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Education for Equality

An Answer to Injustice and Intolerance

4th Vienna International Christian-Islamic Round Table
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Preface

The situation of our world on the threshold of the new millennium and the perspective of foreseeable global developments have inspired the "Vienna International Christian-Islamic Round Table" from the beginning. Having identified four major problem areas that confront humanity on its way into the future – intolerance, violence, poverty, and injustice – we decided to deal in our fourth meeting with "Education for Equality : An Answer to Injustice and Intolerance." We strongly felt that education would be a proper answer to the major social injustices worldwide, not the least in view of all forms of gender inequality still prevalent in our present world.

So, from their individual viewpoints and in the light of their varying experiences, the participants at the Round Table wished to cope with significant problem areas in the field of education. This broad programme covered a number of issues that appeared to be of special interest and actuality in the context of our endeavours to promote a spirit of joint sensitivity vis-à-vis common challenges and of readiness to tread new paths towards a world order under the sign of peace and justice. The wide range of crucial issues taken up referred to subjects such as education in view of religious pluralism, the right to education in religious texts and modern laws, illiteracy and access to basic education, education and gender, religious education and identity, preaching and education in Christianity and Islam, mediation of religious values at schools in European Union, religious education in Central Asia, learning justice, human rights education, and education to overcome fundamentalism. All these topics were extensively discussed, many suggestions and inventive ideas developed, and conclusions drawn on how things could be changed for the better.

In order to take a determined step further ahead, the participants at the Round Table were invited this time to take students along from their countries, so that the next generation could take over in time what we have

been pursuing in our common Vienna dialogue initiatives for many years. This idea was also welcomed by the University of Vienna and substantially supported by the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research, and under the title "VICIRoTa Summer School 2006" a pilot project finally emerged. A reception was arranged for VICIRoTa professors and students at the University of Vienna by Vicerector Dr. Arthur Mettinger. Doors were thus opened for the continuation of our common dialogue initiative in the forthcoming years under the auspicies of the university.

What we all experience on the verge of this new millennium is an ongoing – and it seems to be an irreversibly and irresistibly ongoing – development towards a hitherto unknown world scenario, towards a common living space for the many peoples of this earth, generally identified under the catchword 'globalization.' To ensure that, as mankind comes closer together technically and physically in its various regions, cultures, and interests, this takes place in peace and prosperity, we are in urgent need of a new attitude of mind that shapes brains and hearts among all nations and peoples around the globe. Physical proximity without mental closeness – without mutual respect and understanding, assistance and sharing – will lead to endless tensions and quarrels and may finally lead to worldwide conflicts. In other words, to turn the process of globalization into a promise for humanity, we need above all a dialogue based on partnership, a worldwide dialogue process on all levels – among civilizations and religions, individuals and groups, various social strata and interest groups, etc. – without which the hope for closeness would be illusory. In pursuing this process we will have to develop a new culture of dialogue, which does not interpret dialogue as a mere intellectual and academic exercise but as a matter of existential interest and importance for the future of humanity.

In our fourth plenary meeting of the Round Table we again wanted to raise a sign of hope in a world which still has to suffer from manifold mutual accusations, from making always again a bogeyman out of our neighbour, from reproaching each other for historical incidents which are kept alive in our collective memory in order to cross swords, instead of forgetting the past and striving for mutual understanding. May this dialogue meeting and its proceedings being presented here contribute to the joint task of the Muslims and the Christians to safeguard and foster social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom for all.

Andreas Bsteh – Tahir Mahmood

Moedling – New Delhi, October 2007

Illiteracy and Access to Basic Education

Saleha S. Mahmood

"iqra᾽ b-ismi r-rabbika lladhī khalaqa"

"Proclaim! (or Read!) In the name
of thy Lord and Cherisher who created"

al-Qur᾽ān, Chapter 96, Verse 1

Introduction

"Iqra᾽ – Read!" is the first commandment of God sent through Gabriel
to Prophet Muḥammad, which presumes literacy. The ability to read and
write is a basic yet essential skill that has been valued highly in the Islamic
tradition, making it the duty of every individual to seek knowledge even
if (in one famous quote of the Prophet) one has to travel as far away as to
China. In Islam one form of penance or paying for a 'sin' could be rendered
through teaching someone to read or to write. Prisoners of wars were re-
leased promptly on the condition that they agreed to teach reading and
writing skills to others. Literacy, education and knowledge are highly valued
in Islam as a faith tradition that places full responsibility on the individual
believer to 'read', to know and to understand, as well as to explain and
interpret and whenever possible, educate others.

1. Education as a human right

Almost fourteen centuries after the advent of Islam, the Universal Declara-
tion of Human Rights was adopted at the United Nations in 1948, which
included an article that affirmed that basic education is a fundamental
human right of every individual. Emanating from this is the obligation of
every society to provide universal, free and compulsory primary educa-
tion that will ensure some degree of literacy and enable every individual
to acquire skills that facilitate communication and enhance comprehension
and enable effective participation in the economy and civil society.

Ever since 1998, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has issued a report on the degree of compliance with various articles including the right to education. However, Jamil Salmi makes an important observation in his article entitled "Violence, Democracy and Education: An Analytical Framework"[1]: "the report focuses on national legislation on compulsory and free education, without reviewing actual compliance. The equality of opportunity dimension is looked at exclusively from the viewpoint of gender inequities: unequal access deserves to be analyzed as well along socio-economic, ethnic, linguistic, and religious lines". Nevertheless it is important to note that according to UNICEF, 60 per cent of the 130 million children aged 6–11 who are out of school are girls, even though among those in school, girls outperform boys.

According to the current United Nations Charter, not only does the State have the obligation of providing free universal education, it must also provide education to all without discrimination. To ensure this, Salmi cites the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education which ensures the principle of equality of educational opportunity regardless of differences in terms of regional, ethnic, religious, linguistic background or gender. Furthermore, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes the importance of "respect for the liberty of parents: to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions." It is important to note that this 'respect' is often denied to parents in democratic societies based on their allegiance to the principles of secularism to which the society wholly subscribes.

2. Education as crucial in the achievement of MDGs

At the Millennium Summit in 2000 the member countries of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration that set out eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be reached by 2015, and these are as follows:

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger

Although global poverty rates are falling, more people are poorer today than at any time in history and poverty has increased in sub-Saharan Africa where levels of education are also the lowest.

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[1] J. Salmi, "Violence, Democracy and Education: An Analytical Framework", in *LCSHD Paper Series,* no. 56 (2000).

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education

While universal enrollment has spread in more regions, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Oceania still have a long way to go in providing universal primary education.

Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women

Gender gap is closing faster in the sector of education but not equally fast in economic empowerment. However, with expanding educational opportunities for women their empowerment would also become enhanced.

Goal 4. Reduce child mortality

Each year eleven million children die from preventable or treatable causes. Ignorance and illiteracy on the part of parents and particularly mothers would aggravate this statistic.

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

At least half a million women die each year during pregnancy and child birth. The figures for maternal mortality are always lower among educated women. Thus to ensure better health of women, they must have education to take care of themselves and their families.

Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases

As a leading cause of death in many countries particularly in sub-Saharan Africa HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases are preventable and more manageable within populations that have better levels of education and literacy, as they could be informed and educated effectively in the prevention of disease and in the maintenance of health.

Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

The techniques and methods of sustainable development, so essential to the future survival of the human race, are effectively applied in literate and educated populations.

Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

The goal of establishing a global partnership for development will be reached when we have partners from developed and developing countries with enhanced commitment as well as understanding and awareness of the various issues involved. Education is a key element in successful implementation of such partnerships.

3. An unprecedented promise

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has described the MDGs as "an unprecedented promise by world leaders to address as a single package, peace, security, development, human rights and fundamental freedoms"[2]. He then goes on to declare that:

"We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed."

Ambitious as these goals might be, their importance lies in the fact that they are people-centered, time-bound and measurable; they are based on a global partnership between the more and less developed countries to advance these goals; they enjoy the support of governments, civil society and development institutions; and they are achievable. Indeed, if one is to analyze closely, the successful attainment of all of these goals is most directly related to one of them, and that is to achieve universal primary education. Indeed education facilitates the reduction of extreme poverty, enhances literacy, promotes gender equality, and empowers educated women. Education is also known to be associated with reduced child mortality; better maternal health; more effective prevention of HIV/AIDS and of other regional diseases. Educated populations may be better informed to ensure environmental sustainability and better qualified to negotiate global partnership for development.

The ability to read and write is not only desirable, but in an increasingly complex world that revolves around information and communication, the ability to read is essential to ensure safety and survival. How else would one be able to learn and acquire knowledge and information so essential to the fulfilment of one's vocation and even to the meeting of daily health, dietary and other needs and in an information age, recognize signs and labels, read and understand terms and conditions, interpret clauses in contracts and agreements, etc.?

4. Education: the cure and the means

For overcoming poverty

In the VICIRoTa of 2002 2nd Plenary Meeting when the theme was "Intolerance and Violence: Manifestations and Reasons", I had stated in my

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prepared remarks that poverty is the most serious form of violence[3] perpetrated by man against humanity. Over a billion people around the world live in abject poverty, and close to a billion go hungry every day. Women and girls form half of the world's total population and male children form a quarter. Thus three-quarters of the population in all societies, developed or less developed, are poorer and economically vulnerable. Endemic poverty is not just a result of the indolence of the poor, but of the greed of the rich; not just due to natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, floods, famine, drought and climate change alone but due to human indifference, greed and arrogance which enable the rich to get richer and force the poor to stay poorer. Due to the ignorance and lack of education among the poor and the vulnerable, the vicious cycle of poverty continues through the generations and is thus perpetuated.

And leading to development

In a report by EarthTrends entitled "Rx for Health: Education"[4], well-educated, healthy populations are of fundamental importance in raising levels of socioeconomic development.

Research suggests that increasing the average education of the labor force by one year raises the GDP by 9 percent. According to the World Bank, human resources are one of the most important components of the wealth of most nations.[5]

Research indicates that investment in basic social services including literacy and primary education usually has more impact on human development and economic growth than does spending on higher education or advanced medical facilities. A UNDP-report estimates that the social rate of return for all developing countries averages 24 percent for primary schooling, 15 percent for secondary schooling, and 12 percent for post-secondary education.[6]

The 1998 EarthTrends-report points out that many economists "now attribute much of the economic success of the 'Asian tigers' to their governments' commitment to public funding of primary education as the founda-

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[2] *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2005*. New York, 2005.

[3] S. S. Mahmood, "Intolerance and Violence: Manifestations and Reasons", in: A. Bsteh – T. Mahmood (eds.), *Intolerance and Violence. Manifestations – Reasons – Approaches* (Vienna International Christian-Islamic Round Table; 2). Mödling, 2004, pp. 23–33.

[4] *World Resources 1998–99,* date written: 1998.

[5] The World Bank, *World Development Report 1997. The State in a Changing World*. Washington, D.C., 1997, pp. 5–15.

[6] *UNDP-Human Development Report 1996*. New York, 1996, p. 74.

tion for development." It cites the examples of Pakistan and the Republic of Korea when in 1960 they had similar incomes but quite different school enrollment ratios – 30 percent in Pakistan and 94 percent in Korea. Over the next 25 years, it is observed that the per capita GDP in Korea grows to three times that of Pakistan. It is reiterated that "if Korea's enrollment ratio had stayed the same as Pakistan's, its per capita GDP would be about 40 per cent less than it is today"[7].

Access to schools

Recent trends in school enrollment indicated a worldwide increase in secondary school enrollment, 1980 to 1994, as well as increase in adult literacy rates between the years 1980 to 1995. According to the UNESCO report published in 1997, the world average for secondary school enrollment ranged from 45 to 55 percent of the school age population between 1980 and 1995. The lowest percentages were observed in Africa ranging from 20 to 30 percent and the highest was in Europe, ranging between 85 to 95 percent of the secondary school age population (Figure 1).

Figure 1. More children are attending school –
trends in secondary school enrollment, 1980–1994
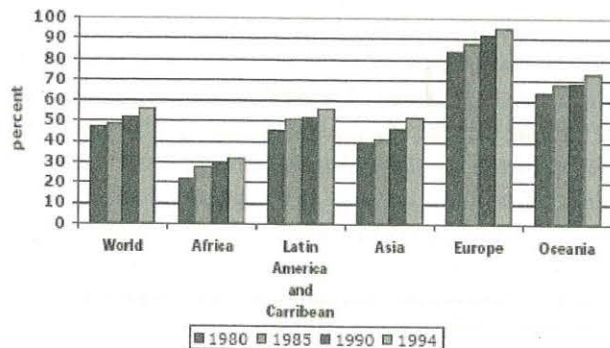
Source: UNESCO 1997: Table 2.10, pp. 2–28

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[7] Op. cit. (fn. 6), p. 76.

Adult literacy

As for trends in adult literacy, the same UNESCO study (1997) indicated the world progress from 70 to 78 percent of the adult population as literate (Figure 2). Though the trends were upwards everywhere, the lowest rates were observed in Africa where only 40 to 55 percent of the adult population are literate, while Europe retains the highest levels with about 95 to 98 percent literate population. However, the issue of functional literacy remains to be addressed by all affected populations.

Figure 2. More adults can read – trends in adult literacy, 1980–1995
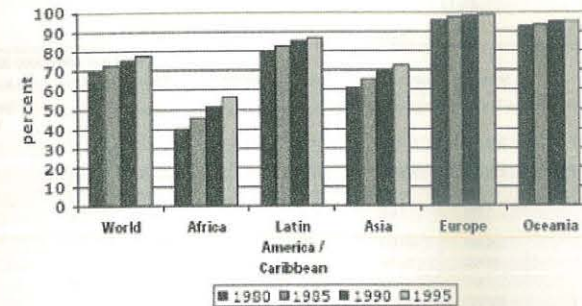
Source: UNESCO 1997: Table 2.2, pp. 2–9

A further positive trend reported by the UNDP is that the gender gap has narrowed for educational attainment between boys and girls and this has happened at all educational levels. It also points out that most progress on this front has been made in the Arab States, followed by Southeast Asia and Latin America.[8]

Adult illiteracy

The world has progressed in material terms with the advances in technology and the enrichment of economies of scale. What has continued to persist in many countries is the level of ignorance compounded by illiteracy and the abject poverty that even strikes those in the richest of countries. In the

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[8] UNDP-Human Development Report 1995. New York, 1995, p. 29.

United States, for example, 20 percent of the children live in poverty and 3.5 million people are homeless. In terms of literacy, 21 percent of Americans are functionally illiterate! In Europe, Ireland exceeds with a 35 percent functionally illiterate adult population followed by the U.K. with 25 percent functionally illiterate adults. However, the highest number of illiterates is found in South and West Asia (Table 1), with almost 35% of the world's illiterates living in India. In fact, 75% of the world's illiterate people live in only twelve countries in Asia and Africa (Figure 3).

Table 1. Estimates of adult illiterates and literacy rates by region, 1990 and 2000–2004

| | Number of illiterates (000) | | Literacy rates (%) | | Change from 1990 to 2000–2004 in: | | |
| | | | | | Number of illiterates | | Literacy rates |
	1990	2000–2004	1990	2000–2004	(000)	(%)	(percentage points)
World	871 750	771 129	75.4	81.9	-100 621	-12	6.4
Developing countries	855 127	759 199	67.0	76.4	-95 928	-11	9.4
Developed countries	14 864	10 499	98.0	98.7	-4 365	-29	0.7
Countries in transition	1 759	1 431	99.2	99.4	-328	-19	0.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	128 980	140 544	49.9	59.7	11 564	9	9.8
Arab States	63 023	65 128	50.0	62.7	2 105	3	12.6
Central Asia	572	404	98.7	99.2	-168	-29	0.5
East Asia and the Pacific	232 255	129 922	81.8	91.4	-102 333	-44	9.6
South and West Asia	382 353	381 116	47.5	58.6	-1 237	-0.3	11.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	41 742	37 901	85.0	89.7	-3 841	-9	4.7
Central and Eastern Europe	11 500	8 374	96.2	97.4	-3 126	-27	1.2
North America and Western Europe	11 326	7 740	97.9	98.7	-3 585	-32	0.8

Note: Figures may not add up to world totals because of rounding.
Source: See Chapter 2 in the full EFA Report.

Source: UNESCO, Education for All – Literacy for Life, Summary, available online, p. 19.

Figure 3. Distribution of global adult illiterate population, 2000–2004

Source: See Chapter 7 in the full EFA Report.
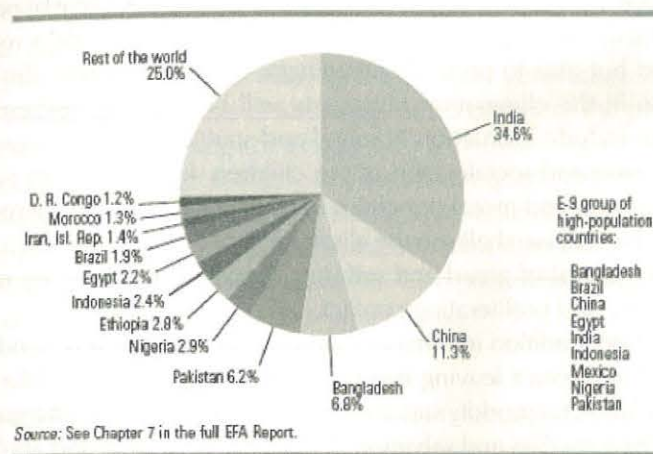
Source: UNESCO, Education for All – Literacy for Life, Summary, available online, p. 20.

In the developing world, illiteracy rates, estimated in 2002, are highest in Africa with most African countries having an illiteracy rate of about 60 percent and at 83 percent, Niger has the highest illiteracy rate in the world. The average illiteracy rate for sub-Saharan Africa is 43.20 percent; Arab States are even slightly higher with 43.40 percent, but the highest rate of illiteracy for a region is in Southern Africa with an average of 49.80 percent. On the other hand, the average for Eastern Asia and Oceania was much lower at 17.40 percent and that for Latin America was the lowest among the developing countries with a rate of 13.40 percent illiterate population.[9]

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[9] *International Literacy Explorer*. Philadelphia, Pa., Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, 1999. http://literacy.org/explorer/index.html.

5. Education for life and for meaningful living

Thus, to answer the question "How do we eliminate this cycle of poverty", the key factor is education – education "not only to provide a means of livelihood but also to promote meaningful living". However, the role of education in the elimination of poverty will be effective and enhanced only if we include instruction in moral and spiritual values so essential to the education and socialization of our children. It is only when we learn to apply ethical and moral principles to our lives and in our interpersonal relationships that we shall see the elimination of injustice and the management and control of greed and selfishness, which are fueled by rampant competition, and proliferating conflict.

As our faith tradition informs us that while we come empty handed into this world and return leaving everything behind, we may send forth only the good deeds, for worldly success may be an indicator but not a guarantor of everlasting success and salvation. Indeed the utilization and application of moral and ethical teachings that are present in all faith traditions could make this world more just and fair to all, which indeed is essential to achieve a peaceful world.

In my earlier statement I had recommended that as part of an action plan, we at the VICIRoTa should develop a policy statement on the inclusion of values/ethics/morality content in the core curriculum of schools and higher education institutions. The policy may be formulated with the assistance of curriculum specialists, particularly those associated with faith-based educational institutions. This form of pedagogy is to be disseminated and incorporated into all educational systems in order to combat the crisis in values that results from anomie or a culture of suspended values. It is only when ethical and moral issues are integrated into secular learning that we can provide the bases for balanced and informed choices.

Conclusion

In Islam, knowledge has been recognized as the most valued asset for an individual to acquire and a learned person to give. The early history of Islam saw the flowering of its culture and civilization mainly through its institutions of learning. The golden age lasted as long as these centers of learning continued to flourish and enriched the economy and society. Once the education system entered into decline then followed the downturn in economic and political trends.

Yet with the contemporary emphasis on education and vocational training, it is important to recognize that in order to meet the challenges of modern life, education particularly of the younger generation, should be geared toward the objective of an overall development of the person and not just towards developing vocational skills and producing the fodder for the labor market. That philosophy of education, equating all pedagogy as a preparation for the labor market, has become redundant along with the failed experiments of Marxism and socialism. Man does not live by bread alone. As human beings, we need to live by higher values and meet and fulfill our basic spiritual needs and requirements.

"[...] God will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted (mystic) knowledge. And God is well-acquainted with all ye do."

al-Qur'ān, Chapter 58, Verse 11

Questions and Interventions

KHOURY Illiteracy is not just a problem of the State and of society in general, but also of religion, for the illiterate has no direct access to a genuine understanding of the teachings of his/her religion. He/she is not able to scrutinize what he/she is being taught, what other people present as their own view. But, exactly this would be an indispensable prerequisite for religions, too, to make progress in the course of history, from generation to generation. I consider this also to be important for Islam, since there is no legitimized central authority in Islam that can speak and lay down things in the name of the whole *umma*.

illiteracy a problem even of religion

The right of parents to decide that their children are educated according to the parents' own religious beliefs can result from time to time in conflicts with the State. This is repeatedly the case in Germany: certain small groupings or sects do not allow their children to go to school because there the State would also like to convey its own values, of which some, however, are not accepted by the parents.

religious beliefs and the values of the State

When, in the beginning of her presentation, Dr. Saleha S. Mahmood mentioned the term *"iqra' – read!"* she drew the conclusion from it that God's commandment presupposes education, including the capacity to read and write. How then is this term to be understood when it is applied to Muḥammad, of whom Muslims believe that he was illiterate?

Muḥammad – an illiterate?

MAHMOOD S. S. No doubt, I should relate illiteracy to religious illiteracy. What I was addressing mainly from the sociological perspective, Professor Khoury of course has looked at from a theological standpoint. In fact, in Islam we do not have a central religious hierarchy, and the burden of acquiring knowledge relies exclusively on the individual. And therefore, it is very important for Muslims to be literate in order to inform themselves. There is nobody who could really tell them what to do. Even though the Prophet could not read nor write, God shows the importance of the skill to read and write.

illiteracy seen from a religious perspective

GABRIEL As expected, it appears in our discussions that not only formal literacy is the issue, but much more the question of what contents do we convey by literacy? Since children are being taught to read and write by means of certain materials, their education may be religious or secular, tolerant or intolerant, etc.

the issue of contents

MAHMOOD S. S. I totally agree – what is taught and how it is taught, is absolutely essential. Finally, the contents will always be at stake, as much as the ability for critical thinking, for analysis, and for interpretation. Particularly the right of the individual to understand and fully comprehend, is very significant. And basically, in a sense that is built into the Islamic position that you are supposed to think for yourself and to be responsible for yourself in finding out what has to be done. That is indeed essential to Islam, although I did not expressly elaborate on it in my presentation.

BSTEH It seems to me that in this context we may not make do without the aspect of the community. On the one hand, certainly, education of the individual is at stake: to make the individual human being capable of taking care of her/his own life. On the other hand, also the community will have to play a decisive role. For, is it not also the community that continuously and substantially models the contents of education? In other words, we must be sufficiently aware of the responsibility of the community to become mature for conveying the proper values to its members.

... and the role of the community

MAHMOOD S. S. I think my paper is becoming rounded up with all of these excellent suggestions, and I am reminded of a very famous title of a book which is actually a quotation of a saying in Africa, "It takes a village to raise a child." The book is written by Hillary Clinton. It takes, indeed, a whole village to participate in the socialization and education of our children. And that's another problem in our contemporary society: we are loosing that village. Instead, we are having mainly the parents, often single parents, to raise their children individually, as far as character development and inculcation of values is concerned.

"it takes a village to raise a child", yet, we are loosing the village

BSTEH Another small remark to the fact, mentioned above by Professor Khoury, that the Prophet is traditionally qualified as illiterate, *ummī*. Although, I certainly do not feel competent to interpret a saying of the Islamic tradition, I wonder about and ask myself whether we are not altogether unlearned people in face of God. Doesn't this term primarily refer to our relationship with God, and has only secondarily, if at all, to do with our ignorance in earthly matters? Independent of how much or little

'unlearned' – to be understood in face of God

we know, we are and remain listeners vis-à-vis God, people who know only by listening.

KHOURY This understanding is being reconfirmed by the following Qur'ānic verse, "Thou knewest not (before) what was Revelation, and what was Faith [...]." (Sūra 42,52). His knowledge of what he has to proclaim comes from God, not from his own.

GABRIEL We only have to be careful that statements like that are not used to create opposition to real knowledge. There are in fact trends towards playing off piety against knowledge and opening up some kind of gulf between both of them; as though the truly pious one would be an unlearned person, an ignoramus by nature. I think this would serve neither the purposes of Christianity nor of Islam as 'religions of the book'.

the danger of playing off piety against knowledge

BSTEH This indeed would be nothing short of an ideology, if we played off the religious motive of the 'unlearned', which was previously mentioned, against true knowledge and, if we would deduce from it: the less we know the more pious we are.

KHOURY The paper, in its title, was speaking of basic education. I am wondering about the role of higher learning – for the development of society, in the interest of the international community, of religions, etc.

the role of higher learning

MAHMOOD S. S. My assignment was basic education. So, I confined myself to that and presented in the course of my explanations some figures to show that, in economic and developmental terms, basic education is extremely important as it sets the foundation for the development of personality and the configuration of the value system. But, seen as a whole, basic education is not sufficient; you need to have more than to know the religious texts and scriptures.

basic education important, but not sufficient

As far as knowledge and piety are concerned, we certainly should not play off the former against the latter or vice versa. The very fact that without reading, the Prophet became the recipient of so much knowledge and information shows that knowledge basically is something divine and that we really should not be too arrogant about our human knowledge or ability to know things. Because what we know is just a spark in an ocean of darkness (cf. Sūra 6,97). What we do not know is immensely more than what we know. And ultimate knowledge, in any case, is left to divine knowledge. Therefore,

in God's light we see light

we should not be too proud in our stance, but remain humble, since we receive knowledge from a wider divine source. And this is reason enough to remain modest in our self-awareness and human activities.

BELARBI I feel that we are dealing here with education insofar as the community is responsible for it, which certainly is true. But perhaps, in this context we do not sufficiently consider the role of the State. A community that is poor and illiterate, that lives under an authoritarian regime, etc., how could it effectively promote education? Therefore, we should not overlook in this context that a substantial part of the responsibility lies with the State and that it is sometimes to be blamed for heavy failures in this respect.

education – and the role of the State

The latest UNDP-report on the Arab world has mainly raised three deficiencies: failures in the area of knowledge and education, failures in gender issues, and, thirdly, in democracy. In any case, we ought to remember the substantial share in the responsibility for education that the rulers of the States and governments actually have. They should not get tired in looking for ever new ways to spread basic education and eliminate illiteracy. Although we hear a lot about progress that is made in spreading education and despite continuous protestations that universal primary education, one of the Millennium Development Goals, will be achieved by 2015, we more and more get the impression that we might have to wait till 2050 to reach that goal. We all must take up responsibility in this matter.

In listening to God, we especially need education, basic education in general and religious education in particular. Otherwise, how will it be possible for people to recognize God, to live their religion and conceive of those principles that are conveyed by religion?

KHOURY When speaking about contents in the realm of education, the question remains: who is defining these contents and who is looking after their mediation?

MAHMOOD S. S. As far as Dr. Belarbi's intervention is concerned: yes, indeed, the State is responsible, but right now, States are failing in this regard to a great extent, and what has come to supplement the work of the State are the multinational organizations and NGOs. States are repeatedly helpless and in many ways hopeless. They have failed in many ways.

Mediation of Religious Values at Schools in European Union

Richard Potz

1. Introduction

The following reflections[1] shall focus on the question to what extent present legal foundations for religious instruction in Europe can offer an adequate framework for the mediation of common religious values.

In this respect, we have to set out from the fact that the relationship between Church, State and school is part of the classical topics of European religious law. So far, the issues of education and schooling are directly linked to the organization of the relationship between State and religion and, repeatedly, in the focus of religio-political discussions. Accordingly, the relevant levels of regulation in educational law are complex. At the outset, the inevitable hints referring to present European law may be presented:

First, I would like to refer to the area of competence regarding education in the European set of agreements. Principally, in the field of education and teaching the responsibility for contents remains with the Member States. However, in Article 149 of the founding Treaty of the European Community, professional and general education is indirectly included in the responsibility of the Community: the European Union contributes to the development of a qualitatively distinguished education by promoting the cooperation among the Member States and through supporting and complementing their activities, in strict compliance with the responsibility of the Member States for the teaching contents and the organization of the educational system as well as for the variety of their cultures and languages. This may be quite relevant to the denominational private schools and theological faculties, and therewith also to the relevant Islamic institutions.

On the other hand, since the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, by virtue of Declaration No. 11, a status-quo-guarantee exists with regard to the religio-legal concepts of the Member States. Therefore, concerning politics in both fields of education and religion, in Europe variety is on the agenda as a matter

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[1] They refer to R. Potz, "Religionsunterricht in den Staaten der Europäischen Union", in: A. Rinnerthaler (ed.), *Historische und rechtliche Aspekte des Religionsunterrichts* (Wissenschaft und Religion; 8). Frankfurt/M. etc., 2004, pp. 377–394.

of principle. But we reiterate the fact that in this case 'variety' pertains to a typical matter of cross-section, which goes on from the normative consideration of religious (and ideological) interests, so that the Community law supercedes at least indirectly national religious law in various segments that are governed by EU law. In other words, we have increasingly to expect European standards in the area of formal conditions of religious education, which will also affect the variety of existing and future Islamic educational institutions.

What are the subject areas that have to be explained? Fundamentally, there are three areas that define the triangle relationship of State – religion – education. The first two, denominational schools and religious education, belong to the classics of religious law, whereas the third, adult education and lifelong learning, is concerned with a field of activity that, in the last two decades, has increasingly gained importance.

Denominational private schools: Common to all European States, we find that the late modern State has, more or less, appropriated the educational system. In general, there is at present freedom of private schooling in Europe, of which the religious communities above all have traditionally made use. Therefore, practically, in all European States the private school system is denominationally determined. However, typical for the private school system is the obligation to fulfill certain legal prerequisites in order to be on the same level with public schools. And so, we may take a relatively standardized legal set-up as a starting point. Even in States with a large proportion of denominational private schools, the State-competence for regulation has increasingly defined the general set-up, which in a way represents a challenge to Islamic private schools.

Furthermore, we have to mention in this context that the implications of religious education in schools have, above all, to be measured against the share of denominational schools in the general educational supply. It was no accident that the closing down of denominational private schools and the monopolization of education by the State ideology was part of the first measures taken by Communists or National Socialists after their seizure of power. Statistics of students who attend denominational private schools in Europe indicate quite interesting aspects. For example, in Ireland the vast majority of schools are denominational, and in Belgium sixty percent of the students in secondary schools attend Catholic private schools. But even in a laic State like France, where Church and State are separated, the number of students who attend denominational private schools, is surprisingly large, larger than, for example, in Austria.[2]

With regard to *religious instruction,* as is well-known, there are various models. These models manifest themselves in the following ways:
- is there religious instruction in schools or not?
- is it provided by the State or by religious communities?
- is it a matter of a compulsory, facultative or free subject?
- how are religious instruction teachers trained?
- who employs the religious instruction teachers?
- who defines the curricula and teaching materials?
- what is the relation between religious instruction and the other subjects?

