to an era of peace and prosperity, foretold by the Prophets.[7]

So they want Jerusalem to be a place of unity for the world, but not for the people who live there! If this is representative of how pro-Zionist Christians view Jerusalem, perhaps its time we looked at what the Scriptures have to say.

2. Jerusalem in the Hebrew Scriptures: The Past

The story of Jerusalem goes way back as far as Genesis. It is possible that Jerusalem was the home of the Melchizedek the priest and king who blessed Abraham in Genesis 14. He is referred to as the 'king of Salem' which later became identified in Jewish tradition with Jerusalem. Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice, is also later identified in 2 Chronicles 3 as the same place where Solomon built his Temple. Clearly, Jerusalem had an existence long before the conquest of the land by the Israelites. In Joshua 15:63, for example, we find the Jebusites already living in Jerusalem and willing to share the city with the new Jewish immigrants. It is clear therefore that Jerusalem was a shared city long before King David turned it into his capital (2 Samuel 6:1-19). Even then, the capture was achieved with minimal casualties on either side. So when Israel celebrated the 'Trimillennium of Jerusalem, City of David', in 1996, under the banner 'Jerusalem 3000', there was legitimacy to the counter claim launched by the Palestinian Authority to 'Jerusalem 5000'.

Clearly the building of the Temple in Jerusalem by David's son, Solomon, elevated the status of the city among the tribes of Israel. However, when God judged Solomon for his idolatry (1 Kings 11:9-13) and his empire was split in two by Rehoboam and Jeroboam, Jerusalem diminished in importance and became just the capital for the tribe of Judah. As Peter Walker admits, "The city designed to bring unity now pointed instead to Israel's division."[8] Nevertheless, the belief grew that Jerusalem was invincible, because God dwelt in the Temple and his anointed king was on the throne. Prophets such as Micah (3:9-12) and Jeremiah (7:1-11) warned against this arrogance. Jeremiah highlights one of the popular mantras of the day. "Do not trust in deceptive words and say 'This is the Temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!'" (Jeremiah 7:4). Indeed, the prophet predicted that, far from defending Jerusalem in a 'holy war', God would actually become her enemy (Jeremiah 21:3-10).

The prophecies against Jerusalem came true in the capture and destruc-

tion of the city by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. The catastrophic events and the consequent exile of the Jews are recorded in 2 Kings 25; Jeremiah 52 and Lamentations. The prophetic message is clear. God holds his people morally accountable and will tolerate neither arrogance nor complacency.

In Psalm 87 we have a beautiful picture of a shared Jerusalem, an international and inclusive city where residency rights are determined by God on the basis of faith not race.

> He has founded his city on the holy mountain. The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are said of you, city of God: "I will record Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me— Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush — and will say, 'This one was born in Zion'. "Indeed, of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High himself will establish her". The LORD will write in the register of the peoples: "This one was born in Zion". As they make music they will sing, "All my fountains are in you" (Psalm 87).

As Colin Chapman has observed, "This is a message which must have challenged many nationalistic prejudices".[9] And one might add - still does. The Prophet Isaiah's vision of Jerusalem is also an inclusive one. In Isaiah 2, for example we learn that people of many different nations will come to Jerusalem and put their faith in God and walk in his ways. One of the glorious consequences of this is that Jerusalem will become associated with the end of war, and with peace and reconciliation between the nations (Isaiah 2:3-5).

Jerusalem in the Christian Scriptures

So what place does Jerusalem fulfil within Christian tradition? There is both good and bad news. First, the bad news. It may surprise you to learn that the New Testament is rather pessimistic about the fate of Jerusalem. Far from promising a prosperous future at the centre of a revived Jewish state or even a millennial kingdom, Jesus lamented the impending destruction of Jerusalem. Luke's gospel provides us with several insights into the passion of Jesus for Jerusalem. In Luke 13 we find Jesus rebuking the leaders of Israel for not caring for the people in the way he does and predicting that he must die there. Evoking the language of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 12:7; 22:5), Jesus similarly laments:

> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' (Luke 13:34-35).

Quoting Psalm 118:26, Jesus displays the instincts of a protective mother concerned for the people of Jerusalem as if they were his very children. A little later, on Palm Sunday, Jesus ex-

presses perhaps his strongest emotions toward the city and its fickle people:

> As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you. (Luke 19:41-44)

Again, Jesus is using the language of Isaiah and Ezekiel to warn of God's impending judgement (Isaiah 29:3; Ezekiel 4:2). Now if you were there and heard Jesus make that prediction, who would you imagine he had in mind? Who were the hated enemies? The Romans of course. With the benefit of hindsight it's obvious that Jesus was warning the people about what was going to happen very soon, not events 2000 years or more in the distant future. With the total destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, stone by stone, the slaughter of tens of thousands of Jews and the exile of the remnant as slaves of Rome, Jesus' sad prediction came true, to the letter. The Christian scriptures instead, look increasingly to another Jerusalem.

2.1 The Jerusalem Above

But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: 'Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labour pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband' (Galatians 4:26-27 – Isaiah 54:1).

The Apostle Paul is quoting from Isaiah 54:1 which refers to the earthly Jerusalem. But Paul now interprets this passage as referring to a new Jerusalem, and no longer associated with the capital of Israel.[10]

In the coming of Jesus, the status of Jerusalem has therefore changed irrevocably. From now on the earthly Jerusalem will be associated not with the Patriarchs or with David or with the Temple of Solomon or Herod but with a simple wooden cross and an empty tomb. "The coming of Jesus has been its undoing".[11] And here is at last a hint of the 'good news' about Jerusalem in the New Testament. The good news about Jerusalem has to do with all that Jesus accomplished there. Peter Walker observes:

> It is Jesus himself… who gives us the warrant to view Jerusalem in an entirely new light… Jerusalem could never be the same again, now that Jesus had come… Jesus, not Jerusalem, would now become the central 'place' within God's purposes, the place around which God's true people would be gathered.[12]

2.2 The New Jerusalem

The image of Jerusalem found in the New Testament, is of a new inclusive city built by God, coming down from heaven - one in which there is no darkness – and where the gates are never shut but open to people of all nations.

> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband… I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:2, 22-26).

In this one all consuming vision, God's people now embrace all nations, God's land encompasses the whole earth, and God's holy city has become the eternal dwelling place of all who remain faithful – literally the Bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9).