And finally, not less important:
- who is financing religious instruction?

Of course, all this impacts on the issue to what extent cooperation and co-ordination between religious instruction teachers of various denominations is possible or in which way common religious values may be conveyed.

As for *adult education,* it is taking place across Europe, not least in view of the demand for lifelong learning, and is becoming more and more important in a continuously spreading civil society. Very early on, the Churches took this into account, so that now, in many European States, adult education may be seen virtually as a typical field of activity of the Churches. Although this is beyond the scope of this contribution, I would like to stress the link connecting the concepts of lifelong learning with these opportunities of conveying common religious values. The concepts-opportunities link would also be an interesting field of activity for the future work of VICIRoTa.

2. Religio-legal systematization and religious education

The incorporation of educational affairs into State-competence has had various consequences in the individual European States:
- in most of the States, the Church's influence in the field of school instruction was reduced to religious instruction, which is basically still

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[2] Cf. the articles concerning the individual States in G. Robbers (ed.), *State and Church in the European Union.* Baden-Baden, 1996 (German: *Staat und Kirche in der Europäischen Union.* Baden-Baden, [2]2005.

maintained, while at the same time the tendency of State supervision has increased;

- within the system of strict separation of State and Church religious education was eliminated from public schools;
- insofar as institutional forms of an interconnection between State and State-Church remained, the State maintained the corresponding State-denominational religious instruction in its responsibility.

Idealtypically, the connection between State and Church manifests itself in the State-Church oriented organization of religious instruction through the State, in the various forms of integration of a denominationally organized or defined instruction into the public schools, or in the elimination of religious instruction from public schools.

Notwithstanding these divergent traditions, the basic types of religious instruction have become overlaid in recent decades by three distinguishable, but interconnected phenomena:

1/- Basically, we have to refer to Article 2 of the Protocol No. 1 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. By means of the "claim to respect" which was formulated there, the State is not required by the obligation to guarantee education according to the religious and philosophical convictions of the parents, but rather to respect these convictions in the framework of the official education system (safe-guarding educational pluralism). As explained by the judiciary of the Strasbourg instances, the parental right does not exhaust itself in the classical liberal right of defence, but implies the obligation of the State to take positive measures of protection, to protect pluralism of school types and pluralism in school. However, from this guarantee of parental rights, neither a claim to the establishment of certain teaching institutions or approved schools nor an education system that corresponds to certain religious or philosophical convictions of the parents can be derived.[3] When becoming active in the field of instruction and education, the State is prohibited from religious or philosophical indoctrination within the scope of materials that are integrated into the programme of instruction.

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[3] Cf. B. Schinkele, "Staatskirchenrechtliche Überlegungen zur aktuellen Diskussion um Religions- und Ethikunterricht", in: Festschrift Schnizer, Österreichisches Archiv für Kirchenrecht 42 (1993), pp. 220–255 (here: pp. 244 f.); M. Göllner, Die Bildungs- und Lehraufgabe des Ethikunterrichts in Europa im Vergleich (Philosophie in der Schule; 2). Münster, 2002.

2/- The emphasis on individual religious freedom in connection with the parental right, has had type specific-varying and yet quite converging consequences.

- Normally, in the States of the first type (the 'State-Church'), the responsibility of the State concerning religious instruction is retained. On account of the legal warranties that are protecting religious freedom, a transition took place to present in religious instruction other religions as well, thereby approaching a kind of comparative religious-ethical instruction. An example of this are the schools in the United Kingdom, which are either supported by the State or are independent. In each school that is supported by the State, the standard curriculum includes religious instruction. There is basically obligatory Christian religious instruction. Since the mid-1970s, a partial restructuring took place towards a multi-religious instruction, special attention being paid to the presentation of Islam. However, this type of instruction was criticized both by the Christian-conservative side and by the Muslims because of the secular foundation of multicultural education, that was underlying the respective concepts of instruction.
- In the States of the second type, 'religio-neutral civil-social integration of religion', the right to give denominational religious instruction was increasingly conceded to the religious communities – for the purposes of the religio-legal principle of parity. These States are socio-historically stamped Catholic or bi-denominational, respectively. The prevailing differences between the individual States of this type are essentially defined by the size of the non-Catholic minorities and the degree of being bi-denominational, respectively. In some States that belong to this group, such as Italy, a preference emerges for Catholic religious instruction.

In States that provide denominationally organized religious instruction, the State is responsible for making it compatible with civil education. Together with the realization of denominational instruction in public schools, the religious communities, on their part, take the responsibility upon themselves to meet in this instruction the central purposes of education especially in the interest of an open and democratic society. This system has already been implemented, mainly in Austria and Belgium, with regard to Islam.

- In States with strict separation of Church and State, no real change resulted at first from this development, for, by cutting out the religious

dimension, religion as a whole but not the individual religious communities were discriminated against. In France, the prototype of this system, religious instruction is provided for only at denominational private schools, which traditionally are rather important however. But private schools, which are bound by contract, endeavour to treat all students on an equal basis without discriminating with regard to religious affiliation among other things. Therefore, in these schools, religious instruction is not mandatory.

In these cases, too, a certain amount of adjustment to the general educational goals is expected. Interestingly, at present, the establishment of religious-ethical instruction is under discussion in France. Its background might be the attention paid to the emergence and publicity of manifold religious commitment. It needs to be borne in mind that the original reason most important for eliminating religious instruction from public schools, that is in this case the disentanglement of State and Catholic Church, would cease to apply.

In these States, private extra-curricular religious instruction is regularly offered, which, however, being beyond public control, runs the risk of losing transparency, a characteristic that belongs to the basic social rules of an open society.

3/- A third phenomenon, which has to be looked at, are the reforms in the 1970s and 1980s that relate to education and schooling, and which also have a bearing on religious instruction. In these reforms, the previously mentioned developments were connected with rearrangements of the pedagogical concepts, which necessarily led to conflicts with the Churches. Having been concentrated for a long period on the interpretation of texts in general and of Holy Scripture in particular in the light of the Modern Age, a kind of religious instruction was now called for that was conceived of in the line of comparative religion and expected to convey basic knowledge in the field of religion by refraining from any kind of indoctrination. What followed was a type of religious instruction that oriented itself by the students: it tried to focus on them, on their queries and problems, and permitted in class to treat only what relates to the life of the students. The most recent concept of a correlative religious instruction tries to combine the advantages of all concepts by assigning the same status both to the life of the students and to the faith of the religious community in their interrelationship and interaction.

3. Final observations

In summary, we may notice that in all European States old religio-legal structures have been relatively clearly maintained as regards denominational school systems and religious instruction. However, since the reform thrusts of the 1970s and 1980s, we tend to find in all European States a number of convergences, which can be summarized as follows:

- a religious freedom and parity tendency leads to a reduction in granting individual Churches privileges with regard to religious instruction;
- the increasing willingness of Christian Churches to co-operate leads to an ecumenical tendency, which, seen in a wider ecumenism, also brings together all the other religious communities;
- the just mentioned willingness to cooperate as well as the religio-neutral interest of the State results in a comparative-religious tendency in religious instruction.

Through all these developments the religious communities are also challenged. Religious instruction cannot be seen as a function within a sheltered space, which immunizes against criticism. It needs to expose itself to the raw atmosphere of public critical discussion. The credibility of religions is at stake here. This requires their capability of playing an active part in the social discourse and conveying common values therein, even under the conditions of an open society.

Questions and Interventions

the right of parents to ensure religious education

MAHMOOD S. S. If I have understood Professor Potz correctly, it is the right of parents to provide religious education to their children, and it is said very clearly that there is no duty on the part of the State to look after it. The Convention, therefore, which assures the parents of their right, is not so much about the State's duty to provide religious education, but rather about its duty not to hinder the parents' right to provide it.

POTZ The "Protocol No. 1 to the [European] Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" (1952) says that "the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions". That is to say, the State has to *respect* this right, and not only not to *hinder* it. For this, in the realm of public education and teaching, the State must not provide lop-sided ideological education.

As an example taken from the Austrian situation, I would like to point to the fact that the concern for the religious dimension belongs to the main goals of the Austrian school system. And from this results the legal basis for granting religious instruction in school. A person committed to religion, on the said constitutional basis is therefore entitled to receive religious education in Austria. This is more than what is said in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights.

the role of private and of State schools in providing religious education

MAHMOOD S. S. What seems to me, furthermore, worth mentioning is the fact that in Europe private schools tend to be denominationally determined. On the other hand, in many Islamic countries most private schools, being very secular and providing modern liberal education, tend to be non-denominational. So, in Islamic countries, the State schools tend to convey religious contents rather than the private schools. What a contrast!

POTZ Behind it, you will find a historical development in Europe. There the State has been simply taking over the school system in its differentiated manner. And by that the State schools are of a secular kind and the private schools in all European countries for the most part denominational. Certainly, this development, in its inverse similarity, is note-worthy.

IQBAL A minor comment on Dr. Saleha S. Mahmood's observation that in Islamic countries private schools are mostly non-denominational: in fact, there are two categories of private schools. Those which are, for the most part, schools for the elite – they have somehow the right to be not religious. But then we have the *madrasas*, which is a very pervasive private school system, and they are obviously totally religiously dominated. As a matter of fact, the different *madrasas* are related to different religious denominations, which is really creating a lot of problems for us.

POTZ Of course, this is a problem in all European countries, too. Those private schools that are interested in getting State recognition, need to acknowledge a certain framework of standards. These general conditions, for example, are also accepted by Islamic schools, which then receive recognition according to public law. This mainly concerns general State curricula, which are accepted in these schools and supplemented by units of Islamic religious instruction, Arabic language, etc.

The situation may become problematic when certain schools are not interested at all in being affiliated to the school systems of the State. In this case, however, they are not private schools in the legal sense, and their school qualifications are not acknowledged by the State.

the right of the parents – and the rights of the child

BELARBI I would like to refer back to the article quoted above of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights. There, the right is conceded to the parents to educate their children in a religious way.

To some extent this is opposed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which grants the child the right "to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (Article 14). Doesn't this imply some sort of dilemma? On the one hand, parents are entitled to give their child religious education, and on the other hand, the child is granted the possibility to choose its own religious belief. I think, for this reason many Islamic and Arab countries did not unconditionally approve of this Convention.

POTZ I was mentioning the Protocol to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights because, in contrast to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the regulations that are included in the former can be pushed through by law. In fact, a number of decisions that were taken by the Strasbourg Law Court refer to this additional Protocol.

Professor Belarbi has rightfully been pointing to a dilemma that exists concerning the issue of religious education, i. e., between the right of the parents and the rights of the child. This also is true of Austria, where a child, aged 14 years and above, becomes responsible to choose its own religion and, simultaneously, between the age of 14 and 18 years – vaguely

speaking – is still under the limited authority of its parents. In one of our earlier meetings, I had already been referring to a particularly significant case in this context.[1]

By that, a young person aged 14 years and over, in Austria or in Germany for instance, can lay claim to the right of leaving his/her religion. But when coming home, he/she is still, to some extent, under the authority of his/her parents. This dilemma, in the legal sense, is difficult to be resolved, and therefore it is also difficult for courts to deal with it. On the other hand, one wants to insist on the age of 14, because a religious decision is a most personal decision, that can be already taken earlier in life.

MAHMOOD T. I think it is generally accepted, that East and West have each their own idea on secularism. That also affects the education system. So, for example, the Indian constitution knows in the field of educational institutions of three different types:

various ideas on secularism affect education systems

first, there are educational institutions which are established and wholly financed by the State; they are ordered not to practise any kind of religious education. Schools, however, which are not established by the State, but only supported financially, are permitted to convey religious education, yet only on a voluntary basis, and the decision of the school to give religious instruction depends on the free consent of the parents. Finally, there are schools, which are neither established by the State nor do they receive any subsidies from the government: they are completely free to do in the field of religion what they think to be proper. And it is this third category to which the innumerable *madrasas* belong that are scattered all over the country.

This difference between the Western education system, as it was explained by Professor Potz, and the system which we find in India – and quite similarly also in Pakistan or Bangladesh – is characteristic for the Eastern concept of secularism, that mirrors our option to be secular, but at the same time not to put up a partition between religion and State.

POTZ I would like to take an example as a starting point: there exists in Vienna a French school, the "Lycée Français de Vienne", which, based on a treaty between Austria and France, offers both Austrian and French diplomas. It

special regulations in Austria

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[1] See A. Bsteh – T. Mahmood (eds.), *Reading the Signs of the Time: Contemporary Challenges for Christians and Muslims* (Vienna International Christian-Islamic Round Table; 1). Mödling, 2003, p. 113.

is, therefore, a French state-run school, in which religious instruction is practised, because it is at the same time an Austrian school and, by that, has to offer religion as a compulsory subject (apart from the fact that in France itself, in three Départements which in 1905 belonged to Germany, there is religious instruction too).

So, here in Austria, the secular State does not put up a partition between religion and State, but takes the view of an "inclusive neutrality" [einer "hereinnehmenden Neutralität"]: there, religion as a phenomenon is included, however, from a neutral point of view, it is accepted as an essentially social phenomenon, yet without any preference for a certain religious system or philosophy.

KHOURY As far as religious instruction is concerned in Germany, it is not the responsibility of the State either to define the curriculum or the subject of instruction, which is in fact seen as belonging to the assignments of the individual religious community. That is why religious instruction becomes a problem in Germany, because there the Muslims do not form a homogenous negotiating partner for the State. There is, in other words, no body that could accept this function in the face of the State.

... and in Germany

But, since the State is also interested in establishing regular Islamic religious instruction in schools, in North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, a curriculum was introduced that was elaborated by the State with the help of an expert in Islamic studies and of a professor in pedagogics, both being Christians. The curriculum was then sent to competent authorities in Ankara and in Cairo who agreed to it and said that it can be introduced. Subsequently, however, the Muslim communities in Germany protested against this procedure and the curriculum was rejected.

As for Islamic private schools, they quite often fail, first, because the school is maintained by somebody who, according to the public authorities, perhaps is not competent to run such a school; second, because of the teaching materials, insofar as in these schools certain points of the curriculum are disguised, and third, because of the lack of qualification on the part of the teachers.

The government has now established three chairs – one of them at the University of Heidelberg and the others at the Universities of Münster and Frankfurt, the problem being the small number of students who are in fact interested to follow these courses and to achieve the relevant qualifications.

Mahmood S. S. Just to follow up on Dr. Khoury's comment, it would be interesting to know more about the situation of religious education for Christians in Germany, whether Catholics or Protestants. When we hear of the problems of Muslim minority communities, we must be aware of their various geographical origins and cultural backgrounds; some are minorities of conversion, some minorities of migration, some minorities of dislocation, etc. So their issues may be very different. Therefore, we need to know what challenges parallel Christian denominations are facing in their schools. Some things may be different, some again parallel.

Potz A very good example concerning the question raised by Dr. Saleha S. Mahmood is the situation of the Christian Orthodox community in Austria. First, we have to consider the fact that the vast majority of immigrants in Vienna in the recent 20 to 25 years does not come from Turkey, but from Serbia and Bosnia. And, in fact, the Serbian Orthodox religious education is a veritable problem. In one case, a Greek Orthodox Albanian wanted her daughter to participate in the Orthodox religious instruction. But when she heard that the teacher there was a Serb, she declared her child to be non-denominational and sent her voluntarily to a Catholic class, because it was simply unimaginable for her that she, as an Albanian, should take her child to a Serbian Orthodox religious instruction, although this would still have happened within one and the same religious denomination. So, all in all, it is more difficult to organize a common Orthodox religious instruction in Austria because of the various nationalities (Serbs, Albanians, Romanians, Russians, etc.) to whom the families belong, than to organize a common Islamic religious instruction.

Gabriel Following up the latest intervention of Professor Tahir Mahmood, I would be interested to know whether or not the Indian *madrasas* are authorized to issue certificates that are acknowledged by the State. And: at which age are Indian children entitled to decide to which religion they want to adhere?

Mahmood T. According to the national law of India, the child's right to choose her/his religion is on her/his attaining the age of majority, i. e., at the age of 18 years. A young person under 18 has to follow the religion of his/her father.

About the *madrasas*: there are two kinds of *madrasas* in India. The first kind of *madrasas* blend the secular education with religious education. These *madrasas* are fully recognized by the State, and most of the federal units have special legislation for regulating their operation; their degrees and diplomas are recognized.

There is a second category of *madrasas*, however, which is providing only religious education. And for that there is neither a legal requirement of registration nor a State recognition of their degrees and diplomas.

Potz One more word concerning Professor Khoury's latest observation on the situation of Islamic religious instruction in Germany. It is indeed due to a lucky historical incidence that in 1912, Muslims in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, after the annexation of Bosnia, gained, in legal terms, complete equality and in this context, the Muslim religious community was given a homogeneous structure. Here, the State has an official contact and is formally entitled to react to certain things. And in this connection the question of competence is not raised either, because, according to Austrian national law, every recognized religious community is authorized *ex lege* to run such schools, whether they are Muslims, Buddhists or Mormons.

By the way, the University of Vienna will start a master curriculum for Islamic religious education in autumn this year. It is planned that students who take part in it have already finished before a three year's curriculum at the Islamic Religious-Pedagogical Academy and acquired some kind of Bachelor, in order to continue their studies by the aforementioned Master course at the University of Vienna. For this purpose a chair of Religious Pedagogics was established, which is comparable to the previously mentioned ones in Münster or Frankfurt.

Right to Education in Religious Texts and Modern Laws

Tahir Mahmood

Introduction

Early this year the government of India announced a plan to provide for a reserved quota for certain socially backward classes of the society in the higher-level general and professional educational institutions. As a similar quota already existing since 1950 is restricted to three chosen religious communities and select tribal groups, the newly proposed quota was obviously meant mainly for the backward among the other religious groups. While nobody has ever objected to the pre-existing restrictive quota, the new proposal led to a massive agitation spearheaded by professional students and trainees. All efforts of the government to placate them failed and the agitation turned violent. At last the conflict reached the apex court of the country which has now warned the agitators to behave and, simultaneously, sought from the government some explanations about the justifiability and feasibility of its new quota plan. Going by the country's legendary delay in the decision of court cases, a temporary truce has been achieved. I have, however, been asking myself all these days if the government's new plan is meant to ensure some measure of equality in educational opportunities for all the backward sections of the society irrespective of creed and caste, why did a section of the present-day students express such a strong resentment about it? Is not India a nation whose Constitution does guarantee to all its citizens equality and justice and does mandate the State to handle with special care the educational and economic needs of all weaker sections of the society without any discrimination?

While still searching for an answer, I came across two disturbing news items in two different leading dailies of India about certain happenings elsewhere in the world. The *Times of India* of 1st June informed its readers that the government of Britain – a fully developed nation that is never tired of swearing by the modern human rights law – has decided of late to treat entirely differently in every respect the so-called "EU and non-EU" doctors, though both are serving the British citizens under the local National Health Service. Disgruntled with the government's move the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPOI) has, according to the report, chal-

lenged it in a local court. My conscience was disturbed by this unexpected news. The other news, in the *Asian Age,* did not disturb my conscience – it stirred my soul. It related to Pakistan – where as per the Constitution Islam is the State religion and the Qur'ān and the Sunna the guiding principles for the government for all its policies and actions. The report cited a recent speech of the country's Education Minister saying that his country had a low literacy rate of less than 50 % and was "indeed a nation of drop outs with a massive 45 % of students quitting schools mid-way – at the end of the day only 2 % of school-goers joining the universities."

Is it understandable why this should be the state of affairs in the world today, while Islam and various other religious faiths have laid so much stress on literacy and education and where for more than a century national and international laws have been proclaiming education to be a basic human right of every human being? It is in this background that I present to my listeners here a brief account of how classical religious teachings, modern international law and domestic constitutions propose that education is a basic human right and how terribly the proposal is being disposed in actual practice worldwide.

1. Right to education in religious precepts

The majority religion of India, Hinduism, has in its scripture and other religious texts laid great stress on learning *(vidyā)*. Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, is worshipped in most Hindu homes. *vidyādan* (gift of learning) is considered in the Hindu religion the most pious service the educated can render to the society. All the other religions of the East and the West also lay stress on literacy, education and learning; no religious faith wants its followers to remain unlettered. Under the Islamic teachings, to get educated is a basic human right of every individual – male and female – and to make every member of the community educated a sacred duty of the community as a whole. The very first Divine revelation the Prophet of Islam had received on the Mount Ḥīrā' in the 7th century AD began with a command for reading and a reference to the importance of pen:

"*Iqra' b-ismi r-rabbika lladhī khalaqa,*
khalaqa l-insāna min 'alaqin.
Iqra' wa-rabbuka l-akramu
lladhī 'allama bi-l-qalami,
'allama l-insāna mā lam ya'lam. –

Read in the name of thy Lord, the Creator
Who has created the man from a clot of blood
Read and thy Lord is most kind who taught through pen
And let the man learn what he knew not."

(The Holy Qur'ān, Chapter 96, Verses 1–5)

Faithfully conveying this Divine command directing all men and women to educate themselves, the great Prophet had soon emphatically declared: "*Talabu l-'ilmi farīḍatun 'alā kulli muslimin wa-muslimatin* – To get educated is a sacred obligation of every Muslim man and woman." Not specifically limited to the youngsters, this command indeed implied also what is now called adult education. And certainly the Prophet was not talking of religious education only, but wanted all men and women among his followers to acquire also worldly learning. This is evident from his other meaningful exhortation: "*Uṭlubū l-'ilma wa-law kāna bi ṣ-Ṣīn* – Acquire knowledge even if you find it in China." Clearly, China was not a place he would ask his people to go to learn Islamic theology. Translating his vision on education into concrete action, after his glorious victory in the celebrated Battle of Badr the Prophet had decided to free without ransom the educated among the prisoners of war if they could impart reading and writing skills to the illiterate among his own followers. Even a non-Islamic society was thus fit enough for learning, and the services of even enemies fit enough to be utilised for acquiring literacy and education.

Despite these great teachings of Islam today not only higher-level education but even literacy is not common among the Muslims of India and many other countries. It is a pity that both the right of the individuals to get educated as also the duty of the community to educate them – both of which are given utmost importance in the Islamic religious texts – have both been eclipsed by some other far less important religious teachings. This, in my opinion, is the primary reason for all the multifarious problems the Muslims are facing – and some of them causing to the rest of the world – even in this 21st century. This state of affairs is indeed shameful for a community whose religion is replete with such forceful principles and precedents on the right to get educated and the duty to educate others.

2. Right to education in international law

Coming to the modern human rights law, it was over 57 years ago that the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* had proclaimed in no uncertain terms[1]:

- "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

Eighteen years later the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* of 1966 had affirmed that[2]:

"The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."

As regards children's right to education, the UN *Declaration of the Rights of the Child,* adopted in 1959, had said that[3]:

"The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents."

After three decades the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) had reasserted that[4]:

"States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity [...].

States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries. [...]

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment."

The *Vienna Declaration* adopted here in Austria at a *World Conference on Human Rights* in 1993 had reaffirmed that[5]:

- "States are duty-bound [...] to ensure that education is aimed at strengthening the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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[1] *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), Article 26.
[2] *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966), Article 13 (1).
[3] *UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child* (1959), Principle 7.

[4] *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), Articles 28 f.
[5] World Conference on Human Rights. *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action 1993,* I/33 and II/Section D/78–80.

- Education should promote understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations between the nations and all racial or religious groups and encourage the development of United Nations activities in pursuance of these objectives.
- [...] education on human rights and the dissemination of proper information, both theoretical and practical, play an important role in the promotion and respect of human rights with regard to all individuals without distinction of any kind such as race, sex, language or religion, and this should be integrated in the education policies at the national as well as international levels. [...]
- The World Conference on Human Rights considers human rights education, training and public information essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.
- States should strive to eradicate illiteracy and should direct education towards the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The World Conference on Human Rights calls on all States and institutions to include human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all learning institutions in formal and non-formal settings.
- Human rights education should include peace, democracy, development and social justice, as set forth in international and regional human rights instruments, in order to achieve common understanding and awareness with a view to strengthening universal commitment to human rights."

3. Right to education in national laws

National constitutions across the globe invariably recognize people's right to education and the State's duty to make them educated.

Among the most populous countries of the East, in *China* the Constitution declares that the citizens have "the right as well as the duty to receive education" and the "freedom to engage in scientific research, literary and artistic creation, and other cultural pursuits."[6]

In *India* the Constitution had begun in 1950 with a Directive Principle of State Policy mandating the State to ensure within a decade free and compulsory education for all children below 14 years.[7] While this target remained beyond the State's reach for five decades, half a century later the Constitution was amended to make education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years[8], and to provide the same to them a fundamental duty of all parents and guardians.[9]

Under the Constitution of *South Africa* "Everyone has the right (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and (b) to further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible." Also, the "State must consider all reasonable educational alternatives [...] taking into account (a) equity; (b) practicability; and (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices."[10]

In *Egypt* the Constitution declares that "education is a right guaranteed by the State" and that "Combating illiteracy shall be a national duty for which all the people's capacity shall be mobilized."[11]

4. Ground realities: global concerns

The question is whether the dictates of the international law and guarantees of the domestic constitutions in respect of people's right to education and State's duty to provide the same are being actually followed in practice? Let us see what the world scenario in this regard is.

At a grand world conference organized by the UNESCO in 1990 at *Jomtien in Thailand* the nations of the world had acknowledged that[12]:

"Despite notable efforts by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all, the following realities persist:
- More than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, have no access to primary schooling;
- More than 960 million adults, two-thirds of whom are women, are illiterate, and functional illiteracy is a significant problem in all countries, industrialized and developing;

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6   *Constitution of the People's Republic of China 1982*, Articles 46 f.

7   *Constitution of India 1950*, Article 45 [original].
8   *Ibid.*, Article 21-A added by *The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002*.
9   *Ibid.*, Article 51-A (k), *The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002*.
10 *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996*, Article 29.
11 *Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt 1980*, Articles 18. 21.
12 *UNESCO World Declaration on Education for All*, Jomtien/Thailand, March 1990, Preamble.

- More than one-third of the world's adults have no access to the printed knowledge, new skills and technologies that could improve the quality of their lives and help them shape, and adapt to, social and cultural change; and
- More than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes; millions more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skills."

The Jomtien global meet had eventually proclaimed a *World Declaration on Education for All (EFA)*. Reaffirming the right of all people to education and forcefully describing this to be "the foundation of our determination, singly and together, to ensure education for all", the nations of the world had committed themselves "to act cooperatively through our own spheres of responsibility, taking all necessary steps to achieve the goals of education for all."[13]

The EFA Declaration especially called for "an active commitment" for "removing educational disparities" referring in this connection to the "underserved groups: the poor; street and working children; rural and remote populations; nomads and migrant workers; indigenous peoples; ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities; refugees; those displaced by war; and people under occupation".[14]

A few years later, in April 2000, a massive exercise was undertaken at a *World Education Forum* conducted at *Dakar* in Senegal to assess the aftermath of EFA Declaration. Attended by 1100 participants consisting of governments and NGOs worldwide, the Forum adopted the "Dakar Framework for Action". Making an assessment of the progress on EFA, the Forum concluded that[15]:

"The EFA 2000 Assessment demonstrates that there has been significant progress in many countries. But it is unacceptable in the year 2000 that more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are illiterate, gender discrimination continues to permeate education systems, and the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies. Youth and adults are denied access to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and full participation in their societies. Without accelerated progress towards education for all, national and internationally agreed targets for poverty reduction will be missed, and inequalities between countries and within societies will widen."

Recognizing that education was the key to peace and stability within and among the nations, and making a frank assessment of the ground realities in that regard prevailing worldwide at the turn of the century, the Dakar Forum had made the following major proclamations[16]:

- "The vision of Jomtien remains pertinent and powerful. It provides a broad and comprehensive view of education and its critical role in empowering individuals and transforming societies. Its key points and principles include universal access to learning; a focus on equity; emphasis on learning outcomes; broadening the means and the scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning; and strengthening partnerships. Tragically, reality has fallen far short of this vision: millions of people are still denied the right to education and the opportunities it brings to live safer, healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives. [...]"
- The Assessment shows that progress has been achieved, proving that Education for All is a realistic and achievable goal. But it needs to be frankly acknowledged that progress has been uneven and far too slow. At the start of a new millennium, the EFA 2000 Assessment shows that:
  (i) Of the more than 800 million children under six years of age, fewer than a third benefit from any form of early childhood education.
  (ii) Some 113 million children, 60 per cent of whom are girls, have no access to primary schooling.
  (iii) At least 880 million adults are illiterate, of whom the majority are women."

These figures represent an affront to human dignity and denial of the right to education. They stand as major barriers to eliminating poverty and attaining sustainable development, and are clearly unacceptable.
- "Such a failure has multiple causes: weak political will, insufficient financial resources and the inefficient use of those available, the burden of debt, inadequate attention to the learning needs of the poor and the excluded, a lack of attention to the quality of learning and an absence of commitment to overcoming gender disparities. There can be no doubt

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13   Ibid., http://www.unesco.org/education/efa.
14   Ibid., Article III/4.
15   World Education Forum, *The Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments*. Dakar/Senegal, April 2000, no. 5.

16   Ibid., *Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action*. http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/dakfram_eng.shtml.

that the barriers to achieving Education for All are formidable. Yet they can and must be overcome. [...]

- Schools should be respected and protected as sanctuaries and zones of peace. Education programmes should be designed to promote the full development of the human personality and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26). Such programmes should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, and all ethnic and religious groups; should be sensitive to cultural and linguistic identities, and respectful of diversity; and reinforce a culture of peace. Education should promote not only skills such as the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict but also social and ethical values. [...]
- To achieve these goals, we the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to [...] meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, national calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and help to prevent violence and conflict. [...] Political will and stronger national leadership are needed for the effective and successful implementation of national plans in each of the countries concerned."

Conclusion

Today, nearly 58 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed education to be a fundamental human right for all with a view to eliminating inequalities of all kinds and dimensions, the landscape of the right to education remains far from being just and equitable. There is a host of guarantees under UN documents, regional charters and national constitutions on free and compulsory education for all school-age children with an absolute equality and no discrimination whatsoever. But not even primary education is free in almost half of the countries in the world. The goal of making all human beings equal through proper education has not been achieved at all. Human rights bodies confirm that education is a human right and cite international legal guarantees agreed to by the world governments. These same governments are, however, often found at the WTO meets seeking liberalization of business in education. How can education be both a basic human right and a luxury available only to those who can meet its exorbitant costs? This is indeed a bewildering paradox.

The letter and spirit of international human rights law requires the educational system to adapt itself to the needs and interests of the children coming from different backgrounds. Contrary to this, in many countries children are often forced to opt between their socio-religious traditions and education, or at least good education. Adherents of one religion have to participate in the rituals of another as the price of good education. In some countries girls are expelled from schools if they wear a head scarf, in some other countries if they don't.

It is conveniently forgotten that children do not start school as equals. Their diverse abilities and varied backgrounds affect their result transcripts. This in turn shatters the promise of "education leading to equality." Schools often increase inequalities by rewarding the lucky and punishing the less fortunate. Education has traditionally been seen as the way in which individuals can overcome the inequalities of society for themselves. Yet the enduring inequalities in the society based on discriminatory grounds like class, gender, minority status, ethnicity and disability are still reflected in and reproduced by the educational system. In the hands of disgruntled and misguided individuals these inequalities get cooked into all sorts of activities culminating into injustice and intolerance.

In our time proper education of the individual has become the most pressing need of the human society – for therein lies the answer to the injustices and intolerance rampant in the human world. Religious texts that ensure human-rights based education must be made use of; and national and international laws must be recast to ensure that education at all levels and everywhere in the world leads to the establishment of a human-rights culture on the globe.

There is a pressing need to have a second look at what is taught at schools and colleges. Human rights must be made an essential part of the curriculum right from the primary levels. It must be ensured that education does not do more harm than good. Education must be designed so as to become the solution to the injustices and intolerance the human world is grappling with, not a minefield of sources and motivation for creating the same. The human world as a whole owes this responsibility to each of its present and future inhabitants. If this solemn responsibility is not fulfilled, all the religious precepts and modern legal prescriptions on literacy and education will perpetually remain hollow and meaningless.

Questions and Interventions

KHIDOYATOV Of course, there is a fundamental right to education. We know, however, that there is a big difference between rights on the one hand and their factual implementation on the other. During my repeated visits to Pakistan and India, I was deeply affected by the fact that you can note high standards of education in urban areas and, vice versa, an immense number of illiterates in rural areas. At the same time, I was extremely impressed in India to see the progress in the field of computerization, as far as I know in this regard ranking second in the world.

standards of education in rural and in urban areas

So I wanted to ask Professor Mahmood how he thinks about the developments in the educational field in the Indian villages. For, it was Mahatma Gandhi who paid special attention to the problem of primary schools in rural areas. It doesn't seem to be only an Indian problem, but one that probably exists all over the Asian countries. However, Chinese and Japanese people have been very successful in eliminating illiteracy from their countries. We can take this as a very positive example of the important role of the State in spreading education. Perhaps, it is the task of the State to make education policy part of the State policy.

MAHMOOD T. What was just said by Professor Khidoyatov I understand more by way of a statement than of a question. But if he wants to know whether there has been any progress from the days of our Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi up to now in respect of education in rural areas, then there has been tremendous progress. At the same time, there has also been tremendous increasing of our population, both rural and urban. Today, India is the home of 1.1 billion people and, within this exorbitant population, the State does not have the resources to provide free and compulsory education to every child. The issue, therefore, continues to occupy India's state policies.

Indian Muslims educationally in a problematic situation

It was 20 years from now that the government passed a national education policy, and there it was frankly acknowledged that the 140 million Muslims have been educationally the most backward community in the country. And it was a shame on the Muslims who confess, that "to get educated is a sacred obligation of every Muslim man and woman" [cf. above pp. 42 f.]. For a community having this commandment from the Prophet, it was definitely a shame when the government declared that Muslims are educationally the most backward community in our country. But neither the government did much nor the community itself used its own resources. Nothing, more or less, has changed since then. However, the basic problems in India are different from the rest of the world: there are prejudices, there is poverty, there are inadequacies by the local politics, etc.

KHOURY So far we have analyzed the factual situation and its lamentable consequences. Therefore the urgent question: which factors hamper the transition from theory to practice, from right to law and from law to its implementation, so that we have to take notice of this lamentable state of education in India and in many other countries? Second: which factors could be helpful to get on?

which factors hamper, which support increase of education?

MAHMOOD T. It will be too unrealistic for us to depend exclusively on the State resources and the State mechanism anywhere in the country. That is why, in my paper you will find a blend of the religious commandments concerning religious education in various religions and the legal prescriptions. It is high time that instead of focussing our attention only on the legal prescriptions, if we turned our attention also to the religious prescriptions, if the religious communities and leaders worldwide, by uniting themselves, faithfully translated those commandments of the religions to put religious education into practice. There is total disunity in the Muslim world in every country. At least in respect of education they should unite. That will be one of the preconditions for them for doing anything in respect of reinforcing the religious commandments relating to religious education. They should unite to see that the religious commandments of all religions in respect of education become the ground reality in the world. The responsibility lies heavier on their shoulders than on the State.

blend of religious commandments and legal prescriptions

The States do have their resources. There are international grants given to the various countries, but there are different conditions for giving those grants. These institutions, which are in a position to give aid for educational purposes, they are most concerned about the business aspect of education, as for instance the World Trade Organization in New York. I think we have waited enough for action by the governments. Now it is time that we should not only wait for action from the religious leaders, but force them to act.

get religious leaders to act

GABRIEL This kind of provokes me to bring in two points into our discussion. First, I would like to note that there are always strong interests connected with education and that the question of contents is most relevant in this context, which also arouse a lot of conflicts within our communities. Second, there is the financial question, and I am not sure whether it should really be left to the religious communities mainly. Should we not be concerned in the present situation with bringing the different agents together: religions, States and international community?

let religions, States and international community cooperate

And should we not also try our best to design educational programs which rely on the best type of contents, that means on fundamental human values, like peace, justice and all the important issues we have been discussing here around this Round Table?

educational programs to be based on fundamental human values

MAHMOOD T. Certainly, we should not absolve the State of its legal responsibilities. This would be a great misunderstanding. On the contrary, we should keep on forcing the State to perform its duties in the field of education. But in addition to that, it is high time that religious leaders are active too, and they should realize that they have to act for warranting education quite generally, not only religious education. Coming to Islam, for example, when our Prophet had declared, "Acquire knowledge even when you have to go to China", obviously he was not expecting Muslims to go to China to learn Islamic theology; he wanted them to learn science and mathematics, in which China was leading in the world at that time [cf. above p. 43]. So the religious leaders had to learn that this is what the Prophet expected. But the problem is that if you ask a cleric in Pakistan or in India about this, he will say that this Ḥadīth is of doubtful authenticity.

MAHMOOD S. S. First a word of thanks to Professor Mahmood for stating the issue about the Ḥadīth and then two short remarks. What was said about the specifics of education that Muslims receive in India: since they constitute only 12 % of the Indian population, it does not reflect all the Muslim issues.

situation in India does not reflect all the Muslim issues

The second point refers to the success story in Kerala. It would be interesting to know more about it, because there, as everybody knows, we discover – even among Muslims – the highest literacy rate in India and also in Asia. And, as Profes-

... and the success story in Kerala

sor Khidoyatov already has mentioned, it has to do with the IT revolution in India as well.

MAHMOOD T. The latest Indian census report puts the national level population of Muslims at 13.4 %. Furthermore, those 13.4 mean 145 million people, and we should not forget that the Muslims of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh taken together are the dominant majority among the Muslims of the world. Only the Muslim population of India is larger than the total population of Britain and France. Therefore, what is happening to this section of the Muslims should be much more important for the international bodies and scholars.

Muslims of India a major factor

Concerning the question about Kerala: I would say Communism is part of the answer, because Kerala has always been ruled by the Communists. It is because of that high level of education, literacy and consciousness about world affairs, that Communism and socialism carry with them, that Kerala has been able to achieve that much progress. But maybe there is still another reason which is more important: the fact that Muslims and Christians, the minorities, if you count their total number, are the majority in Kerala. Therefore the local Hindu majority cannot take too much liberties in neglecting this long segment of the population constituted by the Muslims and the Christians. This also has played an important role in keeping Kerala the most progressive State in the country.

the special situation of Kerala

POTZ A problem that interests me a lot is the decline of education in Central Asia after the collapse of Communism. So, for example, many colleagues in Tajikistan deplore that, soon after the breakdown of Communism, the interest in participating in the educational process on the part of girl students has quickly decreased. What reasons might be decisive for that? Obviously, this concerns an internal ideological problem of Communism that is not specifically referring to the relationship between Communism and Islam, but turning up again, for example, in the relationship between Communism and Christianity: thus we will find no State in Latin America in which there are no illiterates, but Cuba. What are the reasons for that?

decline of education in post-Communist era

KHIDOYATOV The Russian Revolution in 1917 was followed by a clash between the Communist ideology and Islam. It was in the interest of the Communist system that the influence of Islam was eliminated. This was not intended to be accomplished by way of a militant conflict, but

the emphasis on education in Communist era

through education. First, they changed from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet and afterwards to the Russian one. Understandably, it was a very complicated situation. What was decisive then was the fact that in the Communist era education became a matter of State policy. Whereas the expenditures according to the budget in some countries made up about 1 % of the total budget, they rose during the Soviet era to 10 %. This implied a lot of financial resources in favour of educational purposes. In every village new schools were established. To be educated became a matter of prestige. Without being educated, there was no access to work. Whatever can be criticized of Communism, but in the field of education, of cultural development great advances must be admitted.

An example of this is China with its 1.5 billion people. If you go there, you will discover that everyone in this country is literate, notwithstanding all the difficulties in connection with the Chinese characters. Mao Tse-tung was the most educated man in his country. He was familiar with 2,500 characters, while, for a modern and intelligent Chinese it suffices to know about 1,000 characters. We can notice an enormous progress, even in Tibet. It does not prevent people from educating themselves and studying, so much as the Dalai Lama is being worshipped there.

MAHMOOD T. I think, what made the difference is the emphasis of Communism on equality in everything. In other, non-Communist ideologies there is not so much stress on equality, because education is being denied on various grounds, sometimes even on the basis of religion, minority status, and so on. So it seems to me that it is this stress of the Communist ideology on equality of their citizens irrespective of God's creed and other reasons, that education became more prevalent there. All nations and all '-isms' claim that education is part of their ideology – but in the Communist regime the said emphasis on equality gained acceptance more than in other regimes.

the Communist stress on equality of all citizens

MAHMOOD S. S. Indeed, one thing that Communism has successfully achieved is to spread education universally in these Central Asian and other former Communist countries. But otherwise there were a lot of discriminations and differentiations for other reasons in the times of Communism.

KHOURY In the course of this discussion, the assignment of religions to the task of conveying values was mentioned once. Perhaps, we should not leave this task only to religions, but we must also call on them

conveying values a joint task of religions

to cooperate in this respect and contribute their share. Why should we take a sceptical view of religions where the mediation of values is at stake which education is supposed to convey. Is it not especially in the field of values that all religions come close to each other? If scepticism is appropriate here, this must be due to other reasons.

GABRIEL In my previous intervention the point was that in all issues concerning education, the question of contents which are conveyed through education is at stake too. We must not assume that education necessarily aims at values like tolerance and humaneness. Therefore, my scepticism did not refer to the religious communities, but generally to the assumption that in education automatically the proper contents would be conveyed.

not automatically the proper values are conveyed in education

BELARBI On my part, I would like to underline also Professor Gabriel's concern about the contents of education because, frequently, this issue plays a decisive role. If only we think that precisely these contents also might convey authoritarian ideas and discriminatory assumptions vis-à-vis minorities or in the context of gender issues. That is why, on the basis of the main fundamental principles of religion, which are tolerance, solidarity and equity, we must focus on the elaboration of new contents and new policies in the field of religious education. Haven't rulers sometimes been using religious education to keep the population in a state of ignorance and lethargy in order to keep them away from struggling for their democratic rights? We disapprove of this kind of religious education, because it is directed against the human being, democracy and human rights. It is directed against religion as such.

in the field of religious education – new contents and policies must be elaborated

MAHMOOD T. Towards the end of my paper I have expressed great concern about the contents of education. And insofar as religious education goes, there is so much disagreement and difference of opinion among the various groups within different religions, that sometimes we do not really know what will be taught in the name of religious education. If, in the name of religious education, we go to the Christians about crusades and the Muslims about *djihād,* for example, it is not going to lead anywhere. Religious education must not mean that one religion expects its followers

religious education must be permanently readjusted to the true values of religion

to fight the followers of other religions, it must permanently be readjusted to the true values of religion, which is universal brotherhood, which preaches man to respect man. This kind of religious education should be made compulsory, not what some of our clerics think is religious education.

Preaching and Education in Christianity and Islam: An Orthodox Perspective

Georges Khodr

By way of an introduction

At the outset of my talk, I would like to suggest that our title "Preaching and Education" implies first and foremost the fashioning of human behaviour into a process of gradual socialization-in-community that takes God as its ultimate revolving axis.

In other words, the main purpose of preaching is education-in-community. It is to broaden the confines of the community of believers and push it beyond its material boundaries, to take it into people's souls, into their homes and into their life-in-the-city.

As Archbishop John (Shahovskoy) puts it in a poetic image: "Just as bees, gathering honey from the flowers of the field take it into their hives, so believers, after true prayer, take heavenly sweetness from the communal worship 'event' to their homes and distribute it into the world."[1]

1. The proclaiming of truth

From an Orthodox Christian perspective, a sermon is an outpouring of the Spirit on the people, on their heart, mind and will. It is a pastoral task that could take three forms:

- Preaching in church or in other words, the whole field of hermeneutics. It has its basis in the exegetical proclamation of the Gospel truth in the light of church tradition or the teachings of Jesus as it has been carried down to us first in the Gospels and the commentaries of the first 'preachers' or the Apostles and later on, of the Church fathers. The preacher's words should be a direct, simple proclamation of the Gospel truth.
- Lecturing outside of the church or the whole field of Christian education in formal and informal institutions such as schools, institutions of higher

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[1] Archbishop John (Shahovskoy), The Orthodox Pastor: Outline of Pastoral Theology (Saint Vladimir's Press). 1966, p. 50.

learning as well as set-ups of continuing education such as clubs, community groups and the like.

- Bearing witness in the homes and thereby in the 'city'.

This Christian perspective has interesting parallels in Islam:

- The tradition of Islamic preaching has its basis in the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad, who is regarded by Muslims as the first and model preacher *(khaṭīb)*.[2] Muḥammad delivered sermons, conducted meetings and rallied his followers in the first mosque, a space adjacent to his home in Medina.[3] He carried out this task in his capacity as the first leader of the *umma* or Muslim community. In this sense, the mosque itself was conceived of as the ultimate community center, with both spiritual and practical uses. Early on, the mosque took on a multipurpose character that reflected the multifaceted role of the preacher. As described by Richard Antoun in his famous book *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World,* the mosque "was a place of asylum, a place to discuss important public matters, a school, a resting place for travellers, and a place of worship."[4]
The preacher's role within such a framework logically corresponds to a blend of the worldly everyday life aspect and the soteriological aspect, essentially mediating between the two.
- Muslim preaching has thus been central in forming public opinion, building grass-roots organizations, and developing educational cadres for a wider Islamist approach to education.
- As for the aspect of bearing witness, this task in Islam is referred to as *djihād*. As Gaffney explains, it is common for non-Muslims to believe that the word *djihād*, which literally means 'holy struggle' in Arabic, means waging a physical war against the infidels.[5] While this meaning is correct, the word itself is not limited to just this meaning. *djihād* could also be done through peaceful preaching of Islam: "Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching [...]" (Qur'ān 16,125).

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[2] R. T. Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World: A Jordanian Case Study in Comparative Perspective.* Princeton, NJ, 1989, p. 67. The title *khaṭīb* refers specifically to the preacher giving the Friday sermon *(khuṭba)* in a mosque.

[3] P. D. Gaffney, *The Prophet's Pulpit: Islamic Preaching in Contemporary Egypt* (Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies; 20). Berkeley, 1994, p. 19.

[4] *Op. cit.* (fn. 2), p. 68.

[5] *Op. cit.* (fn. 3), p. 28.

Muslims are commanded to do *djihād* with non-Muslims in open dialogues, and this through knowledge and wisdom. If a Muslim dies while he is contributing to spreading Islam, whether he died while preparing material or died on his way to a dialogue, then he would be considered a martyr by the will and the mercy of the Lord. It is interesting to note here that the Arabic word for 'witness' *(shahāda)* also means literally 'martyrdom'.

2. The preacher

In Islam the most familiar and ritualized form of preaching takes place in mosques where the preacher, who gives the formal Friday sermon, is known as the *khaṭīb* (or *imām*, literally meaning the one who stands in front), and the ceremonial delivery of the *khuṭba* represents a straightforward inheritance from the tradition established by the Prophet, designed to replicate his method of speaking to the *'umma'* (or people).

The development of the *khaṭīb*'s role is inseparable from the legacy of the Prophet. But in order fully to understand the cultural, political and social roots of the preacher's authority in Islamic politics and society, the tradition of the *khaṭīb* should be traced back to a time before the spread of Islam, when the *khaṭīb* was a tribal spokesman or storyteller. He carried special insignia in public appearances which could be a lance or a staff which was an outward sign symbolizing the fact that he represented the tribe. In the early days of Islam, the Prophet adapted the role of the *khaṭīb* to speak "publicly with ceremony and authority."[6] Still carrying the staff or lance of the tribal *khaṭīb* as a symbol of authority and dignity, the Islamic *khaṭīb* addressed the Muslim community, not in the context of tribal war and competition, but as a messenger of God's divine purpose. Moreover as *khaṭīb*, the Prophet did not only pronounce on spiritual issues; he also used the pulpit to promote a dynamic project of ethical and social reform.

The significance of the preacher's pulpit as a place where earthly and spiritual authority intersects is reinforced in its traditional association with the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, all of whom delivered the *khuṭba* themselves in their capacity as leaders of the Muslim community. It was "quite in keeping with the nature of early Islam and with that of the Arab *khaṭīb* that the ruler himself was spokesman and that he not only

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[6] *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (EI[2]). vol. IV, s. v. *khaṭīb*, p. 1110.

made edifying speeches from the *minbar* [pulpit] as *khaṭīb* but also issued orders, made decisions and pronounced his views on political questions and particularly questions of general interest."[7]

This explicit political connection, linking the ruler with the *minbar,* and the role of *khaṭīb* continued beyond the first four Caliphs under the rule of the Umayyads and their governors, who held the right to control the pulpit by giving the authoritative Friday sermon and presiding over congregational prayers *(ṣalāt)*. Even long after the actual ruler ceased to act as *khaṭīb,* a tradition developed in which the *khaṭīb,* sitting on the *minbar* in the ruler's place, would include a prayer for the well-being of the sovereign. In modern times and in accordance with this tradition, the mention or omission of the ruler's name could indicate to the people gathered for prayers a political statement on the part of the *khaṭīb* either for or against the political establishment.

In support of this, Gaffney writes that the pulpit embodies public authority and mosques "are local manifestations of the religio-political order that characterizes the communities that build, maintain and ideally staff them."[8] In this sense, the preacher's authority comes not only from God, but also, significantly, from within the community itself, which theoretically legitimizes that authority through *idjmāʿ* or consensus. Antoun rightly remarks that many individual preachers today continue to use the sermon as a form of symbolic public discourse to promote the 'official line' as dictated by government. Since preachers and their sermons play central roles in transmitting ethical norms of behaviour in 'Islamizing' society, they are able to exercise a great deal of influence and flexibility within their own communities.

Nonetheless, Islam knows no sacramental priesthood and drawing parallels between the role of the priest and that of the *khaṭīb* may lead us to misunderstandings. A few interesting remarks though cannot be neglected:

- The pastor in the Orthodox understanding is an *imām* in the sense that he is delegated by the people 'to stand in front' of the assembly at God's altar. At the ceremony of ordination it is essential that the people proclaim in *idjmāʿ* (consensus), "He is worthy!", before the officiating cleric invokes the descent of the gift of the Spirit on the one to be ordained. However, the priesthood is a function of the people as an organic unit representing the one common body of Christ.

- The pastor is not a-political or neutral. He is rather meta-political and seeks the City that is to come. That is why he should know the conditions of 'life in the city'. Without joining any particular party or siding with or against any particular sovereign, he must be prepared to have among his flock men of widely differing convictions and mutually hostile parties. He must admonish these men standing side by side before the holy Chalice, to bring into their lives the Spirit of unity in brotherly love.

- A pastor is not 'outside life': he is merely outside its vanities, his direct task is not to invent new methods of social organization, but to make the most of every given social organization in order to teach men to be faithful to God. He educates men to be faithful in all conditions of life and on every path of it to be followers of Christ's Spirit.

- Like the Lord Jesus Christ himself, a pastor teaches men not what social forms they should adopt, but in what way they should relate to one another in society.

3. The educational process

The teaching task in Islam is not a duty limited to *khaṭībs*, who lead prayers in the mosque and deliver the formal *khuṭba* (or message). On the contrary, extending the 'invitation' or *daʿwa* (call) to accept Islam can be considered the responsibility of all true believers and is not necessarily limited to a mosque setting.

The primary use of the concept of *daʿwa* in the Qurʾān refers to a personal appeal or vow to God's commandment to Muslims to spread the message of the revealed religion by guiding others, through reason and persuasion, to the 'straight path' of God: "Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best [...]" (16,125).

Since the Qurʾān also proclaims that there is "no compulsion in religion" (2,256), the idea of *daʿwa* as a religious and social mission suggests an emphasis on 'rational intellection' rather than force or compulsion. The Qurʾān acknowledges that some stubborn or foolish people will never answer the call, no matter how often or persuasively they are invited, but there is also a Qurʾānic argument for stressing patience rather than retaliation:

"[...] For thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance. And if ye do catch them out, catch them out no worse than they catch you out: but if ye show patience, that is indeed the

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[7] Ibid.
[8] *Op. cit.* (fn. 3), p. 23.

best (course) for those who are patient. And do thou be patient, for thy patience is but from God; nor grieve over them: and distress not thyself because of their plots." (16,125–127).

da'wa is issued by a *dāʿī* or *dāʿiya* (caller), who can be any Muslim using well-informed argument, eloquent persuasion and self-example to summon others to take up an Islamic way of life and join the community of believers *(umma)*. This 'communal dimension' of *da'wa* is emphasized by the Qurʾānic concept of 'contract' or 'covenant' *(mīthāq)* existing between God and all Muslims. In this sense, believers enter into the *mīthāq* in response to God's original *da'wa* as passed down to human beings through his Prophet, taking up the duty of *da'wa* as an inheritance: "The appeal of God transfers into an appeal by the Prophet; whereon Muḥammad, in turn, organizes those who answer him, taking from each a covenant and creating thereby an 'ummah' that ultimately assumes the responsibility of '*da'wah*' on its own."[9]

Importantly, *da'wa* also can be understood as a spiritual project that is "as much intended for the benefit of Muslims as of non-Muslims."[10] The fundamental essence of *da'wa* is *tawḥīd,* or acceptance of the oneness of God[11], but the concept can have a broader philosophical and social application. Ismaʾil al-Faruqi argued that the idea of *da'wa* is at the heart of Islam's spiritual and intellectual experience as a quest for self-knowledge and fulfillment of God's divine plan to realize human potential: "All men stand under the obligation to actualize the divine pattern in space and time. This task is never complete for any individual. The Muslim is supposedly the person, who, having accepted the burden, has set himself on the road of actualization. The non-Muslim still has to accept the change. Hence, '*da'wah*' is necessarily addressed to both, to the Muslim to press forward toward actualization and to the non-Muslim to join the ranks of those who make the pursuit of God's pattern supreme."[12]

Understood in this way, *da'wa* is as much a personal process of self-actualization as it is a religious mission. al-Faruqi's image of *da'wa* summoning non-Muslims to "join the ranks" of Muslims in their efforts to realize God's plan conjures up the image of an army of believers, not in the sense of military *djihād,* but as a divinely inspired society communally striving for

self-improvement. Such an interpretation can be based on the following Qurʾānic lines: "Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong [...]" (3,104).

da'wa then is the command to promote good and fight injustice at large. Sūra 3,104 articulates a sense of *da'wa* as a synonym of *umma* and of righteousness itself.[13]

In this context one cannot help but stop at the words of the risen Lord to the disciples: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15).

These words put the Christian understanding of *da'wa* – if it can be called so – in a nutshell. They help us, Christians and Muslims alike, put our common calling in its proper perspective. As we are today increasingly walking in a world of like predicament and mutual involvement, we may be outsiders to one another's dogmas, but none is outsider to humanity and to the God with whom we have to do. As we get nearer to Him we realize more and more that He gets us into a common situation of response, a response to Him, which has to be expressed-in-community in order to bear fruit. The words of our response do not happen as speech, as an educational message, as mere words rushing out over the other's head. This speech has no alphabet; each of its sounds is a common situation, which binds us together in our everyday lives.

Both our Christian mystics and Muslim *ṣūfīs* have spoken of the ultimate meaning of 'education' as the divine darkness of unknowing. It does not reside in ideological conversations limited to concepts and doctrines preached and taught in two self-enclosed communities where none regards and addresses his partner in reality. This divine darkness of unknowing is the night of an expectation – not of a vague hope but of an expectation that is fulfilled in us and through us only in this relation of mutual response. We expect a theophany of which we know nothing but the place, and the place is called *umma* or community.

In the common night of our common expectation, we are perhaps on our way to realizing that there is no single word of God, which can be clearly known and advocated, but the words delivered are clarified for us in our human situation of being turned to one another.

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[9] *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World,* s. v. da'wah.

[10] I. al-Faruqi, "On the Nature of Islamic Da'wah", in: *Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wah: Proceedings of the Chambésy Dialogue Consultation.* Leicester, 1982, p. 35.

[11] *Op. cit.* (fn. 9).

[12] *Op. cit.* (fn. 10), p. 35.

[13] *Op. cit.* (fn. 9).

There is no obedience to the Coming One without loyalty to his creatures. Only then will genuine common life appear, not that of an identical content of faith, but that of a common situation of anguish and expectation. The way we respond to this situation binds us together in a common quest of Him who comes to us.

Perhaps the most eloquent summing up of preaching and education is best portrayed in an-Nasafī's creed which states, "He, whose Majesty is majestic, speaks with a Word *(kalām)*. This Word is a quality from all eternity, not belonging to the genus of letters and sounds, a quality that is incompatible with coming to silence [...]. God Most High speaks with this Word, commanding and prohibiting and narrating. And [...] the uncreated Word of God, repeated by our tongues, heard by our ears [...], preserved in our hearts, yet not simply a transient state *(ḥāl)* in these [...]."[14]

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[14] D. B. MacDonald, *Development of Muslim Theology: Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory.* New York, NY, 1903, pp. 309 f.

Bsteh Being most appreciative of Msgr. Khodr's presentation, I think that a field of tension becomes obvious here, in which the Christian community is living. The proclaimed word on the one hand creates community; on the other hand, the community that lives out of this word is an assembly of people who are personally answerable and responsible to their God. The tension between this indispensably critical element of the individual human being vis-à-vis his/her community and the proclaimed word, on the one hand, and the role of the word insofar as it creates community, on the other, how can we get both elements into a balanced interrelationship?

the proclaimed word creates community and makes people personally responsible to their God

The faithful's openness to the word that creates its own community of believers and, at the same time, the absolutely personal element – immanent to the individual's responsibility, that must always be self-critical and never accept unquestioned and uncritical from the community what is a living reality in the community or, now and then, still handed on although it has passed away long since. Here, I realize a wide field of tension if both the community and the individual believer in it wish to be alive.

Khodr It applies to the Christian community that it is of an eschatological character, as we like to say, that means, a community which is rooted in hope, awaiting eagerly God's definitive revelation – be it Christ's second advent or, if one thinks of the Muslim community, the advent of the Mahdī. It is a community that is continuously moving and, speaking of the Church, here and now never completely identical with the 'body of Christ'. It lives in the world, but it does not belong to the world (cf. Jn 15:19; 17:14–18).

eschatological character of the Christian community

After a long time of discussions among the Reformers and the other Churches, we are now ready to confess that we are a 'Church of sinners'. What we are, we live always in the tension between a sinful body, a body to be continuously corrected and renewed by the word of God – and what this community will be at the end of times, "a bride adorned for her husband, the wife of the Lamb" (Rev 21:2.9). The word and the sacraments are as it were the structure of the Church, the sacraments being some other form

of the word itself. Therefore, the Church is in itself criticism of the world in obedience to the word – and yet we are still striving for what we are called to be.

the *umma* in the tension of being the "best of People" and still in need of being corrected

Of course, in Islam we don't have the same way of seeing things with respect to the *umma*; there is no such concept in Islam as the 'body of Christ'. And yet, the Qur'ān says, "Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind [...] – *kuntum khayra ummatin ukhridjat li n-nāsi* [...]" (Sūra 3,110). Of course, Muslims do not think either that their community as it exists in fact now in Lebanon, Syria, Saudi-Arabia or Afghanistan, is already the best of all. Muslims rather conceive of themselves as the community of God, insofar as they face up, always anew, to the call of God, to the word addressed to them, and thus are ready to correct themselves. Only in this way – hoping, fighting and striving – the Muslim community is about to become the best one.

differences between the Christian preacher and the imām

MAHMOOD S. S. Where Christian and Muslim understanding of education is at issue, with emphasis on preaching, we must be aware of the fact that the 'preacher' is a different category of people in Islam and in Christianity. We have neither professional churches nor preachers as such, in other words, the *imām* is not the equivalent to the priest and we do not know of a ritualized system of priesthood. How would that affect the differences in emphasis on education for preaching, for the formal preacher in Christianity and the informal leader in Islam?

God guides us through His word

KHODR In Christian understanding, the priest is not a mediator between God and humankind. There is no mediation except that of "Christ, Jesus himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tm 2:5 f.). Any other human being is not a mediator. The approach to God is open for all. In some sense, however, we may attribute to the Church a mediating function, insofar as the Church offers an inner and spiritual community, that extends to the individual the chance to become a person that is in communion with others, a community in which we may experience God's saving proximity. God guides us so to say directly by his word. And if the priest preaches his own ideas, his private theology, we need not listen to him, can correct him, and so on.

... and the priest is called to educate and help people on their way

Some time ago, we had a very good *'ālim*, 'Abdallāh al-'Alāyilī, who was educated at al-Azhar. He was not too religious a man, but, at his time, he was perhaps the best Arabist in the whole world. He once said, "I watch the Christians having that priesthood, because there are people who take care of the individuals." If we bear in mind that the Church will receive its perfection only at the end of times and is therefore an eschatological entity, the individual believer will not yet be perfectly sanctified till then. And al-'Alāyilī interestingly observed that the Christian institution of priesthood is meaningful, because by that one does not only look after the preaching of the word of God, but also pays attention to the fact whether people verily have received it in their hearts and live accordingly. So the priest is somebody who helps people on their way so that they do not get tired, but finally achieve their goal. Of course, among priests there is also from time to time the one or the other hired hand "who sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away [...] because a hired hand does not care for the sheep" (Jn 10:12–14).

In my diocese there are 97 parishes and I regularly get reports on the situation of the various local communities and their priests – whether they are facing imminent dangers from inside or from outside, and so on. So the Bishop is something like a shepherd and guard, he is a *mudjtahid*, one who keeps guard.

the word of God proclaimed by humans?

SCHABESTARI A priest proclaims the word of God, this was said by Msgr. Khodr when he spoke about preaching in a Christian perspective. I would like to know more in detail what this in fact means.

the question of Scripture and tradition

KHODR We all know of Martin Luther's famous saying *"sola scriptura"*: that it is only the Bible where the word of God can be found. In the Roman-Catholic Church, however, the emphasis is on the fact that there are two sources of faith, namely Scripture and tradition. One did not know of a catechism in the Christian Church before Martin Luther: people had been reading the Gospel and they participated in the liturgy. These were the sources of their education in matters of faith.

it is the spirit that gives life

In response to the question which was raised by Professor Schabestari, I would like to stress the fact that we find the word of God in the words of the Bible the way they are handed down to us in the consensus of the Church Fathers.