4. The Solution for Jerusalem: The Present

To summarize, in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, God reveals that he expects Jerusalem to be a shared, inclusive city of faith, hope and love. The Scriptures also envisage a glorious future for Jerusalem. One that impacts and benefits the entire world. The vision is of an inclusive and shared Jerusalem in which the nations, including the Jewish people, are blessed. Perhaps this is why, when Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for exploiting the international visitors to the temple, he quotes from Isaiah, "For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7, cf. Matthew 21:13).

But today, we have to live with the reality of a Jerusalem that is associated with apartheid and racism, with exclusive claims that can only be sustained by oppression and injustice, by military occupation, the denial of human rights, the disregard for international law, access to religious sites and freedom of expression. Living between Jerusalem past and Jerusalem future, what is our religious responsibility in the present?

In June 2009, I helped write the Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism endorsed and signed by the Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem. The Declaration explains the reasons for their rejection of the exclusive Zionist claims to Jerusalem. It also outlines the response expected of followers of Jesus Christ.

Statement by the Patriarch and Local Heads of Churches In Jerusalem[13]

> 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God' (Matthew 5:9).

We categorically reject Christian Zionist doctrines as false teaching that corrupts the biblical message of love, justice and reconciliation.

We further reject the contemporary alliance of Christian Zionist leaders and organisations with elements in the governments of Israel and the United States that are presently imposing their unilateral pre-emptive borders and domination over Palestine. This in-

evitably leads to unending cycles of violence that undermine the security of all peoples of the Middle East and the rest of the world.

We reject the teachings of Christian Zionism that facilitate and support these policies as they advance racial exclusivity and perpetual war rather than the gospel of universal love, redemption and reconciliation taught by Jesus Christ. Rather than condemn the world to the doom of Armageddon we call upon everyone to liberate themselves from the ideologies of militarism and occupation. Instead, let them pursue the healing of the nations!

We call upon Christians in Churches on every continent to pray for the Palestinian and Israeli people, both of whom are suffering as victims of occupation and militarism. These discriminative actions are turning Palestine into impoverished ghettos surrounded by exclusive Israeli settlements. The establishment of the illegal settlements and the construction of the Separation Wall on confiscated Palestinian land undermines the viability of a Palestinian state as well as peace and security in the entire region.

We call upon all Churches that remain silent, to break their silence and speak for reconciliation with justice in the Holy Land.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to the following principles as an alternative way:

We affirm that all people are created in the image of God. In turn they are called to honour the dignity of every human being and to respect their inalienable rights.

We affirm that Israelis and Palestinians are capable of living together within peace, justice and security.

We affirm that Palestinians are one people, both Muslim and Christian. We reject all attempts to subvert and fragment their unity.

We call upon all people to reject the narrow world view of Christian Zionism and other ideologies that privilege one people at the expense of others.

We are committed to non-violent resistance as the most effective means to end the illegal occupation in order to attain a just and lasting peace.

With urgency we warn that Christian Zionism and its alliances are justifying colonisation, apartheid and empire-building.

God demands that justice be done. No enduring peace, security or reconciliation is possible without the foundation of justice. The demands of justice will not disappear. The struggle for justice must be pursued diligently and persistently but non-violently.

'What does the Lord require of you, to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8).

This is where we take our stand. We stand for justice. We can do no other. Justice alone guarantees a peace that will lead to reconciliation with a life of security and prosperity for all the peoples of our Land. By standing on the side of justice, we open ourselves to the work of peace - and working for peace makes us children of God.

> 'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has com-

mitted to us the message of reconciliation' (2 Cor 5:19).

His Beattitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah
Latin Patriarchate, Jerusalem
Archbishop Swerios Malki Mourad
Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem
Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal
Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
Bishop Munib Younan
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

In this paper I have explained the contested place of Jerusalem within Christian Tradition, comparing and contrasting the Zionist and anti-Zionist positions. In our view, Christian Zionism, is a defective, misguided and dangerous theology. It is an exclusive theology driven by a political agenda which elevates one nation over others, rather than an inclusive theology centred on Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Christian Zionism uses the Bible to justify racial superiority, land expropriation, home demolitions, population transfer, colonial settlements, the denial of international law and fundamental human rights. What does Jesus think about all this? On Palm Sunday, the Apostle Luke tells us,

> "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:41-42).

I believe God continues to weep not only over Jerusalem, but for all his children in the Middle East, as well as those who promote a theology of war and conquest here in the West. It is a very long way from the simple teaching of Jesus who promised "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). May God give us the courage and strength to fulfil this role.

Notes

1 'Prophets in Jerusalem' *Newsweek*, June 28th, 1971, p. 62.

2 'International Christian Zionist Congress Proclamation' International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem. 25-29 February (1996).

3 'Christians Call for a United Jerusalem' *New York Times*, 18 April (1997), http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/united.html.

4 *Ibid.*,

5 Mike Evans, 'Israel does not exist!', www.freeman.org/m_online/apr04/evans.htm.

6 John Hagee, *Jerusalem Betrayed* (Dallas, Word, 1997), p. 42.

7 The Jerusalem Summit, The Jerusalem Declaration", http://www.jerusalemsummit.org/eng/declaration_full.php <Accessed March 2007>

8 Peter Walker, 'Jerusalem' in eds. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Leicester, IVP, 2000), p. 589.

9 Colin Chapman, *Whose Holy City?* (Oxford, Lion, 2004), p. 30.

10 Peter Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1996). p. 131.

11 Walker, *Jesus.,* op.cit., p. 320.

12 Peter Walker, 'Jesus and Jerusalem: New Testament Perspectives' in Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maria Schrader, eds, *Jerusalem: What Makes for Peace!* (London, Melesende, 1997), pp. 62, 66, 67.

13 http://imeu.net/news/article003122.shtml

Social justice and education of the soul in Islam: Al-Ghazālī's approach

by Tayeb Chouiref

We just celebrated the ninth centenary of the death of the great Muslim thinker, Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī. Throughout the Muslim world and the West, there were during 2011 conferences, symposia and seminars to reflect on his work and the impact of his thought in our contemporary societies.

Can the message of an author as old as Ghazālī, who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD, throw any light on the problems of the contemporary world and particularly those experienced by the predominantly Muslim societies?

The great spokesmen of wisdom in Islam have managed to combine their demand for authenticity in their inner spiritual journey with the sense of balance and harmony in society. As such, the case of Ghazālī is particularly noteworthy.

Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) lived in an era marked by the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate. The Seljuk sultans, supported by powerful viziers, were those who exercised the real power. Let's first emphasize that the questioning of Ghazālī on his politically and socially turbulent times has had a decisive impact on his written work during and after his spiritual retreat, which stretches between 1095 and 1105. His masterpiece entitled *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-Dīn* (*The Revival of Religions' Sciences*) can be read as an attempt to provide both an epistemological and religious base to an intellectual and spiritual recovery.

The title of this book with impressive dimensions is particularly significant: for Ghazālī, only an intellectual recovery[1] could assist in overcoming difficulties of all kinds suffered by the Muslim community. For the author of the *Ihyā'*, it is because the understanding of what the reality of Islam has become all too rare that all sorts of excesses and fanaticism become possible. We know that Ghazālī has fought hard against obscurantism in all its forms and especially against the sectarianism of the *Batinids* who did not hesitate to resort to murder to impose their ideas. Thus the protector and friend of Ghazālī, the vizier Nizam al-Mulk, was assassinated by a young *Batinid* in 1092. This event, painfully experienced by Ghazālī, has certainly sharpened the awareness he could have about dangers of ignorance, and the fanaticism it can cause.

Through what we have just mentioned, we see that reflection on the political and social justice have played such a big role in the development of his thought, which had a strong influence on many authors in both the Arab and Muslim world and the West.[2]

For Ghazālī, the question of social justice in all its forms is not structural: it is not a matter of changing *a priori* external conditions that constitute the social context in which the believer

lives. The foremost thing is to first orient him towards the purification of the soul and, to do so, it is necessary to offer him sufficient knowledge of human nature.

As taught by the Qur'ān, human nature is fundamentally dual. In every soul is a part of good and of a part of evil. In the Qur'ān, this duality is clearly stated: "[By the] soul and He who proportioned it and inspired it its part of perversity and its part of righteousness..." [3].

Ghazālī summarises all the negative possibilities of the human soul to four fundamental skills:

1. The first and most serious dark tendency of the soul is the temptation to attribute oneself the *rubūbiyya*, sovereignty that actually belongs to God alone.

A related tendency is pride (*al-kibr*), vanity (*al-fakhr*), the love of power (*al-jabarūt*) and the desire to be above everyone. For Ghazālī, the best example of this tendency is the personification of Pharaoh who said: "I am your supreme lord"[4].

2. The second negative possibility of the soul is the properly satanic tendency (*al-sifa al-shaytāniyya*) that gives rise to many vices like jealousy (*al-hasad*), cunning (*al-hila*), the betrayal (*al-khidā'*), love of deviant and perverse innovations, etc.

3. The third negative possibility of the soul is bestiality (*al-sifa al-bahīmiyya*). Ghazālī means by that all manifestations of animality that is in man: gluttony (*al-sharah*), greed (*al-kalab*) and sexual immorality in all its forms.

4. The fourth and final negative possibility of the soul is aggression (*al-sifa al-saba'iyya*). The latter gives rise to various attitudes such as anger (*al-ghadab*), hatred (*al-hiqd*), cruelty by words or actions, etc.

We just saw the four negative possibilities of the soul in the order in which Ghazālī presents them. However, it should be noted that this does not match the order they appear in the psychological development of man and mental maturation. According to Ghazālī, the child is first subject to bestiality, and the role of education will help to channel the force of desires. Without such assistance, the child may indulge in aggressiveness and develop destructive attitudes, either for himself or for his entourage. In this case, he will reach adulthood by being dominated by the satanic tendency, which is none other than the use of reason in the service of aggressiveness and bestiality. It is only in a soul where reign those fatal first three tendencies that may appear the worse negative possibilities of the soul, namely the search for power and strength.

We have in the four negative possibilities exposed, what Ghazālī calls the roots of sin (*ummahāt al-dhunūb*). It is easy to see that for our author, man of power is only succumbing to the Pharaonic temptation because he lets himself become trapped by satanic, aggressive and bestial tendencies. To practice justice in exercising power necessarily implies to have received a spiritual education that goes in the direction of the purification of the soul.

The Qur'ān says that - and it could be said so of other spiritual traditions - all these evil tendencies sit within the heart (*al-qalb*). Referring to those who rejected the faith and do not follow their lascivious desires, the Holy Book says: "There is a sickness in their heart, and God increases this sickness..."[5].

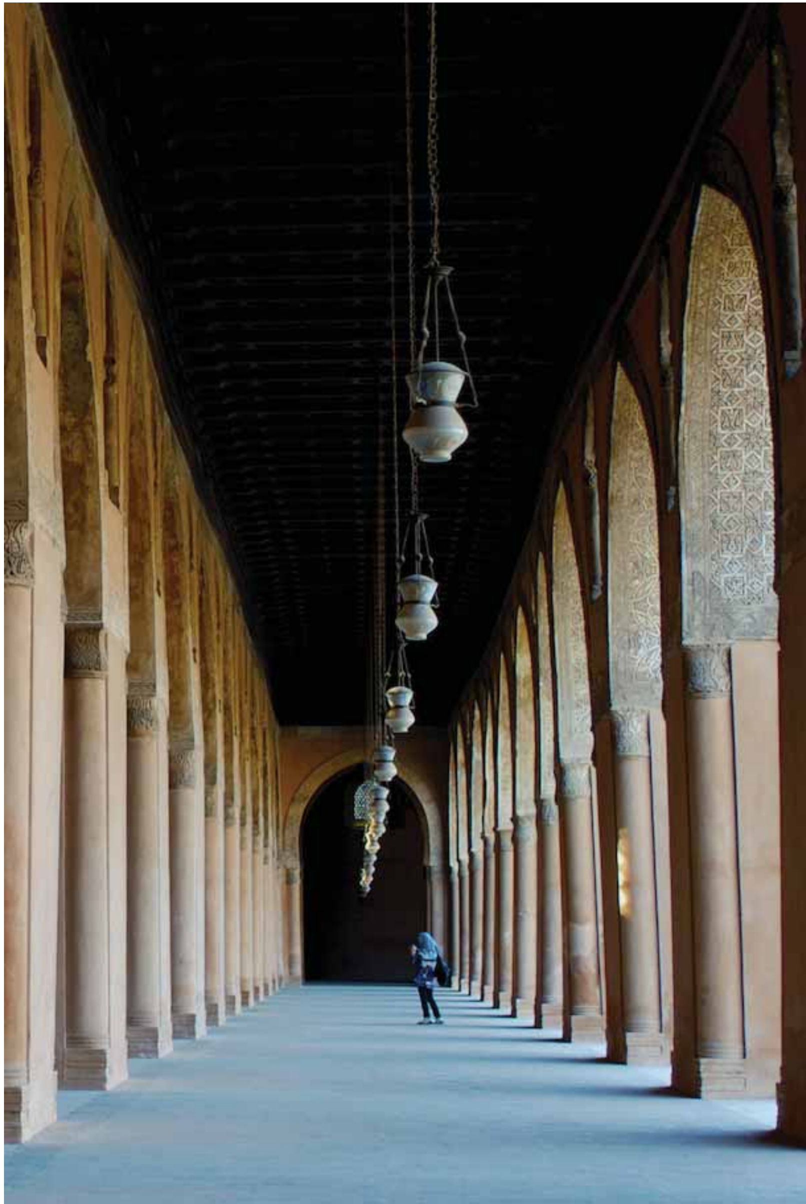
But the spiritual meaning of the word 'heart' is not easy to grasp. Properly speaking, the knowledge of the interiority of man is not referring to a science accessible to every believer that Ghazālī calls (*'ilm al-mu'āmala*) but to an unveiling of the reality given by God to he who follows the path of His proximity. The knowledge obtained by an inner illumination is called *'ilm al-mukāshafa*. In this regard, Ghazālī writes: "Know that there are two types of science: *'ilm al-mukāshafa* and *'ilm al-mu'āmala.* The first is the inner science *('ilm al-bātin)* and is the goal of all knowledge *(ghāyat al-'ulūm)...* The term *'ilm al-mukāshafa* refers to a light that appears in the heart after its purification from blameworthy character traits. This light enables us to understand in depth what we only knew outwardly"[6] .