But what does this exactly mean, the consensus of the Fathers? No doubt, we repeatedly have to ask where this consensus in fact may be found and where an individual Father was right or not right in stating this or that. We even might say that this word of God is given to us through the tradition of the Church. What do we mean by that? I once formulated that the Church tradition does not mean anything but the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit to himself. By that, in simple words, the Spirit of God is meant who – throughout all centuries and within the change of periods – inspires the same truth. So there is no physical definition of God's word, but a spiritual one: a definition that understands the word of God in the light of the Spirit, who, through the change of times, remains faithful to himself and hands over the word of God to both the individual and the community.

| the word of God can be understood only in its effect, not in its essence | **SCHABESTARI** As I see it, we have to note a different understanding of the word of God, the *kalām Allāh*, in Islam and in Christianity. Concerning the human word, we know what it is, because we are experiencing our own humanness, because we are living in a human society, and are capable of expressing ourselves – this |

is then our own word; and when other people express themselves – it is their word that consoles or hurts, that gets us further or pins us down, and so on. But the word of God, how can we define it, if it is in fact something else than the word of man? If God is the Wholly-Other, as Karl Barth used to call him, then his word is entirely different, too. But if a word is entirely different, how should we understand? Ibn 'Arabī, a great mystic in Islam, he says that the word of God must be understood in the light of what it causes. So, we cannot define it in its essence, but only in its effect, because and insofar as there is no similar effect resulting from the human word. Is there a comparable understanding in Christianity – that the word of God can only be recognized from its special effect, its spiritual effect?

| we should respect differences in both our religions | **MAHMOOD T.** Before Msgr. Khodr will answer to Professor Schabestari's question, I would like to say that, first, we must take care not to deviate from this meeting's special topic by raising the question after |

the Christian or Muslim concept of *kalām Allāh*.
Furthermore, I want to take up once again what Dr. Saleha Mahmood was saying very rightly that in Islam, unlike the great Christian religious traditions, there is no clergy. The Qur'ān or the Holy Prophet, they did not create an ecclesiastical hierarchy in Islam. And therefore the word 'preacher' is a word

alien to original Islamic teachings. All his life, the Prophet kept saying, "I am but a man like you – *innamā anā basharun mithlukum*" (cf. Sūra 18,110; 41,6). He never said, "I am a preacher" or, "I am teaching religious things", but, "I am a human being". He secondly said about himself, "I am the city of knowledge. I am the city of learning – *anā madīnatu 'ilmin*." He neither ascribed to himself the role of a preacher nor did he create a hierarchy, like we have in Christianity.
We have to accept these differences and we must learn to live with them. I respect God and I respect the teachings of God. There is no need to compare every single teaching or every single feature of the two religions. We are expected here to speak about education and the teachings of both our religions on the issue of getting educated and educating others.

| preaching as a means of education | **KHOURY** We are speaking about preaching as a means of education. The question suggests itself: for what are we educating by preaching? In any case, we intend to impart to the community something of our tradition, |

of our own religion.
Furthermore, the question arises: to what extent are we as Christians expected to follow the message of the Apostles and imitate their conduct, and similarly, to what extent are Muslims expected to follow the message of the Prophet Muḥammad and imitate his conduct? The response might be different depending on whether the relevant basic religious decisions and intentions of the Prophet Muḥammad or of the Apostles are at issue here or also the concrete sociopolitical implications of their original historical context. In other words: are the basic intentions of a certain tradition at stake in our preaching or are we expected also to refer to the historical solutions that were found once upon a time in reaction to the sociopolitical environment of a certain historical epoch?

| we have to translate God's meanings to our fellow human beings | **KHODR** Whether the quality of somebody who speaks to the community leads to calling him a 'preacher' or otherwise, in any case, there is at least in Christianity and Islam somebody who translates, who expresses and conveys God's meanings to people. We don't give to that, if you like, a technical meaning. That is a good |

Christian tradition, I am not especially referring to the Reformation. I would think, there is no hierarchy in the older sense we have in Pseudo-Dionysius in the early 6th century. We Christians around the holy table are hierarchy. My best Roman-Catholic friends, like Cardinal Yves Congar, say: We are

not a pyramidal Church. So there is this togetherness of the community around the Holy Bible in the first part of liturgy and the holy Eucharist in the second part, which we call hierarchy. It is the meaning of hierarchy in Greek that you are ordained to the book (in the first part of the liturgy) and to bread and chalice (in the second part).

If my presentation of Islam is correct, we have many things in common. I think that we are dealing in this group, or in any other similar group, with this very nature of *kalām Allāh*. Because a true Christian would first say, Jesus or the Christ is the word of God. The real Christian faith insists that he himself is the word of God, the *kalām Allāh*.

If my Muslim friends regard what I said about *daʻwa* and preaching as being faithful to Islam, I would be very pleased.

MAHMOOD T. In interpreting those teachings of Islam, you have been more faithful to Islam than many Muslims.

Education and Gender

Aïcha Belarbi

Internationally, it has become quite fashionable to speak nowadays of living in a global village. The term is usually intended to express the linkages, interactions and exchanges established throughout the world through a wide variety of technology of information and communication. The similarities of issues confronting different people, the will of seeking for solutions at national, regional or international levels to resolve these concerns demonstrate the new needs to understand each other, to sustain one another by establishing and reinforcing the communication between individuals and groups.

But if the expression 'global village' implies a sense of collective responsibility, it describes more practically the integration of the world's economies into a global system, the homogenization of education, the implementation of large networks worldwide, and the search for new means and other tools to reshape and rebuild our world.

However, this global village is characterized by deep structural imbalances between North and South, different classes, castes and ethnic groups, men and women and between the elite of decision-makers and those bereft of power and influence. It appears like a place where democratic principles and norms are often circumscribed by underlying inequalities in access to resources, information and education.

"Education is empowerment. It is the key to establishing and reinforcing democracy, to development which is both sustainable and humane and to peace founded upon mutual respect and social justice. Indeed, in a world in which creativity and knowledge play an ever greater role, the right to education is nothing less than the right to participate in the life of the modern world"[1]: to take part and to be a part of this new global village.

This right concerns both men and women; it is a fundamental right that many international conventions and treaties have highlighted. Many States have implemented it or are taking it into consideration. No country in the world could be prosperous, democratic and law-abiding if its females were still living under the yoke of illiteracy, poverty, and authoritarian regime.

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[1] *Education for All: Achieving the Goal.* The Amman Affirmation. Mid-Decade Meeting, UNESCO, 1996, p. 8.

Moreover, I would like to retain the tight links between our VICIRoTa three and four. After a long debate on poverty, its roots and the ways to reduce it, we kept hold of one of the main factors of poverty, the lack of education. Of course, education is a key part of strategies to improve individuals' well-being, societies' economic and social development, to reinforce democracy and protect human rights.

Poverty with its many faces is much more than low income. It also reflects poor health and education, deprivation of knowledge and communication, inability to exercise human and political rights and the absence of dignity, confidence and self-respect.[2]

Indeed, "when poverty engulfs a family, the youngest are the most affected and most vulnerable – their rights to survival, growth and development at risk. A child born today in the developing world has a 4 out of 10 chance of living in extreme poverty"[3].

Education for All (EFA) and more specifically the education of girls is a vital factor in dealing with root causes of poverty and underdevelopment. Evidence shows a clear link between the level of girls' education and some indicators in economy, democracy, health and well-being of a society.

Two concepts are recurrent in this paper: education and gender. Adopting a comprehensive approach, we will try to explain and give some definitions that elucidate our conception related to them.

Education

Education means "any process, either formal or informal, that shapes the potential of a maturing organism. Informal education results from the constant effect of environment, and its strength in shaping values and habits cannot be overestimated. Formal education is a conscious effort by human society to impart the skills and modes of thought considered essential for social functioning. Techniques of instruction often reflect the attitudes of society, i. e., authoritarian groups typically sponsor dogmatic methods, while democratic systems may emphasize freedom of thought."[4]

An ancient idea held by Socrates is that the rightly trained mind would turn toward virtue. This idea has actually never been abandoned, although varying criteria related to the search for truth through the protection of fundamental human rights, the human well-being, wealth and prosperity have influenced education policies, the content and the techniques of education.

Education as an acquisition of knowledge is generally accepted, because knowledge represents a core factor of production and a principal determinant of productivity and human capital. "A limited knowledge stock, especially if combined with poor or nonexistent knowledge acquisition, condemns a country to meagre productivity and poor development prospects."[5]

However, education is a deeper concept. It is not limited to the act of learning and teaching, but goes beyond to focus on the Socratic aspect of maieutic, or in other words, on the method of helping a person to bring forth and become aware of latent ideas or memories. Then teaching is not just transmitting, but helping the learner to discover his own capacities, his hidden resources, and to develop what gives him the capacity to be autonomous, free, and responsible for himself.

Thus, Khalil Gibran in his book *The Prophet,* said about teaching: "The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness. If he is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind. The astronomer may speak to you of his understanding of space, but he cannot give you his understanding. The musician may sing to you of the rhythm which is in all space, but he cannot give you the ear which arrests the rhythm nor the voice that echoes it."[6]

Definitions of gender

Although the terms sex and gender are used interchangeably in many writings, some authors have differentiated between the terms. In its 1992 report, the "American Association of University Women Educational Foundation" used the term sex to refer to individuals as biologically female or male. On the other hand, it used the term gender to denote the set of expectations imposed by society on girls and boys simply because they are female or male. Sex is the way in which an individual was born, whereas gender is what the individual learns about the proper way for the sexes to behave.

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[2] *UNDP-Human Development Report 1997,* p. iii.
[3] *UNICEF-The State of the World's Children 2001,* p. 32.
[4] HighBeam Encyclopedia: www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-educatio.html.

[5] *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations (UNDP).* New York, 2002, p. 19.
[6] Kh. Gibran, *The Prophet* (1923). Chapter 18: On Teaching.

The "Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary" (1995) defines the term gender as the conditions of being male or female.

Gender may also be understood as the way women and men are socially constructed from birth and throughout their lives by the institutions of family, school, media, civil society, political and religious institutions and States to adopt female and male identities.

Neither women nor men are homogeneous groups; each individual's gender is influenced by class, race, religious beliefs, age, and current family role.

Gender varies from one culture to another, it also varies over time. We have to retain that cultures are not static; in their evolution they maintain certain traditions and develop new ones.

1. What is the impact of women's education on economic and social development?

Girls' education has a favourable impact on economic growth, reproductive health, child and family well-being and social change.

Education also plays a key role in the democratic process by giving women and men the opportunity, the knowledge and the commitment to influence the nature and direction of society. Individuals cannot develop their full potential without education nor can they participate fully as citizens.

A very important consequence of investing more in the education of girls and women are the changes that are brought about in household behaviour and practice. Some of these changes are highly valued by society. For example, the improved sustenance of children has been shown to be more strongly associated with increased levels of education of the mother than of the father. This is so with respect to the birth weight of children, child mortality, nutrition, morbidity, school entry at early ages and longevity in school.

A further welcome benefit of the schooling of women concerns its negative impact on rates of fertility. In some societies, particularly in Africa, the first few years of schooling appear to have little effect on fertility. But elsewhere, education is associated with reduction in fertility, cumulatively for each additional year. Moreover, the evidence suggests that additional years of schooling of men are associated with increased fertility. So, in this context, targeting women and girls is particularly important.[7]

The economic and social benefits of fertility decline are considerable. It lowers the dependency burden, which should increase national savings. It increases the labour force in proportion to the population and via its employment effects in turn helps to boost per capita incomes. The effect on economic growth can be considerable – some estimates suggest that up to 2 percentage points of annual per capita income growth in East and South-East Asian countries was due to this demographic effect of declining fertility.[8] High female education in these countries could thus have contributed substantially to their economic boom.

Education is also a way of avoiding HIV/AIDS infection. With the rapidly increasing incidences of HIV/AIDS all over the world and especially in Africa, girls and women are the most vulnerable. There is evidence that young girls are dropping out of school to take care of their sickly parents or younger siblings. The girls have to go to markets, to do the domestic chores, to take care of families. In addition they themselves have to avoid contracting the deadly virus. Given the myths surrounding sexuality in Africa, it is crucial that girls have access to adequate information and knowledge about their sexuality and a basic education on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Summing up, we may assume that the benefits of female education are as follows:

- Education plays a key role in women's empowerment and gender equality and social changes.
- As female education rises, fertility, population growth, and infant and child mortality fall and family health improves.
- Increases in girls' secondary school enrolment are associated with increases in women's participation in the labour force and their contributions to household and national income.
- Women's increased earning capacity, in turn, has a positive effect on child nutrition.

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[7] Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), *Girls' Education and Poverty Eradication: FAWE's response.* Paper presented at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Brussels, 2001.

[8] D. E. Bloom – J. G. Williamson, "Demographic Transitions and Economic Miracles in Emerging Asia", in: *The World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 12 (1998) no. 3, pp. 419–455.

- Children – especially daughters – of educated mothers are more likely to be enrolled in school and to have higher levels of educational attainment.
- Educated women are more politically active and better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them.

All these direct and indirect benefits indicate that, where females have less access to schooling than males, society loses. In such circumstances, there is a clear need for the implementation of educational policies that bridge the gaps between boys and girls in education and for the extension of greater subsidies to the education of females.

2. Women's education worldwide

Historically, women have been denied access to school, literacy and other educational opportunities. Through a complex set of social, cultural, economic and biological reasons, many women have been effectively deprived of the basic human right: education. This has produced a gender gap that persists even when school enrolment rates increased and progress was made in literacy and adult education.

Nowadays, the world has made a lot of progress to promote girls' education and reduce women's illiteracy. Many countries and especially Northern countries have reached an equal access to school, suppressed almost entirely the women illiteracy rate, and introduced many reforms in the curricula and textbooks to eliminate all the stereotypes that devaluate women and convey a false image on them.

Today, the continuing prevalence of educational inequality in many countries, especially in the South, is a major infringement on the rights of women and girls, and it is also an important impediment to social and economic development.

- Worldwide, 840 million people of the planet are undernourished and 880 million adults are illiterate. These people are mostly the same, mainly the poor in Southern countries. When we add 130 million children out of school to the number of illiterate, we reach 1 billion of illiterate people in the world.[9]
- One in six of the world's adults is illiterate, among them two thirds are women.

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[9] *Food for Thought: Education for Rural People.* FAO Workshop, 12–13 Dec 2002.

- The enrolment rate is woefully low in sub-Saharan Africa (57 %) and South Asia (84 %).
- Together, sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia account for almost three quarters of the unenrolled children in the world.
- Once enrolled, there is a pitiful one-in-three chance that a child in Africa will complete primary school, the situation being more disastrous for girls.
- In the Arab States, 8.5 million females between 15 and 24 never do attend school, compared with 4.5 million of males (UNESCO 2003).
- The children of uneducated mothers are more than twice as likely to die or be malnourished than children of mothers who have secondary or higher education.
- In a typical developing country with a population of 20 million and a mortality rate of 150 deaths per 1 000 children up to the age of five, giving girls one additional year of schooling would save[10] as many as 60 000 children's lives.
- The participation of children and the youth in education in several Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is extremely low. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for primary school in Sierra Leone was 41 for the females and 59 for males. The GER for primary school in Angola was 88 for females and 95 for males, while for Niger the GER for primary school was 22 for females and 36 for males during the period 1995–1999 (UNICEF, 2001).
- The statistics on the secondary school level show a more worrying trend. Sierra Leone has a GER of 13 for females and 22 for males and Niger has a GER of 5 for females and 9 for males. Ethiopia records a GER of 10 for females and 14 for males on the secondary school level for the period 1995–1997.

Women illiteracy as violation of human rights

The female rate of literacy varies between 44.6 % to 53.1 % respectively in the Least Developed Countries, the Arab States (53.1 %), South Asia (46.6 %), and sub-Saharan Africa (52.6 %), while this rate climbs to 88 % in East Asia and the Pacific, in Latin America and the Caribbean.[11]

Literacy rates are 18 % for females and 45 % for males in Sierra Leone, 29 % for females and 56 % for males in Angola, and 7 % for females and 21 % for males in Niger during the period 1995–1999 (UNICEF, 2001). These

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[10] *Save the children Report 2003.*
[11] *UNDP-Human Development Report 2005,* p. 310.

indicators have tremendous implications for education and, consequently, sustainable development.

The rate of illiteracy is still high in the Middle East and North Africa, where 42 % of women are illiterate, in Iraq 77 %, Yemen 75 %, Morocco 64 %, Egypt 56 %, Algeria 43 %, Syria 40 %, Tunisia 39 %. Lebanon has 20 % and Palestine like Jordan 16 %. The rate in the Gulf countries fluctuates between 17 % and 20 %. Saudi Arabia has 33 %.

These figures witness why women today are still left out in the process of globalization. We understand very well the feminization of poverty, and the underrepresentation of women in political institutions like governments, parliament and others.

3. Factors of girls' non-schooling

A closer look at the factors reveals that the main factors that influence the gender disparities in education fall into three categories:

3.1 Socioeconomic disparities

Poverty is one of the major factors that undermine the girls' right to education. We have to take into consideration the costs that the opportunity to go to school involve. School fees and expenses relating to transport, clothing and books widen the gender gap. As families cannot afford to educate all their children, girls are the ones that stay at home, helping with household chores. Parents in many developing societies still prefer to have girls work at home and assist the mothers. This leaves little time for school work and assignments at home for those who attend school.

In the increasingly open global economy, countries with high rates of illiteracy and gender gaps in educational attainment tend to be less competitive, because foreign investors seek labour that is skilled as well as inexpensive. Various global trends pose special challenges to women who are illiterate or have limited education. Economies' export orientation and the growing importance of small and medium-sized enterprises create opportunities for women, but women need the appropriate education and training to take full advantage of these opportunities.

3.2 Sociocultural beliefs and practices

In many societies, and especially in poor countries, girls are considered in their function of spouse and mother; marriage then, remains the ultimate goal for girls. Hence there is no need to invest several years of formal education for them. Many rural communities consider girls as a source of wealth for the families. The majority of societies silently believe that "educating a girl is like watering another man's garden." A girl is considered as a visitor in her own family.

The socialization process leads girls to view marriage as the ultimate purpose in life, and if they get a good husband, who can take care of them, they don't need any education. Early marriages and early pregnancies entail a high drop-out while girls are still in primary school and early years of secondary school. Usually, the youth has inaccurate information about reproductive health, and it is a shame for a girl to attend the available health services, which are usually not youth friendly.

A number of families find education irrelevant, especially where even children who have completed university education have no jobs; many parents are less convinced of the relevance of schooling, especially for girls.

3.3 School environments

In many cases the school environments are not conducive to learning, especially for girls. There is evidence that a majority of girls miss school during their menses because there are no separate toilet facilities to meet their needs. Some toilets have no doors and there is no running water.

Safety and security when attending school play an important role in girls' schooling. A majority of girls feel not safe when walking long distances to and from school. Together with their parents, they fear being raped, abducted and in some cases being attacked by animals. In conflict zones, many schools have been closed down. For girls, the safety both within and outside the school is very crucial.

Gender bias in education is reinforced in many countries. Boys and girls are treated differently in schools. Gender bias includes teachers' behaviour towards students, the subjects and topics students are encouraged to study, and the images conveyed by textbooks and other materials representing social gender roles. In addition, society's emphasis on gender differences creates two separate sets of values, beliefs, and assumptions for girls and for boys, which restrict opportunities for each gender to communicate and accept the other, and to a large extent impede all forms of gender understanding and exchange, and obstruct the social change.

4. Gender discrimination at school

At school girls encounter many obstacles that marginalize them and incite many to leave school at an early age. I would like to focus on four main obstacles, which silence and hinder the disclosure of sexist and discriminatory practices against girls and women.

4.1 Sexual harassment and sexual violence

Sexual harassment exists in different schools all over the world. Pupils at schools are experiencing sexual harassment and violence. Girls were found to often encounter highly sexualized verbal degradation in the school environment. The different forms of sexual violence were found to be committed by other learners, by teachers or other school employees.

In dealing with the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual violence within the school system in South Africa, Erika George, the author of the *Human Rights Watch Report,* concludes as follows: "On a daily basis in schools across the nation, South African girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school that impedes their realization of the right to education."[12]

Since the 1990s, the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT), commissioned in 1996 by the Department of Justice to analyze the education system from a gender perspective, identified the problem of sexual violence in schools as severe and systemic. The GETT Report noted that while violence and harassment had been documented in the behaviour of teachers and students towards other students, there was insufficient data about the prevalence of violence in schools or who the perpetrators were.

A later study by the Community Information, Empowerment and Transparency (CIET), Africa, in 1998 found that one in three Johannesburg school girls had experienced sexual violence at school and, of these, only 36 % said they reported the episode to someone (not necessarily the police).[13]

The most recent report released by Human Rights Watch is probably the most useful way of assessing the extent of the problem today. The research needs to be contextualized within the framework of poverty stricken areas, where learners need to travel long distances in order to arrive at school and often make use of public transport, which in itself is inherently unsafe and dangerous.

Human Rights Watch further found that in most of the previously disadvantaged schools there was very little or no monitoring of what happened on school premises during and after school hours. For example, learners were being abused in toilets or in secluded classrooms where there was no supervision at the time. Alcohol and drug abuse and the unmonitored presence of alcohol and drugs on school premises also contributed to the problem of sexual violence.

What is the most effective tool for combating these problems? Education. According to the Global Campaign for Education, in order to stop this poverty wheel, a comprehensive package of interventions backed by clear policy aims is needed.

4.2 Gender bias in the classroom

Boys tend to be offered more chance to express themselves and to negotiate their identities in school, whereas girls find themselves constrained by an overly protective environment, by acting through silence. This difference can be expressed by the amount of physical, linguistic and pedagogic space taken up by boys in mixed classrooms and schools: much of the 'action' in schools is male.

Normative models of the male and female citizen are learned as children progress through the levels, hierarchies and processes of the school. The examples of school rituals (assemblies, uniforms, celebrations), forms of discipline, relationships between teacher and pupil, and between pupils, the curriculum content, all help to shape male and female citizen identities.

The school is considered a small society, it is a microcosm with the same norms and values, shaping the behaviour of pupils through the social habits. School staffing structures represent to pupils the principles of the social order, and the same social women and female images are conveyed at school.

Furthermore, these normative models are not always conducive to the promotion of greater social equality. Ideally, learning environments should model democratic principles and transmit equality.

4.3 Gender and technology

Gendered social systems surround technology, but equally the technology influences the social systems, including that of gender, changing them subtly and sometimes in ways unforeseen.

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[12] *Scared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools.* Human Rights Watch, New York etc., 2001, I. Preface.
[13] http://www.rapecrisis.org.za.

Technical know-how (design, maintenance) tends to be predominantly a male preserve, and female technical knowledge is more practical, so it is simply not classed as properly technical.

Talking about the design, manufacture, wholesaling, retailing and use of microwave ovens, these faultlines are repeated, with slight variations, in most of what society chooses to call technology: whether it is automobiles, bicycles, appliances, computers or microwave.

Teaching and learning environment are not always conducive to learning especially for girls in science, mathematics and technological courses. Girls develop attitudes that mathematics and science are not for them and they perform very poorly to their detriment because they are not able to choose careers in science-based courses such as engineering. Teachers also discourage girls from taking mathematics and science subjects.

4.4 Discrimination against migrants and especially women

OECD education systems leave many immigrant children floundering, as shown by the report on educational systems in OECD countries.[14]

Many developed countries are failing to help children of immigrant families integrate into society through education. According to a new OECD study, immigrant children in some OECD countries lag more than two years behind their native counterparts in school performance, and a sizeable gap remains often even after accounting for socioeconomic factors, especially when we observe that the unemployment rates in many countries are two to three times higher among immigrants than among nationals.

Cultural factors have a great impact on migrant girls' schooling. Learning a new language, adopting other schemes of culture, trying to assume their integration in the host society are complex tasks, especially for female migrants who are totally non-accepted, neither by their parents nor by the host societies.

School systems differ widely in terms of their outcomes for immigrant children, the report makes clear. In some countries, such as Canada and Australia, immigrant children perform as well as their native counterparts.

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[14] *OECD Education Systems Leave Many Immigrant Children Floundering,* report May 2006: the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which tested 15-year-old students in 41 countries in mathematics, reading comprehension, science and problem-solving skills. It focused on 17 territories with large immigrant populations: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the U. S., among OECD countries, and three non-OECD PISA participants, the Russian Federation, Hong Kong-China and Macao-China.

But in other countries, notably those with highly tracked education systems, they do substantially less well.

The report shows that more than a third of second-generation immigrant children in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway and the United States, who have spent their entire schooling in the host country, perform below the base line PISA benchmark for mathematics performance.

Furthermore, in a number of countries, second-generation immigrant children still perform as badly as their first-generation counterparts. On the other hand, in some countries with high levels of immigration, the performance of second-generation immigrant children is much closer to that of native children and close to the national average, especially in the rank of girls. Many of the countries that do well by this measure have in common well-established language support programmes in early childhood education and primary school that have clearly defined goals, standards and evaluation systems.

The report spotlights the challenge facing education systems in helping immigrant populations integrate into their host societies. With migration likely to remain high and even to increase, European countries, in particular, need to respond more effectively to socioeconomic and cultural diversity in their student populations, in order to achieve a real integration for migrants and to respect gender equality.

5. Right to education:
legal instruments and political commitments

There exist clear sets of legal and political commitments to achieve gender equality in education, which have been freely undertaken by a majority of countries. Thus the right to "Education for All" is well articulated and accepted internationally.

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, gives witness to the nature and extent of human rights. Amongst many others, the right to education was acknowledged for everyone. Furthermore, it was declared that elementary education shall be free and compulsory, and that the higher levels of education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (Article 26).

Transforming these undertakings into reality has continued to incite and inspire, and has been included in many international activities ever since.

Such action has taken two main routes:

1/- The first of these has used treaties as instruments to secure human rights observance. Thus, between 1966 and 1990 a series of international covenants and conventions was promulgated, which provide a comprehensive legal basis for required measures to protect and deliver human rights, especially those which most affect education and gender equality.

The earliest two of these, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), were adopted in 1966 and entered into force in 1976. These covenants contain the provisions on compulsory and free primary education and non-discrimination in education that were first set out in the 1948 Declaration.

The two more recent conventions: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), contain the most comprehensive sets of legally enforceable commitments concerning both rights to education and to gender equality.

The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, entered into force in 1981, ratified by 173 countries. Unlike the two previous treaties, CEDAW was developed specifically with gender in mind. It gives emphasis on rights to education with provisions covering primary, secondary, higher education, non-formal education, sports education, and family planning information. It includes wide-ranging provisions for ending gender discrimination. It focuses on the equal opportunity for scholarships, for continuing education, literacy, sports and physical education, bringing to an end stereotyping in curricula.

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child,* adopted in 1989, entered into force in 1990 and was ratified by 190 countries; it ensures the rights of the child and includes provisions to guarantee rights to education. Like its predecessors, it reaffirms human rights in a context that does not discriminate anybody because of sex. It contains a strong emphasis on measures to promote free primary education and financial support, human rights education, sex education and reproductive health information, educational counselling, and a gender aware curriculum.

It reaffirms the right of every child, "without discrimination of any kind" (Article 2/1), to free and compulsory primary schooling (Article 28/1a), and states that the higher levels shall be "available and accessible to every child" (Article 28/1b). Furthermore, it protects the child "from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely [...] to interfere with the child's education" (Article 32/1).[15]

The process of ratification is important, because it accords the treaty an international recognition and obliges the States to implement its provisions. Accordingly, the great majority of countries in the world – as a consequence of having ratified – are legally obliged to meet the provisions for gender equality and for universal access to education which are set out in these two treaties.

2/- The second route towards securing acceptance of and compliance with human rights obligations has been to use the declarations of the international conferences, convened by the United Nations, as additional instruments. The outcomes of these conferences:

(a) In 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, at the *World Conference on Education for All,* world leaders agreed that "the most urgent priority [was] to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation". A deadline was set: universal access to, and completion of, primary education should be achieved by the year 2000 (UNESCO World Declaration on Education for All / EFA).

(b) The *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,* drafted at the World Conference of Human Rights, Vienna 1993, places a strong emphasis on the State's obligations to promote gender equality, equality in education included.

(c) The *International Conference on Population and Development* (ICPD), Cairo 1994: the nineteen entries span all areas of Appendix 1 ("Rights to education and to gender equality specified by international treaties and declarations"), demonstrating an increasing level of awareness of gender issues.

(d) The *World Summit for Social Development,* Copenhagen 1995. The World Summit for Social Development represented a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development. Among the decisions made were ten commitments, two of which affect gender education. These are (a) to achieve equality and equity between women and men and (b) to attain universal and equitable access to education and primary health care.

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[15] The CRC has been ratified by all the nations of the world, with the exception of the United States and Somalia.

(e) The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995). As an agenda for action, the Platform seeks to promote and protect the full enjoyment of all human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all women throughout their life cycle. There are twenty-two entries related to gender and education, which span most relevant areas. Each of them reaffirmed (in different ways and with different emphases) the gender equality provisions in education to which States were already committed by the earlier human rights conventions.

(f) In the *World Education Forum 2000,* held in Dakar, Senegal, new deadlines were fixed: all children should complete "compulsory primary education of good quality" by 2015, and participants once again expressed specific concern about gender disparities in education, pledging to eliminate them by 2005. In addition, adult illiteracy is to be halved, early childhood education and programmes for out-of-school youth are to be increased, and the quality of education is to be much improved. "All children" comprises, of course, boys and girls.

(g) At the *United Nations Millennium Summit 2000,* heads of State adopted the following targets as two of the eight Millennium Development Goals for reducing world poverty:

Goal 2. Achieving universal primary education. Target: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3. Promoting gender equality and empowering women in its broader scope is a key objective of the millennium. Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and on all levels of education no later than 2015.

The *Global Campaign for Education* (1999), an international coalition of NGOs and trade unions, states that "because education is so crucial to improving health and increasing incomes, the girls' education goal has a domino effect on all of the other Millennium Development Goals. Failure to achieve it will set us up for almost certain failure on the other MDGs."

(h) One of the main conclusions of the *World Economic Forum,* which took place in Jordan in May 2005, focused on the priority for education reform in most countries and the provision of universal secondary education. Funding should be channelled towards investment and reform of the curriculum in these schools in order to procure graduates equipped for a global economy which increasingly demands sophisticated knowledge-based skills.

The educational commitments made in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have also been reaffirmed on many occasions over the intervening years. Most notably, during the 1960s a set of regional conferences was convened by UNESCO. Target dates for the achievement of universal primary education (UPE) have been fixed by 1980 in most of the developing regions of the world. By 1990, however, there was still a long way to go, and the World Conference on Education for All, held that year in Jomtien (Thailand), affirms that the world still has many efforts to exert and a strong solidarity to establish between North and South to achieve this goal.

6. Good practices in women education and reduction of gender disparities

The legal framework that establishes gender equality in education in addition to the Dakar Framework for Action and the Millennium Declaration, expressed the education and the gender goals in a more formal way.

Many countries and especially developing countries have carried out many initiatives to promote girls' education and gender equality. Here I would like to focus on some original initiatives that go beyond promoting school attendance of girls or maintaining them at school, but those that tend to implement a new vision on girls' education announcing a new era and other approaches to eliminate all forms of discrimination related to gender.

1/- *Nigerian Girls into Sciences* (NIGIS): NIGIS is an action-oriented performance enhancement programme for girls at junior secondary level in Nigeria, whose primary goal is to expand interest and improve performance in science among Nigerian girls. It is believed that a way of increasing female participation in science, stimulating interest, and increasing confidence, is by paying special attention to their learning. Accordingly, the NIGIS project prompted the development of a teaching manual "Learn Science by Doing", based on the syllabus of junior secondary (JSII) science in Nigeria. Learn Science by Doing (LSD) is a guide for teaching integrated science in schools.

The pedagogical approach in LSD[16] stresses a shift from teacher talk-and-chalk or demonstrations to collaborative hands-on, activity-based learning, and skills development among students.

The schools using the LSD approach found it of immense benefit to girls, because it increased their (a) interaction, (b) ability to manipulate

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[16] Girls' Education and Poverty Eradication – FAWE's Report 2003.

the environment, (c) mastery of science subject, and (d) development of positive scientific attitudes.

2/- Ngong Young Restore Hope: Training Centre for marginalized girls (Kenya). The Communities in the Ngong area live below the poverty line (USD 220 per household). Due to many social evils such as drugs, early marriages and prostitution, the most vulnerable is the girl-child who drops out from school due to early pregnancies and lack of school fees.

The centre attempts to rehabilitate 200 young girls and mothers through training in community based health care programmes, family life education, justice and peace awareness, and involvement in income generating activities and small enterprise development with community participation.

3/- Pre-Entry programme for female students at the Faculties of Sciences and Engineering, University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). The programme is an attempt to redress the gender imbalance in admission to the Faculties of Science and Engineering. In these two faculties, enrolment in the year 1991 and 1996 averaged 15 % and 4 % of females respectively. In response to this trend the Institutional Transformation Programme Steering Committee of the university decided to actively pursue strategies that would raise the proportion of female students ultimately to reach 50 % of the overall enrolment. The programme was assisted by FAWE for two years.

The course increased female participation for 1997–98 by 70 % in chemistry and biology. One significant finding was that the programme oriented the students well to the university environment, making it easier for them to know their way around the campus, use the library and understand lecturers' expectation, and generally raise their self-confidence.

4/- Empowerment of girls
FAWE's[17] most recent intervention is the creation of three FAWE Centres of Excellence, one in AIC Kajiado Girls' School in Kenya, the other in Mgugu Secondary School in the Kilosa area of Tanzania and the third in Kigali, Rwanda. These schools have been helped in terms of technical as well as material support. This includes bursary schemes as well as programmes that encourage girls' access to these centres.

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[17] Cf. fn. 7.

5/- New Global Challenge
In 2003, no fewer than 37 armed conflicts were raging around the world with 12 million of refugees and more than double that number of internally displaced persons, about 25 million. A very large proportion of these people comprised children of school age, who would have had no school to attend; hence the need for special provisions for education in emergencies, conflicts and reconstructions – Educating Children in Crisis.

Indeed, the Dakar Forum 2000 reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to meet the need of education systems affected by conflicts, national calamities and instabilities with special programmes that promote understanding, peace, and tolerance. This education, often delivered by international agencies, aims at protecting girls and young women by helping them to overcome gender disparities, but few agencies were involved. The initiative of 'Save the Children' is an important case study.

'Save the Children' has launched a new global challenge initiative to provide educational opportunities for millions of girls and boys whose schooling has been interrupted by crises, including war, conflict and natural disasters. As a starting point, 'Save the Children' is focusing on eight countries that have experienced recent disasters or conflicts and aims at ensuring education for 3 million children currently out of school in affected areas.

The first priority countries are Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda.

Through this effort, 'Save the Children' hopes to mobilize the international community to provide a range of education activities for millions more of girls and boys. It seeks to establish education as a recognized means for protecting children against potential abuse and harm, while also offering children the opportunity to create a better future for themselves.

In Indonesia and Sri Lanka, where thousands of children, including many girls, still have not returned to school following the devastating tsunami of December 26, 2004, 'Save the Children' is working closely with government officials to increase school enrolment and to provide informal education opportunities for children who cannot attend school.

6/- The last *World Economic Forum* that took place in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from 20–22 May 2006, has launched the Egyptian Education Initiative, which focuses on improving schooling in the country through information, communication and technology. The EEI will focus on 4 tracks:

pre-university education, higher education, lifelong learning, e-learning industry. Gender approach is taken into consideration.

7/- The *UNESCO programme for 2004/2005* to promote gender parity and equality pursues four strands of strategies with appropriate activities:
- the first strand is advocacy, using partnership and networks to strive for more understanding on girls' education and women literacy;
- the second strand is research and analysis of the root causes of gender inequality in education;
- the third is the provision of gender responsive services that can include guidance and counselling for school, reorienting and training teachers, assessing and promoting girls friendly environments and encouraging the production of appropriate learning material;
- the fourth strand is promoting wide options for girls and women in higher education in mathematics, science, engineering and technology.[18]

All these statements on the right to education and all these initiatives have indicated their equal applicability for all people, without distinction of race, sex or nationality. However, if the notion of gender equality was increasingly emphasized over the last years, the achievement of gender parity in education is still far away. So, equality and parity in education are of special importance in the most recent statements of the Millennium development goals.

7. The leap from parity to equality

Gender equality in education will not be possible without wider social change in many societies.

Gender parity, which refers to the equal participation of both sexes in different levels of education, is a quantitative concept. Its indicators are static, measuring, for example, the relative proportions of girls and boys with access to, or participating in, primary, secondary and higher education. It can serve as a dynamic indicator of change and represents the first steps towards achieving equality of the sexes.

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[18] *UNESCO Report of Interworking Group in Education.* Helsinki, 23–25 June 2003, p. 50.

However, gender parity indicators have some limitations, even when they are available over time. First, even if progress towards parity appears to be made, this sometimes masks declines in male or female enrolment and participation rather than indicating positive gains for both boys and girls. Second, a focus on quantitative balances reveals nothing about the processes by which they are being secured, nor about the qualitative changes that would be necessary if gender parity is to lead to full equality.

Gender equality requires the achievement of equal outcomes for women and men, although they are starting from different positions of advantage, and are constrained in different ways.

Of course, women differ from men both in terms of their biological capacities and in their socially constructed identities. So, inequalities arise from unequal power relations between women and men, and from the divergent roles attributed to each gender. Hence assessments of progress towards gender equality need to establish whether the changes that are being achieved are significantly oriented towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

The erasure of the social norms that see women and men as making unequal contributions to society and having unequal entitlements to its benefits is critical to achieving a society free from gender discrimination.

Education would imply that girls and boys are offered the same chances to go to school and that they enjoy teaching methods and curricula free of stereotypes and academic orientation and counselling unaffected by gender bias. Most fundamentally, it implies equality of outcomes in terms of length of schooling, learning achievement and academic qualifications and, more broadly, equal job opportunities and earnings for similar qualifications and experience.

Conclusion

Educational policies that govern education do not always favour girls and women. In the provision of school places, school equipment, teachers' distribution and deployment, the gender approach needs to be applied to ensure non-discriminatory practices.

Girls' education is a necessary and important aspect of eradicating poverty. What is critical now as the third millennium progresses, is what we do – at the individual level, at the family and community level, at the national level and at the global level – to ensure that girls, the future citizens of many

countries and especially the Least Developed Countries, are not left behind as the world moves on to greater heights in technology and information.

Girls must participate fully not only to organize and uphold their own lives or their future families, but also to support and endorse their country's development as active and dynamic citizens. Indeed, the factors militating against their full participation in education must be removed, so as to increase the number of girls that acquire a secondary and a post-secondary education as well as acquire appropriate skills for development. To remove these hurdles requires a deliberate effort and the adoption of an integrated approach for the eradication of poverty by all stakeholders.

Achieving full citizenship status for both men and women is not a single event. Attention needs to be focused on how male and female are learning and through which curriculum contents, how they participate and how they are encouraged through styles of teaching and learning. Opportunities are needed for both boys and girls to achieve control of their lives and of the social environment in which they are located.

Indeed, when girls and boys recognize their capacities and learn through schooling, so that they can control by themselves their own lives, they will be more able to take themselves in charge, to contribute efficiently to the social and economic development of their society and to take part in the decision-making through their engagement in political issues when they become adults.

A new vision of education for a sustainable future requires reorientation of traditional approaches and the implementation of new ones in view of promoting widespread public awareness and understanding, critical analysis and support for sustainable development based on gender equality, through engagement of a wide spectrum of institutions and sectors.

Gender equality is seen as both an aim and a precondition of sustainable development. Gender equality in formal education is also the main objective of the UN system, the States policies, and the NGO's actions. All these institutions emphasize the need for gender-sensitive approaches and materials, and for the integration of gender perspectives into all educational activities.

KHODR   In autumn 1941 we were about 130 boys in our school and 1 girl. Although, at present, girls are numerically much better represented in high schools and universities and with better chances of success, the question arises: how was it possible that my father, in his days, was very much content with the way also his daughters were successful in their high schools, but did not send them to the university, much as he could have afforded it. The answer to this question was time and again that girls should get married and that it will do for them to write letters to their families and read the Bible or other books and newspapers. Was that so even in other countries, and how could that happen at all?

how could this discrimination against girls and women happen at all?

BELARBI   I think, in many countries girls and women are not recognized as citizens equal with men. They are simply the daughters of Mr. Soandso or the wife or the mother of Mr. X, but never citizens with their own rights and obligations. Their place is with their family and household. When they work, they are expected to meet the needs of the small family, which includes parents, husband and children.

Even when we look at the educational level, when we go through textbooks and curricula, we will be taught that girls are expected to help their mothers, that husbands are allowed to beat their wives – as can even be read in some religious textbooks – and, all in all, that man is superior to woman and dominates her. In fact, they are living in order to procure a name for someone else, they do not live their own lives.

we must be ready to do some rethinking

What the declarations and conventions on issues of education and gender, on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women are so concerned about, is the assessment that a woman must not be seen in the perspective of her sex, but as a human being, as a citizen. Of course, there are sex-specific differences, but women and men should live together in the respect of the difference of their sex, working together in order to achieve gender equality.

We are aware that women were less educated at the beginning of the past century, but we are now living in the 21st century, and we must be ready to revise and rethink our situation. The process of globalization is chang-

ing our world; however, women are still lagging behind, they are waiting for men to help them to survive, especially in rural areas. Because even if you have a very good system and equal rights on principle, on the ground you will have a lot of differences. In the mind of men a woman, even if she is their colleague as an engineer, professor, or attorney, she is never considered as equal, just because she is a woman. We *are* women and we are proud to be women, and we are struggling for equality, not only on paper, but in reality.

KHOURY   My question goes back to the plea of Professor Belarbi in favour of a strategy to find means and ways in order to get out of this unpleasant situation: can already concrete efforts be observed worldwide? Are there groups and institutions who make an effort to elaborate appropriate measures and even to execute them in order to improve the existing conditions? So far, did it remain with the wish or claim for such a strategy, or can we already discover first attempts towards it?

are there practical measures taken worldwide to change the situation?

BELARBI   The fact that we do not only stay with visions and wishes has to do with our hope that, in the long run, things will really change. However, if we do not get involved in it and do not become partners in this undertaking, nothing will change.

each country's general state of development plays a major role

Numerous international conferences are being held on equality between men and women, and a lot of relevant documents passed; nonetheless, in this respect we are confronted with strong issues: so, above all, with each country's general state of development, since obviously the more a country is generally developed, the more higher educational standards are within reach. Morocco is a very good example for that, where still in the 90s of the past century only 56 % of the girls went to a school in rural areas, whereas today we reach 90 %.

But then the second problem: how to maintain these girls at school, during six years of primary school and four years of secondary school? Again, it appears to be a problem of economic and social development: the number of schools and teachers available, the problem of transport in rural areas, etc. Last but not least, all that remains a cultural problem as well. Parents might be aware of school education being the only way to find jobs. However, they contemplate all these issues in a far too short-sighted perspective.

All in all, the issue of education will always be inextricably linked up with a country's general state of development, particularly with the degree of its democratic development. In any case, we will never attain this aim of gender equality in education without the critical voice of women, because, up to now, education seemed to be a domain of men. But society is composed of men and women. Consequently, all the curricula, textbooks, etc. must be elaborated in a concerted effort by women and men together to get to a wise vision on education, our future in general, and a balanced distribution of power between women and men in our society.

we need the critical voice of women and a concerted effort by women and men

MAHMOOD T.   Rightly, Professor Belarbi referred to the fact, that women become in their husband's family Mrs. Soandso, because she comes from a traditional Muslim country in the Maghreb. But, why is it so? Have we not blindly accepted this from the West? That is not a tradition that our Prophet Sayyid Muḥammad has left for us. As we all know, Sayyida 'Ā'isha aṣ-Ṣiddīqa in the house of her husband Muḥammad, after her marriage to the Prophet, remained 'Ā'isha bint Abī Bakr, and she did not become Mrs. Muḥammad. And his own daughter Fāṭima, after her marriage to 'Alī, remained Fāṭima bint Muḥammad, and she did not become Mrs. 'Alī. So we are ourselves responsible for the plight of women in our society.

the tradition of Prophet Muḥammad was different from what we have learned later on

Msgr. Khodr has explained to us what, in 1941, his father had replied to the question, why he did not want his daughter to become a University student. Even today, 65 years later, parents in the Muslim world and in many non-Muslim countries feel that the girl, sooner or later, has to go to another family, and why to invest on her education? Doesn't she belong to a different family in the end, isn't she a guest here, or a bird who will fly away the moment the cage is opened? But at the same time it is also true that there has been tremendous progress in recent years. This is very visible even from the composition of our VICIRoTa.

tremendous progress has already been achieved

BELARBI   Our society, in fact, is highly susceptible to acting against women in a discriminatory manner, not only in Morocco, but in many developing countries and even in developed countries. It is high time to make decided efforts to eliminate this discriminatory attitude towards

a change of mentality is needed

women, which affects the whole society. By nature, men do not feel this discrimination as deeply as women do in their lives and minds and in their interpersonal relations. At stake is not only the fact that we become, sooner or later, the woman of Mr. Soandso, but rather the danger that our individuality is excluded and no longer respected as a proper person. Of course, we are visible as women. We actually can be found in almost every part of modern society, etc. And people are sometimes very happy to find women in their midst – like flowers that please them or a fragrant perfume, as I can hear sometimes. But this is exactly part of the problem. We do not want to be associated with flowers or perfume, we want to be recognized as human beings. This criticism has to be brought up time and again, in the hope of contributing by that one's share towards an urgently needed change of mentality. In fact, our world happens to be in a thorough and far-reaching change and we should not remain in the world of our grandparents but get involved in favour of our present world and that of our children.

the fracture between theory and practice

POTZ Previously, we gave a positive mention to educational models in communist countries. However, I also remember a Russian language textbook from time immemorial, which I was using at school. In fact, on one page there was the father represented as a teacher and the mother as an engineer. When you turned the page, however, you could see the family at home: the father was sitting in the living room with the newspaper in his hands and the mother standing in the kitchen preparing for the meal – Mrs. Engineer. So, reality finally was only ideal with some reservations.

BELARBI In 1975, I was in the preparatory committee of the International Women's Year. Two celebrations were held: an official one in Mexico in June/July and an alternative one in Moscow in October for the Socialists, Communists, etc. who wanted to boycott the official celebration in Mexico. To prepare the latter conference, I was invited to Moscow with a strong women's group. On this occasion we were invited to visit different institutions, and among others a school, and I was surprised to see boys attending technical courses and girls feminine training, like cooking and sewing. What I knew from my own country, being very critical of it, I thought that it would be different then in Russia – but there again the same situation. It is therefore evidently a problem of mentality. Although, at this time, more than 30 % of the deputies of the Russian parliament were women, they did not change much. They acted for the purpose of the given hierarchy of power, not as women.

women must take responsibility on themselves

MAHMOOD S. S. I do agree with Professor Belarbi that women are marginalized and discriminated against by all the pressures that they suffer. A part of the problem is, that women do not take responsibility on themselves to find out what can protect or defend them. Why, for example, do women have to take the name of their husband when it is not so required in Islam? In the younger generation, they are refusing in the Muslim families to adopt the name of their husband after marriage. However, within the Arab world, in Saudi Arabia for example, women do not change their names after marriage but retain the father's name.

In general, we women do not take on the responsibility to find out what our tradition provides for us, but tend to remain ignorant and let the men make the decisions for us. For example, there is the law of inheritance in the _sharī'a_ which protects us. Whereas 95 % of the wealth around the world is owned by men, only in Saudi Arabia, which applies the _sharī'a_ law on inheritance, 40 % of the wealth is owned by women. And that is, because when the law of inheritance in effect is applied, women inherit directly from their fathers and their husbands. And indeed investing in women's education even is an economic thing; they say, when you educate a man you educate a person, when you educate a woman, you educate a family. So educating women is very crucial. But they themselves, to some extent, should feel responsible for their own plight.

the role of women NGOs in our world

BELARBI The fact that women easily tend to accommodate and resign to given conditions, underlines the role women NGOs and development NGOs have to play in our world – to make women more aware of their rights and obligations. And also to encourage them to get more intensively involved in politics. Although women sometimes think, that there are special spaces, so to speak, reserved for women, others reserved for men, I think that in order to give all spaces the necessary strength they have to be shared by men and women.

women are not being empowered

IQBAL I do find that even though there is still this gender inequality, times are changing very rapidly and perceptions of parents are changing too. Part of the problem, as for instance in Pakistan, is the fact that lots of people, when they get educated, they go abroad. And sometimes they send their earnings back, sometimes they don't. If men send their money back, it goes to their wife and children, the parents are feeling a bit

neglected. So they like to educate the daughters, and when they are educated, parents say, "Son is a son till he gets a wife, but a daughter is a daughter all her life." I have seen so many women, who are educated now, and they are supporting their parents and their family and even their brothers, because they are too lazy to do anything.

So the question is not so much that they are not being educated, but they are not being empowered. They are educated, they earn – and their earnings are appropriated by the parents and by the siblings who often are not doing anything. Then the State has even started evolving strategies. In my country, at least now, what they are doing is: 80 % of school attendance of a girl entitles her to 2 Euros income from the State per month, which sounds a small amount here, but it means a lot in our country – at least it looks after her transportation, because the books and the uniforms and also food are now being provided by the schools for the girls.

As for the beating of the wife: there is the saying in the Holy Qurʾān, the "men are the protectors or guardians of women" (cf. Sūra 4,34). And it is said there that the reason for it is that they provide for them out of their earnings. But now, because the women are earning, if anybody needs a beating, it's the men, who don't do anything.

wide-reaching changes in Morocco by the New Family Code

BELARBI Of course, there is still a lot to be said about this subject of our deliberations here and now. I would, however, like to conclude by referring to the wide-reaching changes that occurred in Morocco by the New Family Code that recently was established and is in fact very progressive, for it gives to women and men the same rights in the family. And that is actually a revolutionary achievement. But how may this code be implemented, how can it actually be understood and accepted by all? It will still take time before we reach this goal.

when you educate a girl, you educate a whole society

As for the saying, which already was cited before, that when you educate a boy you educate a man and "when you educate a girl you educate a family", I would like to change it as follows, "When you educate a man or a woman, you educate society." That means, I don't want to start by saying that when you educate a girl you educate a family, in other words I do not like the idea of maintaining this link between girls and family. When you educate a girl, you educate a whole society.

Religious Education in Central Asia

Goga Abrarovic Khidoyatov

1. Historical background

In the 8th century, Arabs conquered the territories of the current Uzbekistan, situated between the Amudarya and Syrdarya rivers, and began the forceful Islamization of the indigenous people. The struggle against Arabs and Islam continued for a long time, and it took two hundred years for the Arabs to establish their ultimate rule and Islam as a governing religion in the region. Bukhārā became a centre of Islamic scholars. It was called a 'glorious Bukhārā' and turned into one of the pillars of Islam. Various Islamic schools were formed and some of the most outstanding Islamic scholars were trained there. One need only to mention al-Bukhārī who created an invaluable compilation of ḥadīths which has never lost its significance. There is a twelve-volume edition of his ḥadīths in virtually every dwelling of faithful Muslims in Islamic countries. He is considered to be one of the most renowned Islamic scholars of all time.

Amīr Tīmūr strengthened the role of Islam as a leading religion. Islam became an ideology in his conquests. Since the times of Tīmūr, Islam became more than just a religion. It became a way of life in Central Asia. Islamic clergy were entitled to investitures from governors and sovereigns (wakūfs), which turned them into rich landlords and made them a powerful political force. Bukhārā was an embodiment of the supremacy of Islam. Thousands of mosques and religious schools in both urban areas and country sides thoroughly watched over the accurate execution of Islamic rituals and the implementation of Qurʾānic rules. In the 15th century, the new mystic branch of Ṣūfism came into existence, which further expanded the influence of Islam. Islam was actively instilled into family life, poetry, music, literature and politics.

2. Russian conquest and Soviet power

The conquest of Central Asia by Russia led to the destruction of Islam. The Tsar's administration could not allow for any other competing force in the process of strengthening its power in the region. Under the false pretexts

of an alleged danger coming from Panislamism and Panturkism, the Russian administration bankrupted the financial base of the Islamic power. The Islamic clergy were deprived of their lands and turned into an impoverished organization, left only with scarce voluntary donations. The Tsar's administration closed the borders to foreign Asian countries and liquidated the ties of local Muslims with their foreign 'brothers' in religion. The Islamic clergy were thrown from their powerful pedestal and became servants of the colonial regime.

Later, the Soviet power with its atheistic principles declared Islam as its ideological enemy and started an uncompromising war for its complete destruction. Thousands of mosques were abolished and turned into clubs on atheistic propaganda, all Islamic schools were shut down, and the observance of religious rituals was forbidden. However, even the Soviet dictatorship could not defeat Islam. Islam went underground and turned into a 'family religion,' becoming a private matter of citizens. It survived, it became a way of life, and it continued to be dominant in cultural life, moulding the spiritual development of the nation. The Soviet regime tried to replace Islam with the universal Soviet values, its system of education, the European culture, and the russification of spiritual life. However, Islam survived and won this hopeless war.

3. Changes subsequent to the Second World War

The Second World War drastically changed the position of the Soviet State with regard to religion, including Islam. During the years of the war and their hardships, in 1943 the participation of the Muslim people both in the military actions and at the home front became vitally important. The Muftīyāt of Central Asia was created. New mosques were opened and Islam became a spiritual organizer again in the patriotic movement of Muslims in the war against Hitlerism. A new Islamic school, Mīr Arab, was opened in Bukhārā. After the Second World War, the Soviet regime used Islam for expanding its influence in Arab countries. Hundreds of students were sent to such Islamic schools as al-Azhar, schools in Morocco and Oman, in order to form a new generation of religious scholars, loyal to the Soviet regime. They were called 'red mullahs.' They were faithful Muslims with higher Islamic education, yet at the same time serving the Soviet regime. They played an important role in strengthening the influence of the Soviet Union in the Arab East. In 1955,

prior to the crisis of the Suez Canal, the President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, visited Uzbekistan. He was stunned by the number of mosques, the religious training of the clergy and the beauty of the mosques. His conversations with Ishan Bobokham, who was at the time a muftī of Muslims in Central Asia, and his son Ziyautdin Bobokham fostered the development of the 'Nasserism' ideology and turned Nasser into a supporter of the Soviet Union. Islam was used as a brilliant façade of Soviet socialism. At the same time, Islam was rapidly expanding by taking over new roles in the social life of the country. It was hard to stop the process then.

4. Uzbekistan's independence, the spreading of Islamic values and tendencies towards the politicization of Islam

The declaration of Uzbekistan's independence in 1991 opened up huge opportunities in the process of Islamic development, strengthening the influence of Islam not only in the social but also in the political life of the Republic. Uzbekistan's first president was Islom Karimov, i. e. Islām karīm – Holy Islam. He was a Communist, one of the leading representatives of the former Communist republic, but he realized the important role of religion in the spiritual revival of society and of the State. He made a number of decisions, which induced Islam to assist him in his activity of fostering independence, of unifying the people, and of spreading true Islamic values. Annually the State granted airplanes and subsidies for trips of ḥadjdj (pilgrimage) and 'umra to Mecca. Hundreds of new madrasas (Islamic schools) were opened for educating a Muslim clergy of a new type, which would combine secular and religious education. Thousands of new mosques were built and Islamic scholars sent to Muslim countries. Bukhārā once again revived its glory as a centre of Islamic theology.

Substantial resources were allocated to Islamic studies, and new scholastic treatises were written, which demonstrated Uzbekistan's contribution to the implementation and development of Islam. For the first time, festivals were held at the occasion of anniversaries in order to celebrate such outstanding Islamic scholars as an-Naqshbandī (d. 1389), al-Bukhārī (d. 870) and al-Marghīnānī (d. 1197). Their names were placed in the catechism of the Uzbek people's glory. Last but not least, the Islamic University in Tashkent was opened, where hundreds of outstanding Arabists teach Islamic subjects, Arabic language and Muslim civilization.

However, something unexpected happened. Various groups of people, dissatisfied with the existent regime, took advantage of the current economic difficulties and began to use Islam for achieving their political goals. I think that in modern society religion should be separated from the State and it should not get entangled with political activities aimed at overthrowing current regimes. The Taliban movement in neighbouring Afghanistan had an impact on the further involvement of Islam in the politics of Uzbekistan. New political organizations appeared which used Islamic flags, while some of their leaders did not even know Muslim religion. It cannot remain unmentioned how extremist foreign Islamic organizations attempted to use Uzbekistan as their basis in Central Asia for destabilizing the political situation. The goal was to create an Islamic caliphate in Uzbekistan.

Various political parties such as "Ḥizb at-Taḥrīr al-Islāmī," "Islom Lashkarlari," "Tawba," "Islamic Renaissance Party" and the Wahhābī movement were created in Uzbekistan. Their programmes and goals were taken mainly from such Muslim political organizations as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Baath party. There has been a complex situation during the years of 1995–2005 in Uzbekistan. Members of propagandistic and terrorist organizations were being trained in the military camps of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many Arabs from Jordan enrolled in the local *madrasas* of Uzbekistan under various pretexts and propagated the idea of creating a caliphate. Terrorist attacks took place similar to those that currently happen in Iraq and Pakistan.

5. Uzbekistan a multi-confessional country

Uzbekistan is a multi-confessional country, and the regime in power treats all religions and confessions equally; for each religion and confession, conditions are set for the observance of their religious practice. There are 16 religions and confessions actively operating in Uzbekistan. The mainstream religions are Islam and the Russian Orthodox Church. Islam has two centres in Tashkent and Bukhara, nearly two thousand organizations and eleven schools. The Russian Orthodox Church has a centre in Tashkent, 31 local organizations, one seminary and three monasteries. There are several schools administered by Evangelists. The Roman Catholic Church has a centre in Tashkent and four local organizations. There is a wonderful building of the Polish Catholic Church in the centre of Tashkent, which also

serves as a church for performing Catholic rituals, such as baptizing and wedding ceremonies. There is a growing influence of the Korean Protestant Church, which has 61 local organizations. Judaism also has an important position; there are seven synagogues in Uzbekistan.

Religious tolerance is one of the foundations for any State. There have never been conflicts based on religious differences in Uzbekistan. The appearance of extremist Islamic organizations with their medieval fanaticism and aggressive character threatens to undermine the peaceful harmony and understanding between the representatives of the various religious groups. In the Orthodox seminaries, the Uzbek language is mandatory, whereas in the Islamic schools, the Russian language is mandatory. A new subject of religious studies is included in the curricula of the schools, where pupils are introduced to the various religions and confessions, their history, background and role in the framework of world civilization.

The struggle against Islamic extremism should be waged not only by repressive methods. A central role in this struggle should be played by enlightenment and education. On April 7, 1999, the Islamic University in Tashkent was founded under the auspices of the Cabinet of Ministers, according to a decree of President Karimov. Its primary aim is to prepare highly qualified specialists in the field of Islamic studies, its history, *sharī'a* and *fiqh*. All its faculty members received their education in the al-Azhar or in Morocco, Lebanon or Jordan.

The University's curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the following subjects: Theology, Islamic studies, *sharī'a*, International economic relations, Computer sciences, Natural sciences, Theory and practice of forming a democratic society, Philosophy, Oriental languages (Arabic, Farsi), English language, and Physical training.

The Department of Islamic scholarly research offers the following subjects: al-Qur'ān and *tafsīr, al-ḥadīth,* History and philosophy of Islam, *sharī'a,* and Islamic civilization and its cultural contribution to the world civilization.

There is a great library at the University with ancient Islamic manuscripts, which help students to understand the original development of Islam. One of the prides of the University is an authentic copy of the 'Uthmānic Qur'ān, written in the 7th century.

The first class graduated in 2003. Its graduates received prestigious jobs. Many of them are sent to foreign countries as diplomats in Uzbek embassies.

SCHABESTARI In his paper Professor Khidoyatov referred to the fact that Islamic studies too are pursued in the universities of Uzbekistan. I would be interested to know more about the question where this new generation of academics comes from, where these people, who are involved in Islamic studies in Uzbekistan, get their scientific education – in the country itself or in foreign countries, and if in the latter, in which countries?

where does the new generation of academics come from?

KHIDOYATOV I think the relations to other Islamic countries have sometimes been tense. Former Communism was the main reason for it. In earlier years, for example, I was teacher in a religious academy and there half of the students were Chechens. And we must be aware of Chechens, in these days, being used to spread Communism secretly in all Arab countries. In this way Islam was sometimes used as a means to an end, but it also becomes evident why we offered resistance to it. However, within the balance of power in those days, Moscow had the final say.

varying relations to other Islamic countries

On the other hand, there have been excellent Muslim scholars in Russia. They translated the Qur'ān into Russian, and we tried to translate it into Uzbek as well, but this turned out to be difficult because it is hard to find the relevant expressions in our language with regard to the Qur'ānic ideas and contents. And that is why, in our Islamic studies, we liked to refer back to the ḥadīths, to the ḥadīths of 'Ā'isha, al-Bukhārī, at-Tirmidhī, and others. This was very helpful to penetrate into the particular world of ideas and ways of thinking in the Islamic tradition, not so much in its literal sense, but according to its meaning and intentions. I think that actually in the Qur'ān, and in Islam quite generally, the main point is its intrinsic meaning. So it was not that tragic that, in spite of repeated attempts, it was not possible to translate the Qur'ān into Uzbek, for in modern Uzbek you will not find these concepts that are used in 'Uthmān's tradition in the 7th century.