The Qur'ān insists on the heart as an organ of spiritual knowledge, particularly in the field of recognition of the truth. Referring to those who reject the message of the Prophet, the Qur'ān declares: "For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts"[7]; "Indeed in that is a reminder for whoever has a heart or who listens while he is present [in mind]"[8].

However, as it is not easy to understand what the heart is, since by definition access to the heart is a divine grace, Ghazālī describes in many parts of his writings what he means by "heart" in its spiritual sense: "The heart is a subtle element, both divine and spiritual (*latīfa rabbāniyya rūhiyya*), which fits with the physical heart. This subtle element represents the reality of man; in it man grasps, understands, knows..."[9].

Foundations of political power and spirituality

The foundations of political power are based, for Ghazālī as for the entire *Ash'arite Sunnism*, on the theory of the Imamate. Abū l-Hasan al-Asharī (d. 324/935) opposed the Mutazilism who founded the obligation of the Imamate on reason. He rejected the idea of founding the obligation of the Imamate on rational arguments. As the legitimacy of power cannot be but divine, he developed a doctrine of political authority based on scriptural evidence (*dalā'il shar'iyya*). Asharism also had to fight Shiite ideas, which reserves Imamate to the descendants of the Prophet. The theory of the Imamate is certainly more sophisticated in *Kitāb al-al-Ahkām al-sultāniyya* of the famous Māwardī (d. 422/1031). For him, the Imamate was established to succeed to the Prophecy (*nubuwwa*) in defending religion and ruling the affairs of this world. Ghazālī does not quote this definition although he had known it. Probably because he reproaches it to forget an important part of the heirs of the Prophets, namely what he calls "the scholars of the



of doubt and uncertainty. Thus, the *Batinid*s believe that only the Imam and his missionaries are able to convey the true teaching that they simply call *al-ta'līm*.

Ghazālī devoted two books to the genre referred to as the "Counsel for Princes". The first of the two is chronologically *al-Mustazhirī fi l-radd 'alā al-bātiniyya*[10]. This book was written at the request of the young Abbasid Caliph Abū l-Abbās Ahmad called *al-Mustazhir bi-Llāh*, who was only sixteen at the death of his father in 487/1094.

The second book is shorter and was written in Persian. It is entitled *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī nasīhat al-mulūk*.[11] With a few differences, being more of a way to present things than content, Ghazālī gives the same advice to men of power in both books. However, he wants to expand the scope of its recommendations he intends also to any person to whom the Law gives the right and duty to impose a constraint to another. The *Nasīhat al-mulūk* was initially aimed at the Seljuk Sultan Muhammad ibn Malikshāh and might be written only a few years before the death of Ghazālī.

Hereafter" which are the real scholars because they have abandoned worldly ambition.

The qualities of the statesman

Unlike Ismaili *Batinid*s, Ghazālī rejects the idea of impeccability and infallibility (*'isma*) of the Imam, the leader of the Community. For those followers, only the inspired teaching of the Imam can get the mass of ordinary believers out

In both works, all of Ghazālī recommendations are organized around two main axes, one of the fundamental beliefs (*al-'aqā'id*) and the rules of conduct (*al-mu'āmala*). This division into two axes is justified by the principle, often reminded by Ghazālī, that knowledge precedes action and determines it; any action, before being carried out, is rooted in the heart as a internal state (*hāl*), but the state itself is generated by an intellectual content (*ma'rifa*). For our author, evil deeds are necessarily caused by misconceptions. Reforming the behaviour of a person or a group of individuals is only possible by a prior intellectual reform.

The fundamental beliefs

In addition to the core beliefs of Islam, such as the Oneness of God, Ghazālī distinguishes between four fundamental beliefs without which right conduct is not conceivable:

1. The first of this knowledge and these beliefs the man of power must assimilate is that the world is not a place of permanent residence (*maqarr*) but a simple crossing point (*mamarr*). From birth to death, life is a preparation for installation in the Hereafter. However, this is only possible by preparing one's luggage (*zād*), which is nothing else than piety (*taqwā*). [12]

2. The necessary piety for this journey sits within the heart, the man of power must thus begin with reforming it. Only a reform of the heart (*islāh al-qalb*) is able to make the reform of the organs of action (*islāh al-jawārih*) possible. Knowledge of the transience of the world, when it is deep and real, anchors in the heart detachment from earthly life (*al-zuhd fī l-dunyā*)[13]. Now, according to a famous hadith, he who achieves detachment is loved by God and mankind: "Detach yourself from this world, and God will love you. Detach yourself from what is with the people, and the people will love you".

3. It should be noted that the spiritual reform must be based on dual compliance with religious law (*shar'*) and intellect (*'aql*). For Ghazālī this dual compliance is the only way to manage to control one's passions, especially anger. This default is a trap even more dangerous than believing that the power held is great. In this perspective, self-control is the only way to exercise an authority that is not tyrannical. This is the reason why Ghazālī writes: "No one can reform the people of his country, if he is not able to reform his own house. But no one could reform its own house if he is not capable of reforming himself"[14].