Islamic tradition mainly via ḥadīth literature

Certainly, we are frequently on very good terms, for example with Saudi Arabia. For the benefit of the participation in ḥadjdj and 'umra, our government places free transport at people's disposal. So, in my opinion, it is indeed very important to educate a clergy that is

religious education above all in our Islamic University

capable of thinking in modern categories. This is also true of the Imāms, the leaders of community prayers, and of the khaṭībs, the preachers; all of them must be educated at the Islamic University in order to make them acquire in their lives a secular and at the same time divine way of thinking.

KHODR I am certainly not an apologist for Russia, but in order to better understand the relationship between the Muslims in Central Asia and the Russians, we have to know first, that Russia for 200 years was occupied by Muslim tatars, and only after a hard fight did Russia gain independence. Second, we have to take into consideration that Russia and Turkey made war on one another. The confusion of 'Ottoman Empire,' being the centre of the caliphate, on the one hand, and Islam, on the other, led to great difficulties. One could, therefore, understand these feelings on the part of Russia. Conversely, for the people of Central Asia the Russians represent the West, although this is not necessarily true. We cannot overlook either that it was a Roman Catholic who led the Swedes in their war against Russia. So, it is not hard to understand the Russians' resentment against other peoples holding their home country occupied for more or less a long time, and also their feeling of self-defence.

Russia's ambivalent historical relations to Central Asia

A psychological explanation for it is, among others, the fact that the Russians see themselves as heirs to Constantinople. In the light of this ideology Moscow is seen as the third Rome, while Constantinople is called the second Rome. So there are a number of historical facts, and therewith associated feelings that make, to some extent, the Russians negative behaviour understandable.

Christian Arabs sympathize with Muslim peoples

Being Christian Arabs, we suffer a lot from the superiority complex of the former Christian nations like France and Russia, who developed a hostile attitude towards Muslim peoples. We, as Christian Arabs, cannot agree on these feelings: we do not only feel in a friendly, but rather in a brotherly way related to Muslims. So, for example, when I go to my family's house in Tripoli, a Sunnite city, I normally do not look at my watch because the house is near to a mosque, called *Masdjid ad-Da'wa*, and I know my time according to the *adhān*, the call for prayer. It is in this way that we also feel happy when the month of *Ramaḍān* gets closer, in order to gather with our Muslim brothers and eat together with them. We expect their invitations, and so forth. By that I only tried to give a more comprehensive picture, and not to justify all the Russian behaviour.

KHIDOYATOV In an abstract and more general form, Russians have a very good relationship to Islam, the concrete Qur'ānic usage however they rather dislike, because it contradicts their own ideology. Russians developed an important, world-renowned scientific tradition in Arabic and Islamic studies. But in their factual relations to the Islamic countries, they develop different behaviour patterns.

IQBAL I would like to raise two questions: I got the impression that the level of education has fallen since the break up of the Soviet Union and independence of Uzbekistan. If this is the case, to what extent? Furthermore, I believe that when Russia took over Uzbekistan, they changed the Persian to the Cyrillic script. Having regained independence, is there Cyrillic still in use and what is the medium of education – is it Russian or Uzbek?

KHIDOYATOV During the Soviet rule, we educated the clergy in the Mir-e Arab Academy, where I was teaching. Since, at this time, there was only one mosque in each region and the number of students very small, this Academy was enough. Different to that situation, there are now more than 2,000 *madrasa*s in the whole country.

Which script is in use at present? We have to remember in this context that the Arabic alphabet is not appropriate for the Turkish language. In the 19th century, the Azerbaijanis wished to remove the Arabic alphabet. After the October Revolution, the Soviet government organized the following experiment: they established in one place two schools – one of them with the Arabic alphabet, the other one with the Latin alphabet. 90 % of the parents sent their children to the school where the Latin alphabet was introduced. Finally, in order to disrupt all links with the Muslim brotherhoods, the Cyrillic script was installed. But also Cyrillic is quite strange for our Uzbek language.

So, starting from 1955 and ending with 2006, everything was transferred to the Latin alphabet. The Turkish language, however, especially in the time of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, very quickly adopted the Latin alphabet. But this alphabet was actually introduced to the Ottomanian language, whereas we practise a different Turkish language; and we realized very quickly that this Turkish-Latin alphabet is not

really appropriate for our alphabet. For ten years, we therefore studied the various types of the Latin alphabet to investigate their usability in the interest of our Uzbek language.

KHOURY The Islamic institutes as well as the Muslim scholars, do they refer back to the famous tradition of the great old days? Furthermore, are their attempts to walk along new paths in order to apply the *sharī'a* as a guiding line for the life after the communist rule, face to face to the requirements of modern life in the present-day world?

KHIDOYATOV The big problem in answering the second question is that some people say that in Uzbekistan the process of modernization consists in the Islamization of the secular society, while others affirm that this process will involve the secularization of Islam. If you ask 100 people concerning this question about their opinion, you will get 100 different answers. That is why the Islamic University was founded.

In any case, Arabic is the language in all the disciplines at the Islamic University, beginning with the first course and the first lesson. This is the case because there are numerous Arabic-schools in our country and you cannot enter the Islamic University if you have not passed one of these schools.

BSTEH I got the impression that Professor Khidoyatov's great interest in history sharpens his look at the present time and even gains there its topicality. And it is this perspective that doubtlessly very much enriches our dialogue at this Round Table.

GABRIEL Professor Khidoyatov was speaking about 70 or 80 years of a terrible Soviet regime, a period, however, that had some positive aspects too with regard to education and social systems, for example. I would like to ask Professor Khidoyatov two questions: how do you deal with this ideological past as a historian and how do you deal with the institutions that Communism left in the field of education, but also in public health care? Are there Islamic institutions to take over that heritage? Repeatedly, we hear from post-Communist countries that there are big social problems concerning the children, for instance, who had been living in social institutions under the Communist regime and now they are exposed to the streets, because there is nobody who would look after them.

Mohammad Modjtahed Schabestari

KHIDOYATOV Islam is a very flexible religion and would adapt to any regime. It feels called to find its way in any given society. And it was always important for Islam to find the way to the soul of the people. As said before, Islam, under the Soviet regime, became a religion of the family. My father, for instance, was a Communist, but at home he was a Muslim. It was indeed a very complicated situation.

In the Russian version of Marxism, Communism was irreconcilably up against any other ideology and therefore also, for a long time, against Islam. Until 1943, the Soviet regime was fighting the Islamic ideology, but then Islam became a substantial part of the patriotic war. And after World War II, Islam became a means for penetrating the Arab world and get it under the influence of Communism. Of course, this was very dangerous for the Arabic countries. So, for example, Saddam Hussein was studying at that time in Moscow and spoke Russian fluently; and he knew a number of KGB people in Baghdad.

At this time, it was very important for Communism to spread its sphere of influence in this direction, and it was exactly this pressure on Communism that caused some sort of liberalization in its attitude towards Islam. When the nationalization of the Suez Channel was at issue and Gamal Abdel Nasser was banned by the Western powers, the Soviet government supported him. And when the Soviet ambassador met Colonel Nasser in Bandung, the Soviets changed tactics with regard to Islam, not only in Uzbekistan, but worldwide. There are two international centres for Islamic studies: Oxford and Moscow. The Soviets showed themselves very flexible in their relationship to Islam. Whereas at first, the Communist rulers did not want to recognize General Nasser, later on they realized that it was an error and began to invite Arab leaders to Moscow. By that Islam has gained a lot of negative experience with the Soviet regime, but at the same time learned also a number of positive things.

The topic of my paper being "Religious Education and Identity," I would like to refer in this context to the following points:

1. Can we think of a relationship between religious education on the one hand and personal and social identity on the other? In order to examine this question, I would like to speak first about identity. Identity presents itself as a socially conditioned, historical concept, which emerged in modern age. We speak of a society's or a person's identity by taking into consideration two historical moments with regard to a society or a person, these two moments being the past and the present situation of a person or a society. The inquiry into the issue of identity is therefore the inquiry into the question of who we have been in the past and who we are today.

2. We try to speak about identity when the natural, unconscious identity is affected by a serious crisis through changes in the social or personal sphere. In such a crisis societies or individuals try to relate themselves to other entities in order to seriously define themselves vis-à-vis these entities. Of course, this definition of the self can only occur when 'the other' has been defined as well.

3. But what do we mean by speaking of religious education? Religious education may have two different meanings. One meaning could refer to efforts that aim at convincing children through creeds and principles of a religion and to get them accustomed to certain religious practices and rituals. This kind of education will not be successful in our times and in face of the modern and even of the half-modern societies, because in the modern age, repeatedly epistemic and social changes are happening, which hinder the stability of any concrete phrasing of religious creeds, principles or obligations and stimulate people to develop, again and again, new interpretations and expressions of their religion which, compared with the previous ones, appear to be heresies.[1] If religious education takes place in this way, we can-

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[1] P. L. Berger refers to this in his book *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary possibilities*

not possibly expect that a personal identity could develop in any individual on this basis, because the stability of a religious personality, as a result of these continuous changes, will always be exposed to danger.

But religious education may have another meaning, too. We can educate children in a way that they get some idea of a religious-spiritual approach to the world, so that they can open up to God as the mystery of the world and experience an inner thirst for truth. We can get children acquainted with this kind of attitude and convey to them what such an opening up of oneself and what the thirst for truth really means. But the details – how and in which ways this decision for a certain religion, for a certain creed, etc., is then definitively made – will in each case be left to the young people, whose education is at issue.

It goes without saying that parents, for example as Muslims or as Christians, in their everyday life may behave as practising religious people and by that practice convey to their children an indirect impulse with regard to the aforementioned spiritual experience.

Religious education, as described above, may lead to a situation in which somebody experiences him/herself as a religious being and in this way achieves personal inner harmony and unity and is spared inner strife. If we define this as 'personal identity,' then the 'other one,' who comes to face this 'personal identity,' is everyone else, who lives in the presence of truth. But since nobody can claim that she/he has the whole truth at her/his disposal, nobody can know of another wholly and perfectly that she/he does not actually have to do with truth. Viewed in this way, the personal religious identity is not confronted by any individual human being or group as the 'other one.' This identity does not lead to conflict, and we could even say that for this human being, the 'other one' is only God, insofar as He is the only one who fully lives in the truth. This difference establishes a borderline between man and God, which is why we must not try to become God ourselves.

4. The final point of importance, which I would like to emphasize here, is that we should not try to achieve a sociopolitical identity through religious education. This thesis is based on two deliberations:

(a) The attempt to set up a sociopolitical identity and the question who we have been in the past and who we are at present, lead to confronting us with other peoples and human groupings as 'the others,' and even wanting to reinforce this by deepening the concept of 'the other.' But this approach leads to conflicts between peoples and civilizations. In addition it is academically controversial today whether there is something like a sociopolitical identity at all. Historical research shows that practically all civilized peoples have been influencing each other with regard to their cultures and that, for this reason, there is no genuine sociopolitical identity at all, or at least not in the sense as we conceive of it at first sight.

(b) When religion is used as a means to achieve a sociopolitical identity, religion turns into a political ideology. An ideologized religion of this kind loses its spiritual impact and is no longer in a position of giving meaning to people's lives.

Religion that has been alienated in this way, leads to nihilism on the one hand and to political conflict among the peoples of the world on the other. It is then in the name of God that nations oppose each other and consider this as their religious duty.

To avoid misunderstandings, I would like to underline that my warning about ideologizing religion does not mean that religion should remain indifferent vis-à-vis all the many forms of injustice and inhumanity worldwide. Religion rather has to raise its voice in the name of truth and decidedly to protest against all forms of injustice and inhumanity in our world. The definition, however, what in concreto is to be judged as just or unjust, has to be left to people themselves, whether they are religious or not.

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of religious affirmation. Garden City, NY, 1979 (German: *Der Zwang zur Häresie. Religion in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft.* Frankfurt/M., 1980).

Questions and Interventions

KHOURY The question about identity even includes situations in which our identity is in danger of being attacked. Education, therefore, must be able to take a given basic identity as a starting point, which, in certain situations, must be strengthened, deepened or also defended. Education must be competent to ensure the respective identity in its basic requirements and guarantee its continuance in individual and social conditions, so that Muslims can preserve their identity in a non-Islamic country and Christians their identity in a non-Christian environment without living there permanently with a bad conscience.

education may also serve to safeguard an imperilled identity in its basic components

SCHABESTARI But what does basic identity actually mean? As explained in my previous presentation, it may be conceived of in a twofold way: first, as a summary of essential elements of a given religion and its binding ways of life – for the Muslim, this could include, for example, the prayer five times a day. What basic identity in fact means, however, can also be something different, namely that I open up for God, and then also decide on praying five times a day, but this in a way that, at the same time, I do not respect those who believe in God, but do not pray five times a day, as aliens, as 'the others.'

various ways of understanding a basic identity

So this also can be conceived of as a 'basic identity': that I pray to God and, as a Muslim, turn to him in my own personal way, but not in a sense that I were not allowed to do it otherwise and that no other form of prayer and professing your creed could possibly be harmonized with truth. It is therefore my way of being religious that I have chosen for various reasons. And I have done so being aware that other people may have other ways of being pious and without confronting them as 'the others.'

For this reason, if the Muslim children had not been educated at home in this way to conceive of their religious way of life as secluded and isolated vis-à-vis others, but in an open-minded way, in the spirit of togetherness and co-existence with other people in other religions, we would not confront all these problems, which, for example, we confront nowadays in Europe considering an appearance of the society that conveys to many people the idea of schism and inner conflict.

secluded ways of life may lead to social conflicts

KHOURY The important thing here mainly is the situation of the religious communities in which people of a certain common creed are living together and ask themselves what indispensably belongs to their own religious identity – as distinct from that of people in other religions. Furthermore, this is of course a question particularly raised to the leaders of the communities, to preachers and religious instruction teachers: which idea do we have to convey about what a Muslim is expected to be? What is characteristic of a Muslim, for example, in our European pluralistic society?

This is very often difficult to decide because people concerned are not sufficiently prepared for reflecting this situation properly and giving appropriate answers to their believers. The average people are not sufficiently educated in theological matters to give themselves answers to these questions; they expect support. And help comes from preaching, from religious instruction in schools, etc.

SCHABESTARI I know about these problems from my own experience, since I was living in Europe for nine years. However, we have to get to the bottom of these problems, if we want to solve them: we must explore new ways and means how these preachers and community-leaders should be educated – especially those who are expected to convey relevant things to Muslims in modern Europe.

we have to get to the bottom of these questions and explore new answers

I would like to refer here, for example, to the question which we were asked at that time by our Muslim believers in Germany: how to shape the month of Ramaḍān during summer time. We had to deal with the fact that Muslims sometimes were forced to work 18 hours in the heat of summer and at the same time expected to fulfil their fasting obligation. Undoubtedly, this was a very difficult situation, and we told them that they were allowed to time their daily fasting according to Islamic countries that have normal, i. e. 12-hour day- and night-time. So, for these practical problems feasible solutions can be found.

GABRIEL Perhaps, it could be advisable to distinguish between secluded and open identities and not to abolish the concept of a collective identity totally, but to see to it that identity is conceived of as an open identity. And this for two reasons:

shouldn't we distinguish here between secluded and open identities?

First, because all religious practice is contingent: it emerges in history and represents ways and means to find God, but it has

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no absolute value. If we do not bear this in mind, we are in danger to attach too great an importance to details in the context of defining identities. On the other hand, because every identity is relativized by practice: it does not depend that much on whether I do this or that in detail; God might rather judge by taking into account our whole path through life, especially our relationship to our fellow human beings.

religion cannot found sociopolitical identity, without religion being distorted by it

SCHABESTARI   With regard to the personal sphere, to the sphere of personal education, I can agree with what has been said before. In this case we can even speak of an open identity. Yet, the crucial point for me is the sociopolitical field: religion must not be related to it; in other words, I cannot conceive of a sociopolitical identity that is achieved through religious identity, even the latter being an open identity. That means, I cannot think of a sociopolitical identity that is based on religion, without falsifying religion by it, without defining political and social concepts by religious texts. If we refer to the fact that this or that is written in religious texts and apply it straightaway to social life, it gets dangerous because social life has always to do with politics, with political measures, etc. In a society, religion may give impulses, indirect impulses even for politics; but identity – even an 'open identity' – in a sociopolitical context cannot be based on religion, without distorting religion through it.

educate people towards an open and flexible identity

BELARBI   I would like to thank Professor Schabestari for his deep presentation, which may help us to raise many questions, and take up Professor Khoury's deliberations concerning the importance of education with regard to shaping identity. He was speaking especially about the situation of Muslim minorities in foreign countries and of Christian minorities, among others, in Islamic countries. I think we sometimes direct people to a fixed and rigid identity and, thereby, risk to overlook that identity continuously develops from the early childhood via all stages of development. We should, therefore, show more interest in directing people to a flexible and open identity, because nobody can perceive his/her own identity without recognizing the other's identity. Only in this very openness and through recognizing the difference between our own identity and that of others, we will be capable of sharing with others and dialogue.

the world is moving rapidly, whereas religions tend to be static

Furthermore, I would like to communicate with you an experience made in the context of my teaching assignment for young people in Morocco and in other countries: that most of the young people find that the world is moving rapidly, whereas religions on their part tend to be static. Maybe religious authorities and theologians do not give enough space to others for their own reflections and questions. And even when they raise their questions, they are considered as heretical. So, they start asking themselves what they can do to modernize religion and get it more adapted to the modern world. And, in fact, we know and it is confirmed by many theologians that Islam is a religion capable of adapting to all values and needs. Maybe we should be more sensitive and apprehensive for young people and their perception of, and ideas about, religion and how to get religion closer to them.

the concept of a sociopolitical identity became controversial nowadays ...

SCHABESTARI   I agree that an Iranian and somebody from Egypt or Austria should have some kind of social and political identity of their own. However, seen from an academic perspective, this issue of a sociopolitical identity became controversial on principle in present day and age. In case some people think that this is academically acceptable, then one certainly could try to establish, based on various historical factors, an appropriate identity.

... and we should not try to use religion for this purpose

Only, we should not try to use religion for this purpose. This would alienate religion from its very essence, since it would deprive it of its spiritual function. Isn't the relation to God the core of religion? It has to do with the divine, it speaks of God and teaches human beings to relate to God – and what has to do with God, should be somehow above time and space, in order to be able to exert a spiritual function in human life.

how should a renewal of Islam look like today, how should it happen?

Professor Belarbi also did right to speak of the necessity of a continuous renewal and reinterpretation in Islam too. And when our wise and scholarly people say that Islam is capable of adapting to all periods in history, it is not without reason. But how and in which way should this reform actually happen? For example, there have been various people who interpreted Islam from their own point of view: above all mystics, philosophers and jurists. When the philosophers

tried to understand philosophy in the light of the Qur'ān, then the mystics, on their part, tried to understand mysticism in the light of the Qur'ān, and similarly the jurists their jurisprudence. They all tried to elevate and upraise a particular dimension. How shall we proceed in our days? Which interpretation shall we elaborate in particular in order to make us Muslims live in our days without schism and inner conflict, as Professor Khoury said?

identity, based on religion, may lead to communalism

BELARBI Once again referring back to the problem of defining identity, I would like to mention that there is a number of factors that can contribute to its definition: socioeconomic factors, sociocultural factors, and – as I would like to add on my part – the factor of international environment and international ideas. If we focus only on the spiritual side and on religion, we would run the risk of instrumentalizing religion and develop a very specific identity, a rigid identity that leads to communalism – and we all know what happens when communalism has the say.

Learning Justice

Ingeborg Gabriel

In our three previous meetings, we have dealt with important issues on justice in our present-day worldwide political situation. By way of our topic this year, we make, as it were, a change of perspective, a change of view. At stake is now justice as a learning process, as something that can and must be learned and that, by teaching, we must get across to others. In this process we always remain learners and teachers at the same time.

After all, this pedagogics of justice, which is at stake here, is always already included in the Biblical-Christian and also in the classical ethical traditions, which I am taking here as a starting point. For, as Aristotle writes in the *Nicomachean Ethics:* "Not for the purpose of knowing what being good really means, we make this investigation, but to become good people. Otherwise it would be useless."[1] Therefore, it is obvious that even according to the Biblical Scriptures, the issue is not information about justice, but rather that listening and thinking are oriented towards acting. Last semester I was holding a seminar on this subject and I realized that we discovered here a sort of blank spot in modern discourses. Thinking is not in an equal manner coupled with acting, and the question after learning processes is largely left out. By that I have already indicated the way I am going to structure my deliberations. In a first section, I will take over Biblical and philosophical impulses on the topic of "learning justice." In a second move, I will raise the question as to what this means under the present conditions of globalization and medialization, and also why I feel that in contemporary thought a not at all harmless blank here exists.

1. Learning justice as a lifelong task

The learning of justice is not first and foremost a matter of information, it is rather a question of a special mode of education that refers to the whole person.

If we condense the multifarious and extensive narratives, prophecies and proverbs of the Biblical books in two sentences, we will discover

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[1] NE 1103b27–29.

that it is, on the one hand, the recognition and worship of God that they are concerned with, or in other words, the love of God and, on the other hand, justice in face of fellow men, or in other words the love of neighbour. These are the two basic Christian commandments. The term 'love' may lead us astray here because in contemporary everyday usage it is used in a restricted sense. Obviously, in this context there is not a certain feeling at stake, but a personal learning process, which, in recognition of God's order of creation, is oriented towards a "righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees" (Mt 5:20), a sort of righteousness that exceeds mere legal morality.

In all monotheistic religions, justice is the central moral norm. Just to mention a few dimensions of this extremely variform term: According to the story of creation, God has formed humankind in his wisdom to "rule the world in [...] righteousness" (Wis 9:3), namely as an image of God to establish just orders, where human beings can live together peacefully and harmoniously. Since reality looks totally different, an outcry against injustice traverses the following books of the Bible. Paradigmatic for this are the stories of the Exodus as a model of divine assistance: God listens to the cry of his people and shows them the way out of their oppression. In the Book of Psalms, the prayer implores God to do justice to the person praying, and this means to help him against his oppressors. But he also confesses his guilt and asks for forgiveness: "O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger, or discipline me in your wrath" (Ps 6:1; 38:1). In seven of the Ten Commandments, the just order in human relations is the subject. The prophets exhort the people to be just and to condemn injustice. The "greater justice," which is demanded in the imitation of Jesus, calls for going beyond what is legally demanded and stipulated, in order to come to a fellow human being's aid, especially if he/she is in trouble. This includes the suffering for the sake of justice, to "overcome evil with good" (Rm 12:21).

Thus, justice as an expectation that is directed at others and equally as an appeal to one's own responsibility, does not primarily designate a state of affairs that has to be achieved, but enjoins an action. In addition, it is a never ending process. Through it, the human being develops into a person. In sum, in a Biblical perspective justice reveals itself as a learning process, which shapes humankind towards what he/she is expected to be as an image of God: a just person. What basically is at issue is to train the capacity and willingness to do justice to the other as a person, to be just to him/her. This approach is analogous to one of Greek ethics: becoming oneself begins with self-knowledge ("Know yourself!"), the goal being justice as the highest virtue, acquired by means of training and habit, which presupposes bravery, moderation and wisdom. In German, the term 'Tugend' [virtue] derives from 'zu-etwas-taugen' [to be capable or good for something]. The goal of human life is to become what humankind can and should be – similar to the way that other things in our world should serve their purpose. In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas has inserted this approach in a theological context: ethics as a learning process of justice and love takes up most of his central work, the *Summa theologica*. Its basic ethical design – now of a connotation geared towards the individual – says, that the individual human being comes from God, passes through the world and returns to God. This short formula (according to Max Seckler) – "from God through the world to God" – discloses the human life- and world-commitment as a moral learning process. Humankind is created in order to become human and to bring this humanness in God to perfection. Justice and learning, pedagogics and moral development are inseparably linked together. Life and activity are meant to strive for justice, i. e., to learn righteousness. In this dynamic process, conscience gets sharpened for what is just the longer the individual engages in moral questions. It is also for that reason that ethics plays such an eminent role in theology. The moral language of that time, by the way, was much richer than that of the present day and age. According to the philosophy of language, the degree of differentiation in the modes of expression can be taken as a criterion for a highly developed culture in a certain field; whereas the impoverishment of the moral language and the lower accuracy of ethical concepts in the present time is an indicator of our weaker interest in a just order of human relations or of a less exact knowledge in this context.

Today, as before, our daily routine confronts everybody with an abundance of issues concerning justice, which have to be decided in a responsible manner and which need orientations, norms and models. In this context, learning justice in the face of God, of our neighbour and of ourselves constitutes the core of a person's moral identity. It consists in the knowledge "of being responsible for one's actions" and in the capacity of acting accordingly. This is the convincing thesis of the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur.[2] Not "cogito, ergo sum", but "credo et ago, ergo sum,"

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[2] P. Ricoeur, *Das Selbst als ein Anderer*. Paderborn, 1996, p. 185 (Engl.: Oneself as Another. Chicago, 1992).

whereby religious and moral identity are closely interrelated to each other. By that, the very nature of learning justice is defined: it is a social learning process which challenges and forms the person as a whole and in which his/her most basic being is at stake.

Closely related thereto is the fact that a dimension of unavailability is proper to moral learning and by that also to moral teaching, which corresponds to that of the person him/herself. This is demonstrated by Plato at the end of his "Dialogue Menon": even if one can argue about the contents of what is good as justice and sobriety, σωφροσύνη, nevertheless its achievement is a matter of divine grace.[3] Similarly, the Biblical texts speak of a peculiar form of obduracy of those who hearing do not listen nor understand and who do not carry out what they have recognized as just and right (cf. Mt 13:13 f.).

Learning justice, therefore, never is only a matter of will, but a personal process, which is of a completely other kind than technical and economical procedures. Hannah Arendt, in her "Vita activa," has made a distinction between 'producing' and 'acting,' and she demonstrated that the modern 'homo faber' does not grant 'acting' its appropriate place. Similarly, Jürgen Habermas differentiates between a communicative and an instrumental reason, whereby, in our technically and scientifically imprinted world, the latter became dominant to such an extent that it overgrows, as it were, the communicative, ethical reason.

However, human justice in itself always also remains imperfect: it will attain its perfection in the Eschaton, in God's ultimate reality. It is indeed the characteristic feature of the Kingdom of Heaven and cannot be realized in innerworldly conditions.

2. Personal learning as social learning

Since the learning of justice is of a personal nature, it takes place socially in groups and communities. This is true of the family, equally of the Church or the cult, of schools and universities, and last not least of the public realm, where the media play a crucial mediating role. All these social agents are of great significance in the context of the moral learning processes and should be investigated separately. At this point only some brief annotations.

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[3] Plato, *Menon*. 100b.

The family is the primary place of socialization and of learning justice. It is time and again surprising that children have a natural feeling for justice. The spontaneous statement, "This is unjust!", demonstrates an elementary desire for social order and harmony. It is within the family that, embedded in religious traditions, the proper ideas of what is just are passed on. "When your children ask you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your children, [...]" (Dt 6:20 f.).

The secondary place of socialization is the school, which, in complex societies, takes over wide areas of education, the issue being at present to what extent it even takes over and may take over moral education. The weakening of the family results in a situation where schools are challenged also in the field of the so-called social learning: this concerns interpersonal relations, which become more and more demanding through the media and multiculturalism.

The Christian cult is another place, where justice is mediated. Especially the regular reading of Biblical texts in the liturgy is an important feature for the learning of justice, based on repetition and memorizing. The narrative traditions, i. e. the various stories and narrations, offer the chance of applying the specific demands of what was heard to the individual situations in life. In this way happens, as it were, a hermeneutical interpretation of what was heard. When the story of the poor Lazarus is read, who lies at the gate of the rich man, the listener immediately will ask himself about his own dealing with material goods. The very drastic threat of an imminent retaliation in the hereafter, of which this story speaks, reveals the radically serious side of our responsibility in view of wealth (Lk 16:19–31). We find such rousing appeals for justice in all the Gospels. They express the specifically prophetic character of the Christian message, which resumes that of the Old Testament prophets. Prophecy, however, is criticism of an alienation from God and of the contempt of human fellow beings. It publicly rises up against injustice. Those are the false prophets who support a sort of appeasement policy: they shout "peace, peace," where there is no peace, and whitewash (Ezek 22:28). The prophets call for justice as a foundation of political rule and social relations. Justice is the be-all and end-all of wisdom (Wis 1:1) and the basis for international recognition: "[...] for this will show Your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!'" (Dt 4:6). Not physical power, but justice is the criterion for superiority.

Justice is learned by word and example. In a special way this comes to a head in the New Testament, in which Jesus is presented as the embodiment of righteousness. He is "the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). This makes the personal element of mediation the focus of attention in a new way. I do not intend to elaborate in this context on the issue of the Christian doctrine of salvation. It is rather the aspect of the imitation of God, which interests me here. This aspect is already an important topos in the Old Testament: it is the task of the believer to imitate God in his justice. In the Christian spiritual traditions, this is transferred to Jesus: the learning of justice takes place through the imitation of moral examples. A deeper scientific investigation of the idea of *Mimesis* would be required. Does it not rather correspond to our basic human experience that we do not primarily learn through words, but through imitating the praxis of those whom we respect as the significant others? The proverb "verba docent, exempla trahunt" (words may teach us, examples attract) is to the point. Moral attitudes are not only and not even primarily transmitted by words, but through both the conscious and frequently also the unconscious orientation by other people. This is, as I was told, largely neglected in modern learning theory. I think that this is true because the said theory is too much cognitively oriented and takes the autonomous individual as its measure. But the reflection on one's own activity, and thereby the formation of conscience, is not only based on norms and values, but also on other people, like parents, teachers, brothers and sisters, and on models who are decisive for a certain culture. It would be interesting to dedicate a separate investigation to this subject. In a further step only will it become possible to question always anew one's own understanding of justice and to interpret and re-interpret it in a given situation. As demonstrated by the American social philosopher Michael Walzer, this is true not only for individuals but also for cultures and religions – and also our dialogue meetings here represent such a learning process.

3. Attempt of an actualization

Subsequent to these general observations, I would like to reflect on their meaning for us under the present living and learning conditions.

Let me begin by quoting the Austrian child psychologist Dr. Max Friedrich on future developments. "Skills of the moral judgement, the formed conscience and the interior voice will be mediated by the united representatives of monotheistic religions in fifty years time electronically in permanent ways by means of an audiological implantate. [...] The children of tomorrow will experience contemporary cultural elements, like architecture, music and similar things, as if they were from the period of classical antiquity – by virtue of the fast acceleration 50 years will be equal to former centuries."[4]

This statement confirmed me in my persuasion that moral learning primarily means personal and social learning. Quite apart from the strange idea of a syncretistic union of the monotheistic religions within the next 50 years, even in a still more technical 'brave new world' the learning of justice cannot be, shall we say, mechanically instilled into someone. The very opposite seems to be true: in view of further technicality, the family, the community of believers and the school will gain ground. As stated by Friedrich – without establishing an inner connection between the two statements – the problems of children are increasing, given their deficient emotional education, and they become incapable of empathy because of their inability of interpreting and reflecting on either their own feelings or those of others.

I think that the question of which way the new technical and cultural conditions will affect the learning of justice is going to be crucial for the future because the learning of righteousness and, more generally, the moral education are more difficult today and at the same time more significant than ever before. As to this question, here some observations, which however are hardly exhaustive.

1/- The process of differentiation in modern societies leading to partial sectors, like economy, politics, science, and private sphere, results in varying standards for the various areas and in different roles for people in these areas. But is justice not indivisible? It integrates all areas, and by that it makes a comprehensive claim. It is exactly here that the growing interest in moral education – some even speak of an 'ethics boom' – becomes understandable. Courses of lectures about ethic questions meet with great interest in economy, science, etc. The issue of what is good and right has to be introduced into the various sectors of society, which all have their own logics. Christian and other religious traditions have an important task here, to make people sensitive to justice as a human value, without promising easy and facile solutions for all problems, which simply do not exist in view of the given complexity. The opposite trend also has to be mentioned, assuming – as it is demonstrated by the aforementioned quotation – that morals and

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4 *Die Presse*, June 24, 2006, p. 41.

justice are superseded by an evolutionary technology, and humankind, so to say, becomes its own creator, leaving uncertain moral standards behind. Justice as a question and the struggle for it then become a remainder of a religious and metaphysical era, belonging to the past, just as the legal system of the "Codex Hammurabi," chiselled into stone, or the Ten Commandments. In view of this tendency, it is necessary to keep the learning and teaching of justice on the agenda as a central ethical challenge.

2/- The quantity of transmitted information, which through the Internet has increased nearly ad infinitum and is far more than human capacity can cope with, calls for an increase in general and philosophical education and above all in ethical education. For the mass media presuppose a higher degree of ethical discernment. Therefore the learning of justice constitutes a complementary programme, so that information can be incorporated into one's worldview and become coherent; because we have to regard this as the basis of human self-experience insofar as the person is the efficient source of his/her actions and responsible for his/her deeds. In addition, the technical possibilities of a transfer of knowledge give rise to the illusion that justice can also be learned and taught by the mass media – even if the assumptions frequently are not that extreme as it was formulated in the aforementioned citation. To what extent can electronic learning be employed in school instruction? Are physically present teachers still needed at all? I think that especially in the field of ethics personal relations and communications in a social context, such as in family, school and Church, will continue to be of decisive weight. Here, also the role of the media should be considered more in detail – which in my opinion exert a relativizing and indoctrinating influence – in case the media consumer him/herself does not have clear ideas that might be differentiated, reinterpreted, etc. through the messages of the media.

3/- The cultural and religious permeation of the society can mean an enrichment, if we are successful in clarifying discursively the various concepts of law and justice and arrive at shared convictions in the national and international field. The world as a common living space also needs common living conditions, i. e. universally recognized rules, laws and values. The same is true for individual societies. Here too, the learning of justice is of special significance. The factual living side by side does not yet create togetherness. If not accompanied by ethical education, the experience of different ideas of justice will lapse either into an ethical relativism or – so to say as a turnabout – into a moral fundamentalism. Both do not promote

social peace. Plurality demands a high degree of ethical discernment in order to conduct public discourses in a tolerant and differentiated manner. The exclusion of ethical scrutiny finally involves that, in an unreflected manner, it will return through the loophole.

Let me end my presentation by defining the tasks that present themselves today in the process of learning justice with three headwords:

• *Clarification:* the division of societies in sectors, the inundation of information, the mechanized transfer of knowledge, and the multiculturality in the experience of the varying ideas of justice result in the challenge for religions to include the central concept of justice in the public discourse, put ethical issues on the agenda and promote the learning of justice in the private sphere.

This is true for all the topics that were dealt with in our dialogue meetings so far, such as international justice and tolerance, and also for other subjects, such as ecology, gender issues, biotechnology, and so on. Thus, the message of the monotheistic religions concerning justice must be spelled out again and again in the concrete problems of the time. For achieving that, it is essential to learn from each other. Ethics however first of all needs people who educate their conscience and conduct their lives according to moral standards. One could perhaps be a good technician and a wicked individual, but, regardless of all fallibility, the learning of justice needs ethical practice.

• *Criticism:* Islam and Christianity are prophetic religions. Prophecy in the modern sense however means social criticism that carries forward to the public the quest after what is just. This is easier in liberal societies with warranted rights of freedom than in authoritarian and totalitarian States. Simultaneously, however, this leads to the legitimate expectancy of a public commitment of the religious communities to justice and to the teaching of it. They are also expected to clarify their differing ideas in a peaceful manner and through dialogue. As the history of religions, but also of philosophy shows, prophecy is not harmless at all. When it gets to the core of the matter, criticism evokes antagonism. In order that "the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Is 26:9), not only errors must be overcome, but also wickedness, violence and unscrupulousness must be confronted.

• *Creativity:* the rapid changes in the contemporary world demand that the signs and structures, the talks and actions become effective for the ever new conditions. Vis-à-vis all the radical new challenges, which I previously

tried to outline, also a radical ethical creativity is needed, which corresponds to the creativity in the technical and economic fields and which is resolved to mould this progress more humanely. This, above all, calls for a change of perspective, which views the world with different, with good eyes, with the eyes of God. Could the world not become more just, if many or perhaps only a few people regarded the goods of this world not primarily as their own property, but as an entrusted general wealth that ultimately belongs to God? Would not the world become a more peaceful place, if many or perhaps only a few people regarded their fellow human beings primarily as God's creatures with their own capabilities and promises rather than as enemies, rivals, or unbelievers? An international study of experts, the Global Governance Report, formulates as follows: "The most important change that people can make is to change their way of looking at the world. We can change studies, jobs, neighbourhoods, even countries and continents and still remain much as we always were. But change our fundamental angle of vision and everything changes – our priorities, our values, our judgments, our pursuits. Again and again, in the history of religion, this total upheaval in the imagination has marked the beginning of a new life [...] a turning of the heart, a 'metanoia,' by which men see with new eyes and understand with new minds and turn their energies to new ways of living."[5]

The learning of justice demands exactly this, and I think that both of our religions have at their disposal the necessary resources, which we should use trusting in God, so that all progress can become a progress that is humane.

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[5] *The Report of the Commission on Global Governance. Our Global Neighborhood.* Oxford, 1995, p. 47.

MAHMOOD S. S. If we raise the issue of learning righteousness, we certainly have to know, first, what justice in fact means. So do we not need in our context above all a clear definition of what being just really means?

what does justice mean, is there a legitimate variety of concepts?

GABRIEL We have to depart from the fact, that the other one is a person who has certain chances in his/her life. John Rawls, for instance, approaches this issue constructionally by saying: imagine that you are in a certain room and when you leave this room, you do not know who you are going to be – whether you are going to be a peasant in some African country or a woman in Latin America, etc. Therefore, what is at issue here is to design an order, which we will still find as being just, even if we have left the place in which we were accustomed to live.

It is this very change of perspectives which I have described in my presentation: if we could look at the world by asking ourselves whether we could live in the varying conditions here and there, I think this could lead to a fair measurement for what 'being just' really means. And I think that people tolerate some differences. Not everybody will have to be one of the richest people in the world, and maybe we need not even want to be it. But there is an inherent sense of justice, already in children. For example, if you have a group of children and something doesn't function in the right order, they say, "But this is not just!" All of us have this basic sense of justice and perhaps we do not really need a clear definition, when we set out for asking how righteousness can be learned.

Of course there are still problems, which I haven't answered yet. For example when we start asking what justice in fact means in case we are confronted with a concrete type of injustice. How should we react to it? To what extent is it allowed to use violence in face of injustice? Even if we have in the Christian tradition an option for non-violence, it is not easy at all to "overcome evil with good" (Rm 12:21) and to make a general solution out of it.

BSTEH At this point, I would like to refer to our Iranian-Austrian conferences since 1996, which dealt exactly with this complex of problems relating to justice and led us to deep insights, the last conference being on "Peace, Justice and Their Menaces in the Present Day and Age" (Tehran, 2003) and

again published in both conference-languages, Farsi and German as well as in Arabic.[1] So, together with our Iranian partners in dialogue, for almost ten years we had been working hard to clarify crucial points in the whole array of questions concerning justice from Christian and Muslim perspectives.

BELARBI If we can stay in this conceptual field, I would be interested to know more about the link between justice and equality, or between equality and equity: the reason being that there is repeatedly big confusion between both these concepts. Some people are of the opinion that equality means the same as equity. Or can we regard equity as the main principle that enables us to find out what equality really means? I think it would be important to clarify both these concepts.

in which way equality and equity are linked together?

GABRIEL I think we can agree that equality certainly cannot be simply identified with equity. But what are people equal in, and what are they unequal in? And which inequalities are justified and which cannot be justified?

For Muslims and Christians, all human beings are equal in their being human persons, created by God. By that they have their fundamental dignity, and this comes before all possible differences. Still there is this big discussion: what comes first, the difference or the equality? – be it in the discourse on men and women, be it in the discourse between religions. First of all, are we all equal or for example, because of our religion unequal? I think there should be a clear option for equality.

But then, how far the differences can go and which social form they may take, this is of course undefined in the discourse on justice. It is indeed a very difficult philosophical problem: all these ethical concepts are of a different type than the knowledge of natural science. Ethical questions always leave a certain leeway for discussion of what is right or wrong. We very often cannot simply say, this is morally right and this is morally wrong – and this is just and this is unjust.

KHOURY If we refer back to the title of Professor Gabriel's paper, it is on learning justice. I would be interested to know more about the conditions and the environment in which somebody gets the right sense of justice and the right feeling for the practice of justice. Is it, first of all, in school, or, as I would think, rather in the family that we learn righteousness?

how do we learn justice?

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[1] A. Bsteh et al. (eds.), *Friede, Gerechtigkeit und ihre Bedrohungen in der heutigen Welt.* Mödling, 2005 (Farsi edition: Teheran, 2005; Arabic edition: Jounieh, 2005).

If I think of the family as the primary environment, various levels come to my mind: there you learn first the practice of righteousness, and of imperfect forms of righteousness too. Second, you learn in the family to overcome simple righteousness through solidarity. And, thirdly, you learn there to overcome simple righteousness and solidarity by love, selfless love. In my opinion, these are the first steps of learning justice, even in the realm of society and further on in international relations as well.

GABRIEL I dealt with this aspect in my paper, but left it out in my presentation for lack of time because I thought we could take it for granted that the family is the primary place of socialization. I then departed from the problem that nowadays in incomplete families, this education for justice becomes problematic not least because of the influence of the media. If it really happens that the family loses its primary role in the socialization of the children, nothing less than a fundamental element of the society gets lost. The task is then transferred to the schools, but they are only in a limited way capable of doing justice to it: because there we will find only a vague idea of social education. In fact, there is a great number of strongly varying concepts and subsequent to it a sort of split-up in the field of education: when, increased by the influence of the media, nobody really knows what is right and what is wrong. In this situation, how should we be able to help people to get a moral identity, i. e. an open and flexible identity, which is not locked up in a rigid system of ideas, but also open for a dialogue with other people? This seems to me to be of fundamental relevance to learning justice.

... vis-à-vis all the problems in families and school

BSTEH The aforementioned widespread uncertainty of knowing what is right or wrong and all these problems concerning an appropriate socialization of children in our present day and age could remind us of the basic fact that here in our earthly conditions, we still are on our way and therefore not yet perfect and that we have not yet reached our goal. In the said situation we need, in the interest of our striving for the perfect, also the courage to be imperfect. This does not mean, on no account, that we shall be content with imperfection as such. Doing so, we would establish a very dangerous ideology by acqitting ourselves of the obligation to strive for what is perfect. On condition that we have, so to say, a vision of what is perfect in our mind and incessantly strive for it, the courage, then, to accept

striving for what is perfect, in our earthly conditions, also needs some courage to be imperfect

what is (yet) imperfect seems to be the only way to reach out for what is perfect. "For we know only in part," as Paul says, "but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end" (1 Cor 13:9 f.). Otherwise, finally we would be crushed by the reality because we cannot but realize in these earthly conditions that we are still imperfect and on our way towards the perfect.

As Christians we have Jesus' commandment "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). But how could I live under this divine commandment without taking into account that only by striving for it, I will be able to fulfill it. If I am well-advised, this motif of the way is also decisive for Islam, when Muslims are praying, day by day, "Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight way" (Sūra 1,5 f.), and constantly confessing that "[...] God careth for all, and He knoweth all things." (Sūra 3,73).

The way Annemarie Schimmel explained it to us, there is the wonderful fact that the Muslim believer, above all the mystic, knows that the way *to* God is infinitely distant. But the true believer knows that the real infinity of the way will then be *in* God. To understand God's infinity from this symbol of an infinite way, is fascinating. In other words, with the vision of what is perfect in mind, I think we all need the courage of being imperfect, i. e. still on the way and striving for the perfect.

let us not do wrong under the pretext of not being perfect

MAHMOOD S. S. Nevertheless, we have to be careful not to forget, that we should not make deliberate mistakes on the pretext of not being perfect. We rather should accept the fact that we can be perfect, that we are capable of striving for perfection. So it doesn't really need courage, it just needs acceptance that we are imperfect.

the role of example in being a teacher

MARBOE I would like to add with regard to the role of schools, previously mentioned by Professor Gabriel, that the role of the example in being a teacher is quite often neglected, even in the modern learning theories. In fact, this is surprising and we should deal with the reasons for it.

GABRIEL There are two blank spaces that are significant of the contemporary cultural situation: the high ranking of the autonomous, self-reflexive individual, so that other aspects do not reach inside. Connected with it, we notice a second element, that is that the dynamic nature of personal development is neglected and narrowed down to a normative aspect which is closely linked to scientific norms. No doubt, we welcome these

norms in the fields of biotechnology, euthanasia, etc. But even though, this is important. The other aspect must not be ignored either – the personal development in the field of ethic values, which is typical also of religious learning. I think there is something very exciting and motivating about this dimension: that we never really come to terms with it, that there are in many cases no clear solutions, that are valid once and for all, but that there is a lifelong way leading up to God and then in God; a way, which is never accomplished and where we need not be perfect ourselves. And, perhaps, this dimension of a personal example is still tightened up under multicultural and multireligious conditions.

A very nice example, which I read in a newspaper the other day: an old lady felt always frightened of foreigners because they speak a foreign language, etc. But one day, she collapsed on the street and there was a Turkish family, who helped her up, held her hand and called for the ambulance – while all the others passed by. In this situation, a moral learning process happens – simply through this natural behaviour of the Turkish family. This aged lady, will now see the world in a different light because this family acted like that. This is a general assignment for our daily routine, which can be rather interesting.

Human Rights Education

Irmgard Marboe

The manifold violation of human rights worldwide is still one of the most urgent problems of mankind. This is so in spite of the fact that since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 many international and regional conventions on human rights entered into force and a still greater number of declarations and programmes of action were adopted in order to safeguard and respect human rights under international law.[1] In the face of this discrepancy UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in 2001,

"The international community has just emerged from an era of commitment. It must now enter an era of implementation, in which it mobilizes the will and resources needed to fulfil the promises made."[2]

Certainly there already exist mechanisms and procedures which monitor the compliance with those rights embodied in the numerous instruments on human rights and shall help with their implementation.[3] They focus on States' reports, since the States parties regularly have to report to the monitoring bodies, which are constituted as independent expert committees, on the compliance with and implementation of those rights embodied in the conventions.[4] Some human rights conventions also provide for the possibility of an individual complaints procedure[5] or for a verification pro-

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[1] Of the international covenants on human rights, the seven most important are, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR, 1966), the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR, 1966), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT, 1984), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD, 1965), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), and finally the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC, 1990), in force since 2003. Cf. M. Nowak, *International Human Rights Regime.* Den Haag, 2003, p. 78. Most valuable also the survey on the homepage of UNHCR <http://www.ohchr.org/ english/law/index.htm>.

[2] Quoted from W. Benedek – M. Nikolova (eds.), *Understanding Human Rights: Manual on Human Rights Education.* Graz, 2006, p. 57.

[3] See on this, above all, the excellent presentation and analysis with D. Shelton, *Remedies in International Human Rights Law.* Oxford, 1999.

[4] Frequently special reporters are being nominated who act on their own initiative, draw up reports and formulate recommendations.

[5] As provided for in the Optional Protocols to CCPR and CEDAW as well as in Article 14 CERD, Article 22 CAT, and Article 77 MWC. See about it in greater detail M. Nowak, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), pp. 99 ff.

cedure.[6] In addition, violations of human rights conventions are generally considered to be violations of international law and can even be taken up by the International Court of Justice in The Hague.[7]

However, it turned out that all these instruments do not suffice for the efficient implementation of the internationally embodied rights. Therefore, comprehensive participation of all those concerned and general and widespread awareness of their importance are imperative. Human rights have a chance of being implemented only if a 'human rights culture' that appeals to every single person's responsibility is developed.

1. UN Decade for Human Rights Education

The United Nations therefore proclaimed the "Decade for Human Rights Education" (1995–2004).[8] It aims at the dissemination of knowledge on contents and methods of human rights implementation worldwide. Large scale efforts in favour of human rights education should lead to "the broadest possible awareness and understanding of all norms, concepts and values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." The right to human rights education can be derived from Article 26 UDHR, according to which "Everyone has the right to education. [...] Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. [...]."

By the Action Plan of the United Nations, human rights education shall be defined "as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the molding of attitudes and directed to:

(a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;

(c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups [...]."[9]

The objective of well-founded human rights education is to establish a culture in which human rights are properly understood, defended and respected.[10] Thereby, the needs and interests of the people and the skills and desires of the individual human beings in their social environment have to be taken into account. Therefore, human rights education might take varying shapes in different places.[11] Differences even result from the context in which human rights education takes place.[12] It is important that human rights education contributes to a perspective, which makes it possible to examine one's own actions and the occurrences around on the basis of human rights standards.[13]

The understanding of human rights principles and procedures enables people to participate increasingly in the decisions that determine their lives. Human rights education should explain why human rights principles and procedures are a proper means of achieving a people-centered human, social and economic development.[14] On this basis, a worldwide 'culture of human rights' shall enable people – as individuals or even as a group – to strive for social changes and full realization of their human rights.

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[6] Cf. Article 20 Convention Against Torture and Article 8 Optional Protocol to CEDAW (1999).

[7] However, since only States have an active legitimation to file actions against other States, to this day no use was made of this possibility. An exception, perhaps, are the proceedings of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia against Ex-Yugoslavia at the International Court of Justice, which deal with the breach of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948). But this is a special case insofar as the said Convention does not standardize individual human rights, but rather the States' obligation to prevent and punish genocide and similar cruel crimes. In a broader sense, however, the Genocide Convention also may be identified as a human rights convention. Cf. *Case Concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia-Herzegovina v. Yugoslavia)*, Judgment of July 11, 1996 *(Jurisdiction)* and the recent developments subsequent to the ending of the public negotiations on May 9, 2006 <http://www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/idocket/ibhy/ ibhyframe.htm>.

[8] UN GA Res. No. 49/184 of December 23, 1994.

[9] Action Plan of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, UN Doc. A/51/506/Add.1. As for the difficulties to give an accurate definition of the concept 'human rights education' see N. Flowers, "How to Define Human Rights Education? A Complex Answer to a Simple Question", in: V. B. Georgi – M. Seberich (eds.), *International Perspectives in Human Rights Education*. Gütersloh, 2004, pp. 105 ff.

[10] B. Oliveira et al. (eds.), *Kompass: Handbuch zur Menschenrechtsbildung für die schulische und außerschulische Bildungsarbeit*. Berlin, 2005, p. 17.

[11] *Op. cit.* (fn. 10). Examples of initiatives in Asia, South Africa, Latin America and Germany, for instance, in: V. B. Georgi – M. Seberich (eds.), *op. cit.* (fn. 9) pp. 21 ff.

[12] In this context, we generally distinguish between 'informal education,' 'formal education' and 'non-formal' or also 'private education': *op. cit.* (fn. 10) p. 21.

[13] W. Suntinger – B. Weber, *Alle Menschenrechte für alle*. Wien, 1999, p. 38.

[14] W. Benedek, "Introduction to the System of Human Rights", in: *op. cit.* (fn. 2) p. 24.

2. The establishment of a global political culture

In all cultures and religions, the respect for human dignity is of central importance. From that point of view, the protection of the rights of each individual, as also enshrined in the concept of human rights, is not alien to various cultures.[15] However, the priorities with regard to the implementation of the individual rights in everyday life and the possibility of their enforcement are distinct.

Whereas the Western industrial nations gave special emphasis to the importance of the so-called human rights of the first generation, i. e. the basic rights and fundamental freedoms,[16] the developing countries attached special importance to the second generation of human rights, i. e. the economic, social and cultural rights as well as to the third generation of human rights, such as the right to international development, peace and environmental protection. In the course of time, especially on the occasion of the World Conferences on Human Rights at Teheran (1968) and Vienna (1993), there were attempts to remove the differences and dividing lines in favour of a really universal system of human rights. While the Conference at Teheran mainly underlined the link between civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights, the universality of human rights and the so-called cultural relativism were debated above all at the Vienna conference in 1993. This debate was coined by the serious endeavour to combine the universality of human rights with the recognition of cultural specifities and peculiarities of societies. In Article 5 of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights this was finally formulated as follows, "[...] While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms."[17]

This clarifies that the violation of human rights by States cannot be tolerated by reference to cultural peculiarities. It should put an end to the misuse and instrumentalization of culture and religion through any repressive government system.[18]

The universal validity of human rights is essentially based on the fact that they emerged from a quite specific political, social and religious Western set-up, but the conflicts and problems which were reason and basis of their emergence meanwhile can be found in all parts of the world.[19] This is connected to the spreading of the 'sovereign state' as an organizational form of human coexistence that, notwithstanding varied cultural and religious traditions, gained acceptance worldwide.

In the Islamic sphere of influence, too, the *umma* is no longer conceived of as the organizational form of the Muslim community in reality, rather quite a number of States emerged claiming 'sovereignty' for themselves. This does not only mean sovereignty externally, as an actor with equal rights in international relations, but above all internally as the owner of the supreme authority and of the monopoly on the use of force on persons and objects in its own territory.

This monopoly on the use of force leads to the fact that the State also becomes a factor of potential threat to human existence. Hence, it would be entirely inconsistent to adopt the model of the sovereign State and, while doing so, to disqualify and reject the concept of human rights. This concept emerged as an answer to the potential of violence and as the result of a lot of experience of suffering connected with it. The threats by the modern State and with it the specific experience of injustice are of the same kind worldwide and are independent of culture, such as torture, withdrawal of fundamental freedoms, despotic rule of police or the refusal of basic guarantees of procedure.[20]

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[15]   The so-called Golden Rule, for example, which was formulated as an ethical principle by the enlightener Immanuel Kant, may be found in its central idea in the same way with Confucius, Rabbi Hillel, Jesus of Nazareth or the Prophet Muḥammad. Cf. *op. cit.* (fn. 13) p. 8.

[16]   They are, above all, enshrined in the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) as well as in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950). Their enforceability on the international level is most advanced. The until now 105 States, which have ratified the Optional Protocol, recognize the individual grievance procedure. All States that wish to become members of the Council of Europe must, together with the European Commission for Human Rights, also accept the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights which is responsible for actions of individuals as well. Cf. about it Chr. Grabenwarter, *Die Europäische Menschenrechtskonvention.* Wien, 2005, pp. 15 ff.; D. Gomien, *A Short Guide to the European Convention on Human Rights.* Strasbourg, 2000, pp. 6 f.

[17]   Par. 5 of the *Vienna Declaration and the Plan of Action.* Cf. about it M. Nowak, *op. cit.* (fn. 1) pp. 25 ff.

[18]   Concerning the political practice of the limitation of human rights with reference to Islam, cf. for example A. E. Mayer, *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and politics.* London, 1995.

[19]   St. Hammer – G. Luf, "Menschenrechte in den internationalen Beziehungen," in: A. Bsteh – S. A. Mirdamadi (eds.), *Gerechtigkeit in den internationalen und interreligiösen Beziehungen in islamischer und christlicher Perspektive.* Mödling, 1997, p. 136.

[20]   St. Hammer – G. Luf, *op. cit.* (fn. 19) p. 143, with reference to H. Bielefeldt, "Zum islamischen Menschenrechtsdiskurs – Probleme und Perspektiven," in: *Zeitschrift für Rechtspolitik* 25 (1992) p. 147.

In addition, there has been agreement that the system of the international human rights is sufficiently flexible to address specific cultural particularities and take them into account. Only a few human rights are constructed as absolute and inalienable rights. To them belong, for example, the prohibition of torture, slavery and retroactivity of criminal offences. However, the greater part of human rights is defined in a way that allows the States to carry out certain restrictions or to warrant their fulfilment gradually.[21]

In the framework of human rights education it is therefore important to help the broader public to appreciate these rules. It is not only the spreading of human rights as such that has to be mediated as much as possible, but also their concrete contents to be applied in practice as well as their interpretation through the human rights monitoring bodies. Especially the conditions of legitimate restrictions must be made clear in order to make it possible to distinguish between permissible restrictions, on the one hand, and their misuse, on the other.

3. Human security

In the context of human rights education, also the relevance of human rights to the issue of human security has recently been emphasized. It was underlined in the Human Development Report 1994 of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) that human security is a decisive factor of development.[22] Without human security there would be no peace and no development. In this context the concept of "human security" was above all identified as "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear."[23]

In detail, human security comprises especially individual security, economic security, ecologic security and political security. These aspects are basically identical with the existing human rights.[24] "The concepts of human security, human rights and human development are overlapping, mutually reinforcing and contingent upon each other."[25]

Some States, under the lead of Canada, united in forming the international "Human Security Network".[26] In 2001 a "Commission on Human Security" was set up under the co-chairs Sadako Ogata, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize Winner for Economics, to report regularly on the progress made in human security affairs.[27]

The growing attention paid to human security by the community of States also becomes apparent in the framework of measures taken by the United Nations in the interest of collective security. Whereas in the past, the idea of security was linked only with States that had to defend their territorial integrity against threats from the outside, threats inside the national territory were increasingly perceived as threats to international security in the face of which the community of States found themselves authorized to react.[28] However, this perspective still is at an initial state and, in the framework of the reform of the United Nations and UN Security Council, the proposals for a reinforced "Responsibility to Protect"[29] have not yet been fully implemented.[30] But as an outcome of the World Summit on the occasion of the 60th anniversary, it was decided to deal with human rights issues to an increasing extent as well as with the specific problems of human security and the right of each individual to the "freedom from fear and from want".[31] The report of the UN Secretary-General, which preceded this summit, had already underlined the relevance of human rights to international security and development in its title "In Larger Freedom. Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All."[32]

Linking up human rights with security issues leads to the conclusion, that human rights violation are at the same time threats to human security.

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[21] Cf. for example H. Steiner – P. Alston, *International Human Rights in Context.* Oxford, 2000, pp. 323 ff. Concerning such a gradual development specifically in an Islamic context s. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law.* Syracuse, 1990, pp. 161 ff.

[22] UNDP (eds.), *Human Development Report 1994. New Dimensions of Human Security.* http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/.

[23] Cf. about it the *Millennium Report* of the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan 2000, which especially emphasizes "Freedom from Want" and "Freedom from Fear" as significant goals of the United Nations in the new Millennium. <http://www.un.org/millennium/sg/report/full.htm>.

[24] On the three generations of human rights, s. above fn. 5.

[25] W. Benedek, *op. cit.* (fn. 14) p. 29.

[26] <www.humansecuritynetwork.org>.

[27] <www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/index.html>.

[28] The situations in Somalia 1992 and in the Kosovo 1999, for instance, were considered as "threat to international security", although it was a matter of purely internal conflicts; cf. resolutions of the Security Council no. 1199 (1998) and no. 1244 (1999).

[29] Cf. for instance the *Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.* A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility. UN Doc. A/59/565 (December 2, 2004), par. 203.

[30] Outcome of the *World Summit 2005,* Resolution of the General Assembly no. 60/1 (September 16, 2005), par. 121 ff. and par. 152 ff.

[31] *Op. cit.* (fn. 30) par. 143.

[32] Report of the Secretary-General, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All.* UN Doc. A/59/2005 (March 21, 2005).

Frequently, they are reasons for and consequences of military conflicts. Therefore, human rights violations may be used both as indicators of existing conflicts and early-warning mechanisms for imminent conflicts.[33] It will therefore be less possible to consider the question of how States treat their own citizens as a mere internal affair, in which States and the community of States as a whole must not interfere. By means of human rights education increasing attention to the security politics dimension of human rights will be called upon.

4. Individual rights

Human rights are sometimes conflicting and have to be balanced against each other. In the framework of Christian-Muslim dialogue, I would like to point out two examples: the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom from poverty.

4.1 *The freedom of expression*

According to Article 19, par. 1, of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, everyone shall have the right "to hold opinions without interference." The right to freedom of expression, warranted in par. 2, shall include "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice."[34]

In this context, the UN Covenant clearly distinguishes between the right to hold opinions without interference and the freedom of expression. Whereas the former one applies unrestricted, the practice of the right to expression is subject to certain limitations. On account of the "special obligations" and the "special responsibility" that are linked to the practice of this right, it can be subject to certain legal restrictions, which are required in the interest of

(a) the respect for the rights or the reputation of others; or

(b) the protection of national security, public order *(ordre public)*, national health or public morality.

In this context, the task of human rights education consists of mediating the relevant contents of this right and of explaining the limitations in detail.

Due to the fact that they are rather broadly and generally formulated, one can hardly identify any precise content, at least not with an accuracy that is required to prevent misuse. The important thing here is to inform about the international standards.

In connection with the freedom of expression, certainly cultural differences may play a major role. Only recently, this became again obvious in the course of the so-called Danish Cartoon Row, when, in a Danish newspaper, the publishing of cartoons of the Prophet Muḥammad led to furious protests in the Islamic world.[35] While the supporters of the publication rested on the right to freedom of expression, many Muslims felt hurt in their religious feelings by the disparaging representation of the founder of their religion.

However, the provisions on the right to freedom of expression are formulated flexibly enough in order to take into account the rights of others and the particular cultural differences in various societies. Also in Western societies the possible violation of religious feelings is a relevant criterion of consideration. Hence, even the European Court of Human Rights, which generally interprets the freedoms rather broadly, has considered the confiscation of a film by an Austrian court, because of a disparaging representation of God, Jesus and Mary, not as a violation of the freedom of expression.[36]

What is important is that the procedure be safeguarded, above all the limitation of the human right by a law whose reach can be examined in a legal procedure. Also the actual measure for the limitation of the right to freedom of expression must be assessable by independent authorities, be it by a Court or by an independent commission. In this context, the necessity and the proportionality of the measure taken must most of all be examined.

It is interesting to know that the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – in contrast to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which only prescribes obligations of omission – contains also an obligation of the States to take action against expressions of opinion, which do not correspond to human rights or other common values. According to Article 20 of the UN Covenant, the States are obliged to take action by law against "any propaganda for war" and "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes

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[33] W. Benedek, *op. cit.* (fn. 14) p. 26 f.
[34] Cf. M. Nowak, *U. N. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: CCPR Commentary.* Kehl etc., ²2005, Article 19, pp. 437 ff.