4. The power holder must know, and also perceive in himself, that man is torn between two major tendencies: the angelic nature (*al-sifāt al-malakiyya*) and the animal nature (*al-sifāt al-bahīmiyya*). Man thus occupies an intermediate position between the angel and the beast. According to his ideas and his life choices, man approaches the one or the other. However, the bestiality of the man of power will have all the more serious impacts since his possibilities of acting are great.[15]

The rules of conduct

To show the man of power which route to take to exercise his authority with the greatest justice possible, he asks him to return to the "heart of the faith" which is nothing else than the intimate relationship with God. While God forgives easily a breach of duty that we have to Him, the injustices committed against the creatures must one way or another be repaired.[16] Ghazālī then gives the man of power ten recommendations that are all benchmarks for the practical exercise of power. The three most important recommendations are:

1. Placing oneself in the place of one's subjects and not imposing what one does not wish to have imposed.[17]

2. The man of power must be able to surround himself with men of religion of great quality and urging his subjects to follow their advice. Religious men that Ghazālī has in mind here are mostly men who are completely detached from the honours and with a deep mystical and spiritual life. He quotes, among others, the example of the relationship of the caliph al-Rashid with the Sufi Shaqīq al-Balkhī and the one with Ibn al-Fudayl Ibn 'Iyād.[18]

3. The man of power must be able to show greatness of soul and magnanimity (*hilm*). Ghazālī points out that the princes are generally arrogant, prone to anger and revenge. However, forgiveness (*al-'afw*) is a necessary quality to safeguard the unity of society. Thus, Ghazālī points out that the Prophets and the Saints are always magnanimous with their community.

The above recommendations are certainly not easy to achieve. Ghazālī is aware of the difficulty of what he calls the leaders of his time to live this ideal. That is why he devotes an entire chapter to the sages' aphorisms that can help a man of power to be able to meditate on the exercise of political authority.[19]

A spiritual sociology

But the more significant help that Ghazālī wishes to provide to statesmen remains, in our opinion, what we call "spiritual sociology". By this we refer to the classification of individuals based on their spiritual abilities. There are in the Qur'ān and the Hadith a lot of teachings on this area. For instance, *Sūrat al-Wāqi'a* has a clear distinction between three categories of men based on the guidance they have received and followed: the Companions of the left (*ashāb al-mash'ama*), the Companions of the right (*ashāb al-maymana*) and the Forerunners (*al-sābiqūn*) who are none but the ones brought near [to Allah] (*al-muqarrabūn*).

This tripartite division is the subject of a lengthy letter to the vizier Fakhr al-Mulk who was one of the viziers of Sultan Sanjar from 500/1106 to 511/1117[20]. Ghazālī addressed in depth the issue of human diversity in the field of spiritual vocation.[21] Especially, he adopted the tripartite division of humanity, as developed in the Sufi tradition, which is based on meditation from the Qur'ān. This tradition recognizes in fact three kinds of men: the common believers (*al-'āmma*), the elite

of believers (*al-khāssa*) and the elite of the elite (*khāssat al-khāssa*).

Ghazālī begins his letter with a quotation from the Qur'ān: "to everyone there is a direction presided over by God, so vie in doing good deeds (*khayrāt*)"[22] In his analysis of this verse, he shows that no man applies himself to a matter without it being his objective, his *qibla*. This is precisely the objective of each man in his life that permits to know the group he belongs to. Ghazālī says: "The first are the vulgar masses (*āmma*) who are the people of heedlessness (*ghafla*). The second are those elite (*khāssa*) who are characterized by intelligence and perspicacity (*qiyāsa*). The third are the elite of the elite (*khāssat al-khāssa*), who are the people of true perception and understanding (*basīra*)".[23]

The vision of the people of heedlessness is limited to transient goods, for they think that the greatest blessings are the blessings of this world which one harvests by seeking wealth and prestige. They devote themselves to this quest, and wealth and prestige become the most beloved objects in their eyes (*qurrat al-'ayn*). Ghazālī bases his arguments on the spiritual teachings of the Prophet: "there are no two wolves let into a pen of sheep more destructive than the love of money and honour released into the faith of a believer". Of this misfortune the Prophet once said: "Woe unto the slave of the *dinār*, woe unto the slave of the *dirham*".[24]

In the second group, we find the elite who have grasped the nature of the world through intelligence and perspicacity and are sure of the superiority of the afterlife. Ghazālī writes that the verse "the life to come is better and more enduring"[25] has manifested itself to them. Through intelligence "they turn their faces from the world and make the hereafter their *qibla*". Yet Ghazālī points out the imperfection of this attitude and invites the Vizier to ascend more in the area of spirituality: "Although these people are at fault for not seeking only the Absolute Good, they have at least contented themselves with something better than this earthly world".[26]

As for the third group, the elite of the elite who are the people of truly perceptive understanding, they realize, according to Ghazālī, that everything that is possessed of good cannot be the ultimate good. Such things are therefore transitory, and no discerning person is pleased with things that fade[27]: "They realize that this world and the next are both created, and they understand that the best aspects of these two realms are the twin pleasures of eating and conjugal intercourse, both of which animals also enjoy. This could never be a sufficient station [for them], for the Lord and Creator of the world and the Hereafter is greater and more lofty. For [the elite of the elite] the verse "and God is better and more enduring" (Qur'ān, 20: 73) has become manifest and they have chosen a place in "an assembly of truth in the presence of an omnipotent Lord" (Qur'ān, 54: 55), for "the Companions of the garden are ever occupied with joy" (Qur'ān, 36: 55)".[28]

For Ghazālī the distinction between belief and disbelief is not as fundamental as that between the Absolute and relative, or if one prefers, between the

Uncreated and the created. But, even Paradise is part of Creation, and God alone is uncreated. Ghazālī is aware of the elitist nature of this distinction but it is for him the only way to fully understand the doctrine of Divine Unity (*tawhīd*) and realize the virtues of detachment and impartiality which are fundamental in the faith in general and in the exercise of power in particular: "Since the Grand Vizier, may God most high grant him the loftiest of stations, calls me from a lower position to a higher one, I also call him from the 'lowest of the low'[29] to the 'highest of the high' (*a'lā l-'iliyyīn*). The lowest station is that of the first group, and the highest of the high is that of the third group… [The vizier should] make preparation to move with all due haste from the depths of the masses to the acme of the elite of the elite." [30]

Finally, the message of Ghazālī to men of power reuses much of what he taught throughout his work in spiritual matters. The difference lies in the fact that he warned people against the spiritual danger that awaits them when their capacity for action is multiplied by the power they hold. In other words, the purification of the soul, which is binding on every man is a *sine qua non* to remain faithful to the demand of justice and give others what God expects from the man of power by giving him the authority over his fellows.

Notes

1 We know that this expression was used by René Guénon (d. 1951) to describe the contribution that he wanted the traditional East should bring to the modern West. The revival that Ghazālī calls for is obviously linked to a very different environment but, in our opinion, this does not prevent some similarities. It is in both cases to fight against intellectual dryness by esotericism and initiatic doctrines.

2 In this connection, reference may be made to the detailed study of Naseem Hamid Rafiabadi entitled *Emerging from darkness. Ghazzali's Impact on the Westerner Philosophers,* New Dehli, 2002. In this book, the author also analyzes the impact of Ghazālī on the thought of Ibn Tufayl (see pp. 170-190) and that of Ibn Rushd (see pp. 213-321).

3 *Qur'ān*, 91: 7-8.

4 See *Ihyā'*, VII, p. 58.

5 *Qur'ān*, 2: 10.

6 See *Ihyā'*, I, p. 75-76.

7 *Qur'ān*, 22: 46.

8 *Qur'ān*, 50: 37.

9 *Ihyā'*, I, pp. 75-76

10 This book was published under the title *Fadā'ih al-bātiniyya* by 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, Cairo, 1383/1964. We quote this edition by the abbreviation *Mustazhiri.*

11 This book was translated into English by F.C.R. Bagley: *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, Oxford University Press, 1964. We quote this book by the abbreviation *Counsel.*

12 See *al-Mustazhirī*, p. 195 and *Counsel*, pp. 9-10.

13 See *al-Mustazhirī*, p. 198.

14 *al-Mustazhirī*, p. 198.

15 *al-Mustazhirī*, p. 201.

16 *Counsel*, p. 12.

17 *al-Mustazhirī*, p. 202.

18 *al-Mustazhirī*, p. 202.

19 See *Counsel*, ch. V, pp. 135-148.

20 C. Edmund Bosworth, "Fakhr al-Molk," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983–present), 9:164–5

21 This letter was translated from Persian and analyzed by Jonathan A.C. Brown: "The Last Days of al-Ghazzālī and the Tripartite Division of the Sufi World. Abu Hamid al-Ghazzālī's Letter to the Seljuq Vizier and Commentary", in *The Muslim World*, vol. 96, January 2006, p. 89-113. We will quote it by the title: "Letter to the Seljuq Vizier".

22 *Qur'ān*, 2:148.

23 "Letter to the Seljuq Vizier", p. 92.

24 This hadith was a staple in Ghazālī's writings.

25 *Qur'ān,* 87: 17.

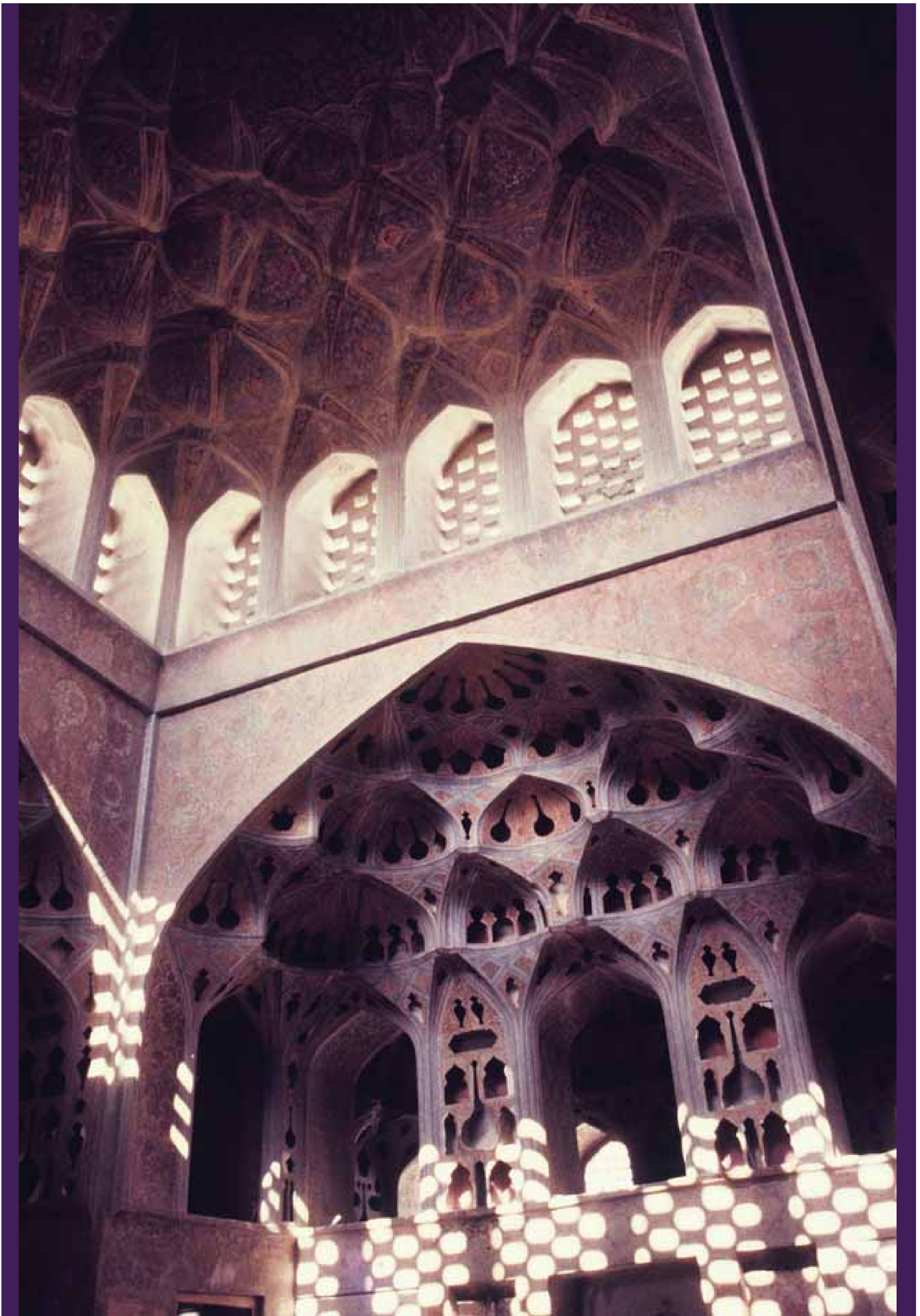
26 "Letter to the Seljuq Vizier", pp. 92-93.

27 *al-'āqil lā yuhibbu al-āfilīn*, based on *Qur'ān* 6: 76.

28 "Letter to the Seljuq Vizier", p. 93.

29 *Asfal al-sāfilīn, Qur'ān*, 95: 5.

30 "Letter to the Seljuq Vizier", pp. 93-94.



Book Review

Process, Religion, and Society. Proceeding of the Seventh International Whitehead Conference 2009. Ed. Kurian Kachappilly. 2 vols. Bangalore, India: Dharmaram Publications, 2011. 286 pp. and 263 pp.

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) proposed one of the boldest and most thoroughgoing efforts to rethink cosmology of the last century. His philosophy of organism has had a strong, though controversial, influence on Christian theology in North America and beyond, with interest growing in some circles in South and East Asia. While Whitehead is strongly rooted in the Western philosophical tradition, including Plato, the British and American empiricists, and the English Romantic poets, his thought also has strong resonances with aspects of Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist thought. Thus it is not surprising that contemporary scholars from a variety of religious and philosophical backgrounds find resources in Whitehead. The two volumes under review are collections of essays that were presented at the Seventh International Whitehead Conference at Dharmaram College and its allied institutions, Christ College and Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, in Bangalore, India in January 2009. As a sign of the international, interdisciplinary interest in Whitehead's thought, this assembly attracted scholars from North America, Europe, Africa, Turkey, India, China, Korea, and Japan, including philosophers, theologians, physicists, psychologists, lawyers, and educators. Leading American process theologians such as John B. Cobb, Jr., and Philip Clayton offered keynote addresses on Whitehead's thought in relation to society and theology. Of particular interest in these volumes are the many contributions coming from Indian, Japanese, Korean, or Chinese authors who reflect creatively on Whitehead in light of the traditional cosmologies of South and East Asia. Many of these essays explore how Whitehead's philosophy can contribute to shaping a constructive postmodern cosmology sensitive to ecological concerns.

After being trained in mathematics and classical physics in the late nineteenth century, the young Whitehead had confidence that humans fundamentally understood the physical universe. Then the theories of Albert Einstein shook many of the fundamental assumptions of scientists regarding cosmology. After early publications on mathematics, including the *Principia Mathematica* co-authored with Bertrand Russell, Whitehead turned his attention to the philosophy of science in light of Einstein's discoveries, developing his own theory of space and time. Then, after moving from England to Harvard University in 1924, Whitehead began publishing his reflections on the far-reaching philosophical project that he called "the philosophy of organism," culminating in his noted Gifford lectures, published as *Process and Reality.*

In what would come to be called ‘process philosophy”, Whitehead rejected the underlying assumption of most Western philosophy that there are permanent substances to which passing experiences occur. Whitehead reversed the perspective, maintaining that reality consists of actual entities, which, except for God, are perpetually perishing. God is the only actual entity that is not an actual occasion. Each actual occasion grasps or “prehends” its relevant universe, makes a decision on what it is to be, and then perishes, becoming part of the environment for succeeding actual entities. According to Whitehead, the beings of our ordinary experience are ever-changing societies of actual occasions, composed of countless momentary, passing pulses.

Our conscious sensations, which Whitehead called “presentational immediacy”, are not our total experience of the world but are rather symbols of and abstractions from our all-encompassing relationship, which he called “causal efficacy”. This perspective shifted the attention of empiricism away from the focus on conscious sense experience, as in earlier British empiricist philosophy to the broader, largely unconscious, interaction with the environment. Whitehead held that most of our experience is not conscious; for example, at any given moment we are largely unaware of most of what is happening in our bodies. He also claimed that the same metaphysical description applies to actual events whether there is consciousness or not. In the philosophy of organism, process is reality; each actual occasion is its becoming.

In this perspective, Whitehead boldly reinterpreted the meaning of God. In Whitehead’s philosophy, God is the only non-temporal actual entity, who is the necessary condition of all creative advance into novelty. For Whitehead, God is not the creator in the traditional sense of creating out of nothing; rather, God is the ever-present lure for feeling, presenting an initial aim for each actual occasion. In light of the emergence of new realities in modern science, Whitehead reflected on the potentials that make possible genuine novelty in the universe. Whitehead calls the pure potentials “eternal objects”, which exist in the primordial nature of God as possibilities awaiting actualization. Unlike the traditional Abrahamic religions, Whitehead did not see God as ultimately more real than creation. Whitehead’s God is omnipresent as a persuasive force for goodness and beauty at the beginning of each moment, but God does not control the universe. Each actual entity makes its own decision and thus is *causa sui*. God receives actual occasions into the consequent nature of God, treasuring the good and the beautiful and dismissing evil to triviality. In light of the relevant past, God then presents a new lure for successive moments.

In his keynote address at the beginning of volume 1, John B. Cobb, Jr., a Methodist Christian who is one of the most influential process theologians of the last half-century, sets the tone for the entire discussion by stressing the primacy of relationships in process and the implications of Whitehead’s philosophy for envisioning God and shaping society. Cobb summarizes Whitehead’s view: “There is not something already given that then relates to the world in one way whereas it might have related in another. The event only exists as the act of creatively synthesizing its relations”

(1:29-30). Cobb then compares this perspective to the Buddhist view of dependent origination, in which there are no permanent substances. Cobb further notes that Whiteheadian Christian theologians reject the notion that God is omnipotent. God's perfection, for Cobb, includes God's vulnerability: "God includes human suffering, but even when humans are overwhelmed by that suffering, God is not" (1:32).

In light of Whitehead's cosmology, Cobb offers a critique of current globalization based on "top-down development", calling instead for "bottom-up development" as holding more promise for a humanly and ecologically sustainable future. Cobb closes with the stark admonition on what is at stake in the choice of a metaphysical vision, warning that "the unrecognized metaphysics that shapes our academic disciplines and through them our public policies is damaging us spiritually and is leading to global catastrophes of unprecedented proportions" (1:37). In a similar vein Philip Clayton spells out the implications of Whitehead's vision for understanding God in a reciprocal relationship with the world, rejecting the traditional assumptions that God is timeless and changeless, with no passionate engagement with the world (1:57). Clayton suggests that there are affinities of process theology with aspects of Hindu and Buddhist thought.

Comparisons across religious and philosophical traditions call for nuance and discernment. Augustine Thottakara, a Catholic priest with extensive training in Vedanta, notes that Whitehead himself saw his philosophy as closer to some aspects of Indian and Chinese thought than to much European thought (1:38). Thottakara points out the similarity between Whitehead's view of process and the Buddhist doctrine that all objects are momentary, relative, and conditional. However, Thottakara stresses that in sharp contrast to Whitehead, "Buddhism denies and repudiates the existence and reality of all objects. They are all mental constructs and illusory projections" (1:39). Turning to the great Hindu theologian Ramanuja of South India, Thottakara notes that in most traditional Hindu religious philosophy, God, individual selves, and matter are all eternal, without beginning and end. In this tradition, there is no belief in creation out of nothing, and the world cycles are transformations of gross elements into subtle elements and vice versa (1:40). He also notes that "the law of *karma* restricts to some extent the sovereignty and omnipotence of God" (1:41), with the result that "God-concept in Hinduism is very much compromised and restricted by the all powerful law of *karma. . .* God's role is only that of a supervisor who allows to happen what is the inevitable" (1:45). Thottakara concludes that while there are points of similarity between the Indian religions and Whitehead, important differences remain.

Chinese authors Zhihe Wang notes some Chinese scholars became enthused about Whitehead's philosophy in the 1930s, but this interest, which he calls "China's first handshake with Whitehead", was tragically cut short by the military conflicts of the time. The "second handshake" began in 1995 with the movement called "Constructive Postmodernism" in China (1:95). Unlike the deconstructive postmodernism of Europe, Chinese constructive postmodern thinkers do not reject metaphysics

but rather explore cosmologies relating modern science to ancient Chinese wisdom. A number of Chinese authors are attracted to Whitehead as a model that resonates deeply with ancient Chinese forms of thought by stressing harmonious relationships. As Wang notes, "Whitehead's process philosophy is the way of thinking that is most convergent with the aim of China's education reform and with deep Chinese tradition. It has strong affinity with Chinese ideas such as organic thought, interrelationship, and concrescence" (1:105). Wang concludes that Whitehead's thought offers Chinese thinkers a way of developing ancient Chinese insights in dialogue with contemporary Western philosophy and science.

Anto Cheranthuruthy compares the visions of the late Catholic/Hindu/Buddhist theologian Raimon Panikkar and Whitehead regarding pluralism: "Both the views highlight the relativity and dynamism of reality and the need to transcend the great western divide of 'either/or.' The implication of this understanding is that the basic attitude towards pluralism is one of conciliation and not confrontation because it can accommodate diverse views in a dynamically non-dualistic manner" (2:180). Noting both the promise and threat of the situation of philosophical and religious pluralism, Cheranthuruthy proposes his own creative synthesis of Whitehead and Panikkar.

Other essays explore the relation between Whitehead and the natural sciences, especially regarding the philosophical questions posed by mind and matter, quantum theory and evolution. Following the lead of Whitehead, Mark Germine argues that contemporary science requires God "as a unifying principle, as the source of order, and as the final causality that make science work" (1:187). Leonard Gibson reflects constructively on Carl Jung's theory of archetypes in relation to Whitehead: "Opening connections between Jung and Whitehead not only resolves criticism about Jung, it also develops practical support for Whitehead's metaphysical scheme" (1:190). Luke George notes the differences between Whitehead's theory of space and time and that of Einstein, and he proposes a way to reconcile them in his own philosophical theory of system.

Many essays in the second volume under review discuss Whitehead's view of education. Numerous authors cite his view of the three stages and aspects of education, beginning with romance and proceeding through the discipline of precision to the final stage of generalization. In opposition to much of the educational establishment of his day, Whitehead strongly opposed the view of education as imparting "inert ideas" to students; he emphatically warned that this causes harm. Students should be introduced to the romance of exploring the new.

Whitehead's philosophy of education as exploration is closely related to his view of propositions. Whitehead made an important distinction between a proposition and a verbal statement. A proposition offers a vision of new possibilities for the world; it functions not primarily as a basis for belief but rather as a lure for feeling. It is through propositions that novelty enters the world, but verbal statements can never fully capture the meaning of a proposition. Even if propositions turn out to

be in error, they can still play a helpful role. Whitehead noted, "Error is the price we pay for progress" (*Process and Reality,* 187). He later asserted, "It is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true" (*Adventures of Ideas,* 244). By that criterion, the propositions of his philosophy of organism are certainly important for a pluralistic world immersed in the processes of change and of religious, cultural, and philosophical exchange.

Reviewed by Leo D. Lefebure

Biographies

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Rabbi Sid Schwarz has been a congregational rabbi, a social entrepreneur, the CEO of several non-profits and an author. He founded and led PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values for 21 years, an organization that is dedicated to inspiring, training and empowering Jewish youth to a life of leadership, activism and service. Dr. Schwarz previously served as the executive director of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington D.C. where he oversaw the public affairs and community relations work for the Jewish community. He is the founding rabbi of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, MD where he continues to teach and lead services. Dr. Schwarz holds a Ph.D. in Jewish history and is the author of over 100 articles and two groundbreaking books--*Finding a Spiritual Home: How a New Generation of Jews Can Transform the American Synagogue* (Jossey-Bass, 2000) and *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World* (Jewish Lights, 2006). Currently, Sid serves as a senior fellow at Clal: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

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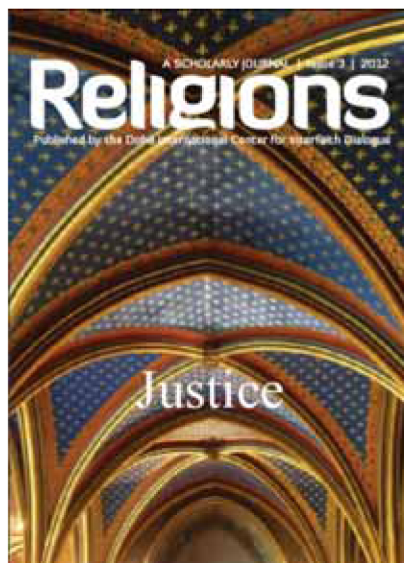

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