[35] See about it, for example, J. Cerone, "The Danish Cartoon Row and the International Regulation of Expression", in: *ASIL Insight,* vol. 10, issue 2, February 7, 2006.
[36] European Court of Human Rights, Judgment of September 20, 1994, Otto Preminger Institut v. Austria, Series A, No. 295.

incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence."[37] The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination also contains such an obligation to act against discrimination.[38]

However, the European Court of Human Rights considered the suspension of a journalist, who presented a TV interview with a group of right-wing extremists, including racist and inhuman utterances, as a violation of freedom of information and, by that, of freedom to hold opinions without interference.[39] This was justified, above all, by the fact that the transmission had been noticeably described as a documentation and had taken a critical and dissociating view.[40] But the dissemination of the said utterances in TV as such, without appropriate criticism and dissociation, would not have been justified by the freedom of opinion.[41]

When it comes to weighing up the rights of the individual vis-à-vis the rights of others, it is not a question of standards which may be applied in all countries in the same way, but the realities that prevail in the relevant social situation have to be assessed. This is true even for the relatively homogeneous culture in the European countries. Even within the same country, different national measures limiting the freedom of opinion can be considered as necessary and proportional.[42] This means that within different social contexts the same legal criteria may lead to different legal consequences, without this being a matter of arbitrariness.

Therefore, in the framework of human rights education it would be important to impart both aspects of a human rights examination to a broader social stratum: on the one hand, the content and scope of the freedom of opinion as protected by human rights, and on the other hand the legal rules and criteria which are relevant for considering limitations of human rights in order to protect the general public and for weighing several human rights against each other.

4.2 Freedom from want

Poverty is one of the crucial problems confronting humanity at present. More or less all the UN Millennium Development Goals revolve around the question about how a fairer distribution of the basic requirements for life in this world may be accomplished and the opportunities be increased for a life befitting human beings.[43] In a human rights perspective, the right to freedom from want is mostly seen in the framework of economic, social and cultural rights. For example, in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, it says,

"1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent."

Because of this rather general formulation and the vagueness concerning the concrete obligations of the States, which characterize the economic, social and cultural rights in general, there are increasingly efforts to regard certain minimum demands as part of the "right to life".[44] As a human right of the first generation, the right to life would offer better opportunities of implementation[45] and depend less on the economic and financial conditions of the individual State. However, nowadays this interpretation of the right to life is not yet generally recognized.[46] But to categorize the freedom from poverty as a mere economic right against the State, which primarily depends on the latter's economic power, is not to the point either. There is a bundle of obligations arising for the States.

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[37] Article 20 CCPR states: "1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law. 2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."

[38] According to Article 4 CERD all States Parties, among others, are obligated to "adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination." This, however, must be done "with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

[39] European Court of Human Rights, Judgment of September 23, 1994, Jersild v. Denmark, Series A, No. 298.

[40] Op. cit. (fn. 39) Par. 33 f.

[41] Op. cit. (fn. 39) Par. 35.

[42] European Court of Human Rights, Otto Preminger Institut, op. cit. (fn. 36) Par. 50. Concerning the criterion for proportionality in the judiciary of the European Court of Human Rights, s. Chr. Grabenwarter, Die Europäische Menschenrechtskonvention. Wien, 2005, pp. 241 ff.; as for the extent of the freedom of opinion in Europe also cf. D. Gomien, Short Guide to the European Convention on Human Rights. Strasbourg, 2000, pp. 75 ff.

[43] The UN Millennium Development Goals <www.un.org/milleniumgoals/>.

[44] W. Suntinger – B. Weber, op. cit. (fn. 13) pp. 22 f. For a better chance to implement the right to food, above all the international NGO FIAN (Foodfirst Information Action Network) speaks up, "Food is the prerequisite to life and therefore the first human right that has to be established worldwide." <http://www.fian.at/pdfs/statuten_fian/ Folder_Fian.pdf >.

[45] See already above in fn. 16, especially the instrument of an individual grievance procedure.

[46] In the framework of the European Human Rights Commission, too, it is emphasized, that the right to life rather includes protecting obligations of the State, but that these obligations do not include social rights as well. See Chr. Grabenwarter, op. cit. (fn. 16) p. 133.

The monitoring Committee on the treaty of the UN Covenant 1 laid down in a General Comment (No. 12 of 1999) on the right to food that from the human right to food – as also from other human rights connected to it – several obligations[47] follow for the States Parties, namely,

(1) the obligation "to respect," i. e. the right to access to adequate food and to abstain from measures that could prevent from an access of this kind,

(2) the obligation "to protect," i. e. measures apt to warrant that the access to food is not hindered or limited by a third party, be they individuals or companies,

(3) the obligation "to fulfil" (or "to facilitate"), i. e. that the States proactively must perform activities to grant people access to, and use of, resources, and grant people their life basis, including security of food,

(4) the obligation "to provide" includes the obligation to provide directly this human right to food for individuals or groups who blamelessly cannot avail themselves of this right to food. It extends also to victims of natural or other disasters.

Having for a while criticized these unsatisfying States reports, this Committee finally nominated a special rapporteur in April 2000, gave him a clear mandate to report on his own – not least by way of States visits – about the accomplishment of national obligations and finally also to elaborate detailed proposals for a better and more effective practice.[48]

In the context of human rights education, we have to mention the fact, that the right to food and to an adequate lifestyle primarily represents a right vis-à-vis one's own State. It is not only a question of a political claim for a fairer distribution of the world's riches, but a right of each individual that the aforementioned obligations are being respected most of all by his/her own home country.

This is important insofar as a lot of studies on the reasons and foundations of poverty have come to the conclusion that the problem is not only the lack of availability of goods, primarily of food, but that frequently the obstacles and deficits in the various countries themselves are even more serious. However, this does not mean that the industrialized countries are freed from their obligations. Instead, on this basis, proposals and guidelines should be elaborated in the interest of a better and more extensive aid for developing countries.

In this context, one of the relevant measures would consist in the best possible implementation of the individual human rights. Among other authorities, it is the Indian Nobel Economy Prize winner Amartya Sen, who comes to this conclusion.[49]

Based on a number of studies and historic research, he takes the following preconditions for granted to be essential in order to prevent want and hunger:

1. the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs in the sense of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 25, and

2. the freedom of expression in the sense of the said UN Covenant, Article 19.

He explains this by the fact that the true reason for poverty does not consist in the lack of goods and food, but in their inadequate distribution. There would be sufficient food in the world, so that nobody had to die of starvation. But unjust distribution mainly occurs in non-democratic States. And this is not a mere coincidence or due to the fact that most of the democratic States are situated in climatically favoured territories; it has more to do with the functioning of systems of absolute power. Since poverty primarily is a problem of distribution, non-democratic rulers can afford to distribute what is available in unjust ways more easily. Normally, even in poor countries, the rulers do not suffer from want and hunger. But in democracies, they would have to be responsible to the whole country and therefore would strive for a more efficient distribution.

In this way, Sen urgently demonstrates how the various human rights categories in fact are interwoven with each other.

5. Initiatives

In the framework of the UN Decade of Human Rights Education, many initiatives have been undertaken. The "Human Security Network," for example, presented in 2003 in Mali a manual on human rights education, entitled "Understanding Human Rights,"[50] which was translated into vari-

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[47] The Right to Adequate Food (Article 11), General Comment 12, UN Doc. E/C.12/1999/5 (12 May 1999), Par. 15.

[48] The Right to Food, UN Commission on Human Rights, Resolution No. 2000/10, UN Doc. E/CN.4/RES/2000/10, Par. 11; also s. the homepage of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food <http://www.righttofood.org/>.

[49] A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*. New York, 1999, pp. 160 ff.

[50] The presentation took place at the African Learning Institute for Human Rights Education (INAFAEDH/ALIHRE) in Bamako, Mali <http://www.humansecuritynetwork. org/events-e.php>.

ous languages, such as Arabic, Chinese and Russian. The European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Graz had coordinated and edited this manual. The English version was published in a second edition already in 2006.[51]

In Austria, also the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights devotes itself to research and teaching in the area of human rights.[52] The Institute is also involved in the European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratization in cooperation with almost 40 universities from 25 countries in the European Union.[53]

Some initiatives start at the lowest level of the organized community, at the level of local communities and middle-sized cities. "The People's Movement for Human Rights Education," for instance, is particularly worth mentioning, on whose initiative many cities have declared themselves as "Human Rights Cities" or "Human Rights Communities," including Rosario (Argentina), Thies (Senegal), Nagpur (India), Kati (Mali), Dinajpur (Bangladesh), Abra (Philippines) and Graz (Austria).[54] Another initiative emerged in 1998 in Saint-Denis, where a "European Charter for Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City" was adopted. Meanwhile, more than 235 cities in 21 countries, especially in the Mediterranean area, have signed the Charter.[55] It comprises political obligations based on international human rights and recommends the establishment of local institutions and procedures for the protection of human rights, as for example, ombudsmen or human rights advisory boards or the so-called "human rights balance sheets." At periodic meetings the signatory cities and communities exchange experience about "good practices". The strategy of promoting human rights on the local level has the advantage of discussing human rights problems in everyday life. Furthermore, a significant role in this context plays the training of teachers, officials, police, health- and social workers, neighbourhood associations and NGOs.

In some regions, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the integration of human rights education in schools has been intensified.[56] Thereby

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[51] <http://www.etc-graz.at/cms/index.php?id=510>.
[52] <http://www.univie.ac.at/bim/>.
[53] <http://hrd-euromaster.venis.it>.
[54] The People's Movement for Human Rights Education, <http://www.pdhre.org/>.
[55] The European Charter for Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City, <http://www.menschenrechte.nuernberg.de/admin/uploads/files/charter-engl.pdf>.
[56] See the "Case Studies on Human Rights Education in Specific Regions or Countries," in: V. B. Georgi – M. Seberich (eds.), *op. cit.* (fn. 9) pp. 21 ff.

it became obvious that the issue of human rights is closely connected with the political experience in each country, the latter being therefore determinative for the conditions under which human rights education is possible.

6. Conclusion: what may be achieved?

Now, what is the special aim of human rights education, what can be achieved, in particular in the intercultural context? First of all, it is important to sensitize as many people as possible. The dissemination of knowledge about the central human rights categories, values and principles as well as about the obligations and responsibilities of individuals, States and the community of States, is an important step for improving compliance with the internationally enshrined human rights in the most varied contexts of life. The individual human beings shall be enabled to note and identify human rights violations as such.

Secondly, the reasons for human rights violations can be examined. In the different contexts of life, they manifest themselves in very different ways and are not easily redressed. But the important thing is to develop empathy and solidarity and to search for possibilities of action. This may happen in everyday life and behaviour as well as through the support of national and international institutions that promote human rights. Thereby, the alternative or "shadow-reports" of NGOs, addressed to the international human rights monitoring bodies, are a very important source of information. They are disseminated very quickly by the internet and may raise awareness either of special bodies or responsible authorities or also in general of the international public.

Human rights education finally helps reminding governments to discharge their commitments and concessions which they have undertaken on the international level, and of holding them responsible for it. In view of the partly incomplete possibility of the factual implementation of international obligations, the internationally enshrined human rights need an informed civil society which calls for their compliance on various levels.

The concept of human rights represents an ethical, political and juridical system that devotes itself to the inviolability of life and centres around human dignity. Therefore, also in the context of various cultural and religious traditions, solutions should be found, not based on power but on generally recognized and accepted rules. Human rights education aims at offering instruments for conflict resolution on the basis of respect for human rights.

Questions and Interventions

MAHMOOD S. S. Very pleased with Dr. Marboe's insightful presentation, I am sure that a lot of these challenging definitions and questions are calling for further reflections. Who really guarantees human rights? Who protects them? Repeatedly it is said that the State is the deliverer and protector of human rights. At the same time the States also have the monopoly on the use of force. So there is a basic clash as to who assures and delivers human rights.

who really guarantees human rights?

And with reference to Amartya Sen's statement that democracy should be the best way for eradicating poverty and injustice and that democratic societies do not suffer from hunger: how do we explain, then, for example, that the largest democracy in the world, which is India, has hunger? And also that in the richest democracy, which is the United States, 35 million Americans go hungry every night? So, frankly speaking, democracy cannot be *the* answer. We still have to keep looking for supplementary answers, despite Amartya Sen's mastery of economics.

democracy the best way for eradicating poverty?

MARBOE The objection to the statements of Amartya Sen is obvious. But Sen himself qualified his utterances in the way of being valid primarily in cases of famine, where he refers for example to China as a country, in which once a catastrophic famine occurred that caused 30 million casualties. And he says that, supposedly, this could not have happened in a democratic country.

hunger mainly is a problem of distribution

Evidently, his merit is to have shown that hunger is a problem of distribution mainly. And this is a pressing problem in India as well, if we take into account that there are tons of corn in one part of the country, but they don't get to the other part of India, where people are forced to eat grass seeds or other seeds that actually are meant to serve for sowing, although it has quite negative health consequences.

Who in fact guarantees human rights, who protects them? The States committed themselves to give account on their factual practice of human rights to higher authorities. For each of these international human rights instruments, a special committee was established that is held responsible for monitoring the compliance with the rights which were defined in the respective covenant. In the case of the

States have a monopoly on the use of force, but are subject to international law

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the competent Commission also may come to quasi-judicial decisions because in the framework of the individual grievance procedures, it is authorized to accept complaints.

The final report, which is normal in such cases, is not seen as a judgment in the strict sense of the word; yet generally the States feel obliged to follow the findings of this report, the so-called "views." By that, a central principle of international law is being addressed: States have the monopoly on the use of force, they are sovereign; all the same, they are not in possession of absolute sovereignty because they are subject to international law. Therefore, at stake is in this context a relative sovereignty which is valid for the States within their own territories, as dominion over people and objects, but by no means a sovereignty vis-à-vis the international law.

MAHMOOD T. Subsequent to what was previously mentioned by Dr. Marboe, I would like to convey some information. They refer mainly to the fact that in all these international human rights instruments it is at least recommended to the States Parties to incorporate as many human rights as possible into national legislations.

human rights shall be incorporated into national legislations

And India has taken the lead to be the first country to incorporate four basic human rights into national legislation: the right to life, the right to freedom, the right to dignity and the right to equality. These four rights have been incorporated into the Indian national legislative definition of human rights. In addition, India has a "Protection of Human Rights Act," enacted in 1993 by the Parliament, under which our National Human Rights Commission has also been constituted. For any violation of any of these rights in any corner of India the National Human Rights Commission is empowered to take all appropriate actions. And if the directions of this Commission are not faithfully followed by those against whom a complaint has been made to the Commission, there is a most remarkable provision that calls upon the National Human Rights Commission to petition the Supreme Court of India against that guilty entity, it may be the State, it may be the local government or any other corporation or person. And, according to the law of the country, the Supreme Court of India is required to give a decision within three months.

India has taken the lead

MARBOE In addition, what is remarkable with regard to the judiciary in India and can hardly be found elsewhere on the international level is the fact that the right to freedom from want and hunger is linked

freedom from want – part of civil liberties in India

to the right to life. By that, doubtlessly, India's judiciary takes a decisive step forward and interprets human rights in the sense of their best possible enforcement. For the right to life is accepted as a basic human right worldwide, whereas the right to food is still subject to certain limitations.

MAHMOOD T.   The Supreme Court of India has ruled in many judgments that the right to personal freedom, guaranteed by the Constitution of India, does not only include the mere right to life and liberty, but a fundamental right to a *decent* life. And therefore the right to freedom from want is part of the civil liberties as incorporated in the Constitution of India.

human rights education therefore is so significant

MARBOE   Here we find another reason why human rights education is that significant: for, similar to this National Commission on Human Rights and the aforementioned legal regulations in India, there are many things of great significance in the context of human rights, but they are not sufficiently known to many people. Precisely here, human rights education wants to put things right.

also the States shall be educated in matters of human rights?

KHODR   A very simple question: who shall be educated in the matter of human rights – the individual people or the States, or both? Because it is a well-known fact that, for example, between 50 or 70 resolutions were taken against one State in the Middle East and they were like flowers over its head and there is simply nobody in the whole world who does or wants to do anything to get these resolutions implemented.

do the UN apply double standard?

My second question would be more practical: is it true that the United Nations applies a double standard? Why is it acceptable for everybody that Israel possesses the nuclear bomb and that mere researches in Iran – since it is not proved at all that Iran is willing to have a nuclear bomb (it may be, it may be not) – suffice to blame Iran for threatening the whole world, and Israel does not threaten anybody?

disregard must not lead to blurring the difference between lawful and unlawful

MARBOE   As to the issue of double standard. This is the problem in all issues concerning international law. I think we should not stop explaining the nature of international law and its violations. Disregard alone must not lead to blurring the difference between what is law and the infringement of law. This would imply a kind of self-abandonment. It is the right and duty of everybody to form a personal opinion on these issues and also answer for it.

should the set of non-proliferation agreements be again untied?

The double standard with regard to the non-proliferation agreement can only be explained by the fact that some time ago a historical consensus was reached that the further development of nuclear weapons must come to an end. Soon after the Second World War, the arms race had assumed proportions that became a threat to the whole world. In consequence of which a non-proliferation agreement was reached and signed by many States. Under the circumstances, wouldn't it be even more dangerous to untie this set of agreements rather than to insist on its compliance?

clear dividing lines must be drawn between law and politics

Furthermore, each and every breach of the law continues to be a breach of the law. Therefore, even here, clear dividing lines between law and politics must be drawn. So, with a certain satisfaction, one took note, for example, that in the United States a Court has called the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo a breach of international law. This is only possible where clear dividing lines are drawn between law and politics. And this chance should be there also in future, on both national and international levels.

human rights groups and NGOs – a true challenge for religions

GABRIEL   Since in her presentation Dr. Marboe brought up the meaningful motive of a worldwide human rights culture, I would like to mention in this context a detail that seems to me to be very important: while having an interreligious dialogue at this Round Table, we are simultaneously confronted with a secular system of values which, so to say, continues to be the third partner in our dialogue. This is a most interesting constellation, since, in no way, it is a matter of course that these secular human rights standards are accepted by the religious communities. Put in concrete terms: taking into account that so many human rights groups and NGOs get that much involved in the interest of more justice worldwide, I cannot but conceive of it as a true challenge for the religious communities, so to say, as a competition in all virtues.

the problem of humanitarian interventions

This is followed by a number of other issues, concerning the universal recognition of human rights and their disregard, and the extent to which human rights shall be implemented by force – the whole problem, therefore, of the so-called humanitarian interventions. In which places human rights are applied, where not? In the context of this secular human rights

ethos, we still face many questions, and of course also in the context of the religious ethos. But here, in my understanding, the important thing is that this human rights ethos is a kind of ethos still to be grappled with creatively by our religious traditions sometime in the future.

human rights and the religious communities

MARBOE   I am very pleased with the idea of a third partner, who is also present when we sit at the table of interreligious dialogue. By that it even becomes obvious that the issue of human rights emerged as an answer to the State's monopoly on the use of force, and that they will mainly have to be understood in this way also in future.

Perhaps this is also true when we speak of the universality of human rights and articulate these rights quite concretely vis-à-vis the sovereign States. But this does not mean that they are generally and in the same way recognized by the different religions without further ado. This is of course another question. In any case, they play a most significant part with regard to the living conditions of Muslims and Christians in sovereign States the way they were once in fact organized.

the question of humanitarian interventions

As for the question of humanitarian interventions: first we have to state that they are violating international law. In other words, according to international law, it is not allowed to enter a sovereign State by using military force in order to enforce human rights. This also is true if somebody declares as the legitimate purpose of such interventions that human rights are systematically violated in this or that State and ethnic cleansing is nothing unusual there. Actual attempts of updating the UN system propose that, in such cases, the UN Security Council should become active.

human rights of the third generation

MAHMOOD T.   Since Dr. Marboe was speaking in her paper about some of the first generation rights and the second generation rights, I would be pleased, if she could give some explanations on what are known as the third generation human rights, about which there is not much awareness in the society, but which are becoming a burning issue more and more.

MARBOE   Whereas the first generation rights deal with civil and political rights, i. e. with basic freedoms, like freedom of speech, democracy, right to life, etc., the second generation rights are on economic, social and cultural rights, i. e. on rights which should make an impact on the social conditions of human life. The third generation is marked by international solidarity and cooperation: among them are ranking the rights to peace, to security and to a clean environment. There is no separate instrument, no separate convention on third generation rights; however, we may find them embodied in some other instruments. But we can also notice in various questions a development towards becoming binding international law, as for instance in matters of maritime law or concerning the exploitation of the international seafloor.

for example, the right to solidarity

It is especially the latter area that must be submitted to an international regime, with particular reference to the developing countries, because considering the enormous costs involved, they are not capable of mining them. Therefore, if the rich States are in a position of mining these mineral resources, the developing countries should have a share in it. By that, we touch on quite a specific obligation that results from the right to solidarity. The same is true of all environmental issues though actually no rights in the line of subjective human rights are at stake there.

we need safe ground, not double standard

KHIDOYATOV   If, in asking after the significance of human rights, we descend from the theoretical down to the more practical level, to the level of what is in fact happening on earth, first I would like to refer to an incident that happened in the Soviet Union in connection with the implementation of a new constitution in 1937 – a constitution, which implied a perfect system of human rights. One of these rights was the right to secret elections. When, in this connection, Molotov was warning Stalin that such a right to secret elections could become dangerous, Stalin replied, "Don't worry, the election results will not so much depend on how people react to this right, more important will be the way how we shall count the votes." That is exactly what I mean by saying, what we need is safe ground not double standards. Isn't it a fact that some people think they were called to teach the world democracy and they themselves give the lie to their understanding of democracy in our country.

UN 'Commission on Human Rights' replaced by 'Human Rights Council'

Take for example the newly-created "United Nations Human Rights Council." In this Council you will find represented, among others, Russia, China and Cuba – all of them countries that violate human rights systematically. Not represented in this new body is the United States, the main fighter for human rights in the world. Why? Because this is most surprising for us, since President Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union the "Evil empire" and President George W. Bush still amplified the term when he presented Iran, Iraq and North Korea not as

the empire, but as the "Axis of evil." Now the United States has refused to join the aforementioned countries. So, I am asking myself, will the new "Human Rights Council" be capable of playing a significant role without the United States being a member of it, the main warrior for democracy and human rights in the world?

Mahmood T. What was said by Professor Khidoyatov certainly alludes to a very important recent development: the disbandment of the UN Commission on Human Rights and its replacement by the UN Human Rights Council. All the Nations of the world, 193 members of the United Nations, were invited to stand for the election to this body, which is a 47 member body. The United States very intensively and arrogantly refused to stand for the election, obviously because before they had actually opposed the resolution for the creation of this Council and for the abolition of the Human Rights Commission. Out of 193 countries, 174 countries – the highest number – voted for India. Among the members, elected to the Council by secret vote, are Pakistan, Bangladesh, even Saudi Arabia, but not Iran.

members of the Human Rights Council are expected to form an independent human rights authority

Marboe All the agendas that were looked after by the former Commission on Human Rights are now the area of authority of the Human Rights Council. A significant aspect of the former Commission was that it had established an independent panel of experts, the Subcommission for the promotion and protection of human rights. Time will tell whether those who have been appointed members of this new body will dominate further on as representatives of their countries or as independent experts. If the newly-created Human Rights Council will be following up the former Commission, the latter should be the case. Like, for instance, people who are nominated for their task in the International Court of Justice by certain countries, from the very moment their appointment comes into effect, they should decide independently. Otherwise the new Human Rights Council again would be a political body, where quite different considerations will play a part – for instance whether a State should be condemned or not. We can only hope that the members of the Human Rights Council will form a human rights authority as independent as possible, and not act as representatives of their countries.

Education in View of Religious Pluralism

Adel Theodor Khoury

Religious pluralism is a fact that confronts all religions. It creates theoretical and practical problems for their believers, and challenges the endeavours towards a sound education in our world that grows together ever more. Even the repeatedly emphasized need for dialogue and cooperation cannot necessarily eliminate the feeling of uneasiness, and calm down existing uncertainties.

My presentation therefore deals with the following issues: 1) how can religious people live with the pluralism of religions, 2) in what way are truth and dialogue compatible, and 3) what goals should be set by an appropriate education?

1. Dialogue and faithfulness in believing

Many people are afraid of entering a dialogue about their own religious convictions with believers of another faith. They do not want to get into a situation that could give them the impression that they were relativizing the truth in which they firmly believe. They have the feeling that in the situation of dialogue, the truth of their faith becomes a matter of negotiation although it is not negotiable at all.

Such misgivings must be taken seriously and necessitate countermeasures. Certainly, dialogue calls for a determined openness of the mind and a great readiness of the heart. For, whoever seeks dialogue must be ready to come out of one's own shell, the well-protected sphere of one's life, leaving the familiar security of one's own tradition and exposing him/herself to the other. The feeling of mistrust that spontaneously comes up vis-à-vis the alien disturbing the usual course of things and threatening to call into question the guiding norms of practical life, corresponds to usual experience, but must be overcome.

For, in a world that is filled with hatred and alienation, it is necessary to develop openness in order to overcome mistrust and misunderstanding and to evolve sincere sympathy, which enables and supports the willingness and the ability to understand one another.

This openness is based on the confidence of faith and implies both the search for understanding the other and faithfulness to one's own belief.

1.1 Certainty of faith

The believer lives in the certainty that what he/she assumes and confesses with reference to the word of God corresponds with truth. This is true, above all, with regard to the contents of the relevant teachings of his/her religion. So, the believer has a right, even the duty, to identify him/herself with the truth of his/her faith, to confess it and to hold on to it notwithstanding all challenges and temptations. Binding matters of faith are not at our disposal. They may be complemented, as they are the basis upon which the whole building is constructed. But a development of this kind does not mean revocation of the hitherto known and recognized truth. The development may happen by way of questions which, being answered, lead to a deeper understanding and better communication in matters of faith. The wealth of recognized truth can unfold; however, this does in no way mean that truth is abandoned; it is its unfolding.

This attitude must not be mistaken as a sign of superiority and arrogance, arrogance of someone, who thinks that he is the only one who possesses the truth. It is the attitude of a humble believer who is sure that truth has been given to him/her, truth has been entrusted to him/her, and that she/he shall grow into the task to cultivate this truth, to develop it and let its effects and fruits ripen in his/her own life and in the life of his/her community.

What is said here applies to all believers of the various religions, so that the religious freedom of people must be respected as well as the right and duty of each and every believer to hold on to his/her religion acknowledged and accepted. A further step will consist in trying to understand the religious traditions of the other ones.

1.2 Trying to understand

The believer is obliged to remain open for further search of the truth, also with regard to other religions. First, trying to understand does not mean that we meet the partner in dialogue with all our ignorance and prejudices, but that we obtain information about his/her religion as objectively as possible. That information is based on the teaching of scholars and starts from the core of the very self-conception of this religion and tries to reach this living core in order to meet the partner in his/her true identity.

By that we do not recommend a blind sort of complaisance. The critical search for truth, also in this case, does not lose its justification and its place. Rather, critical openness and critical sympathy is demanded for love of truth and for respect of the partner in dialogue, who is really taken seriously in his/her personality and religion. A critical attitude prevents people from exchanging superficial politeness, from careless enthusiasm of discovery and from falling prey to levelling syncretism.

1.3 Faithfulness to one's own belief

But an encounter with others does not live only from the open-mindedness and receptivity of the partners in dialogue. It equally lives from the dynamism of sincere faithfulness to our own belief and religion. This faithfulness must not be mistaken as blindly clinging to each and everything that belongs in one way or the other to our own tradition. Conversely, it also does not allow us to abandon carelessly what belongs to the substance of our own tradition and constitutes the identity of our own religion. This determined and open faithfulness to our own identity is a mainstay of a sincere and fruitful dialogue. For, the deeper we are convinced of the truth of our own religion, the more we may be involved in the dialogue and exchange with the others without giving ourselves up or gaining the impression of setting out to completely unprotected positions.

In this way, dialogue does not live from ignoring the quest for truth, i. e. from abstaining from truth and the judgment on the truth of proposed teachings. On the contrary it lives from the faithfulness to the recognized truth of our own faith, and that on both sides. For both partners in dialogue owe it to themselves, their own religious communities and to each other to share with one another whereof their faith lives and their religious life is nurtured.

2. Variety of religious experience

2.1 Difference and compatibility

Furthermore, if we consider that faith is maintained and experienced within history, we must take into account that on the level of human experience, a certain variety becomes obvious.

• Variety is not always the same as contradiction. Where there is an explicit contrariety to binding teachings of my own religion, the incom-

patibility of both positions is certain, because, being contradictory, both statements cannot be true at the same time.

• In face of contradiction or only of difference, it is important not just to know what the partner says, but we must try to understand the reasons why he thinks and believes in this way. In other words, we must try to go along with the other believer's way (including premises, arguments and conclusions) towards his/her religious convictions in order to be able to really understand his/her position. Here the issue is not to agree, but to understand. For, the one who is able to understand what is said and why it is said, takes a more appropriate approach to his dialogue partner.

• Difference does not always mean contradiction. Often it is simply difference. Being different from others, even in the normal context of human relations, does not necessarily and firstly mean an assault on my identity, but may be simply another form of human existence. In other words, we need courage for patience and cultivate confidence in the possibilities of a future development.

2.2 Difference and complementarity

Because human knowledge and human experience play a major part in the context of truth and religious practice, we frequently may speak of a complementarity of religious knowledge and experience.

Among the elements in the various religions, which are recognized as true and holy, there are many not due to the influence of my religion, but are authentic fruits of their own tradition. They demonstrate that there is some kind of complementarity at work between my religion and the religious experience of other religious communities. The question then will be: how is it possible for me, as a Christian, Muslim, etc. to integrate such elements into my own faith and religious practice?

• These observations are true for the interreligious realm, for the relationship between the various religions as well as for the intrareligious realm. Both of them have their own problems and difficulties, but also their proper demands and chances of success. Looking at the stage which does not yet imply the final and binding truth, we might observe a parallel between the endeavours of ecumenical work within a religion and the dialogue aimed at with other religions. Parallel to the principle of *'unity in diversity'* we can also formulate with regard to the interreligious dialogue, *'receptivity through understanding and rapprochement.'*

3. Education towards tolerance

In this context, one of the relevant concerns is education towards tolerance. But which tolerance is being referred to here?

3.1 Not only practical tolerance

In dealing with religious pluralism, at issue is not only the tolerance of *pragmatists* who, in a world community that moves closer together, take the necessity of peaceful coexistence as a starting point. Of course, it is true that in the one world the factual plurality of traditions and the religious claims of truth demand the search for ways of a peaceful and profitable coexistence. Most certainly, one of these ways is practical mutual tolerance, independent of the claim to absoluteness and validity of one's own religion. This practical tolerance may help avoid the excesses of a militant fundamentalism of whatever origin or colour and eliminate the use of force as a means to solve problems of coexistence.

Yet this practical attitude is not the only form of tolerance I want to mention here. There is also the question to be answered whether the recognized religious truth offers space for tolerance notwithstanding its own certainty of faith.

If this is the case, the next question is, how can we explain this tolerance and, in this context, ease the tension between certainty and relativization of truth, which becomes apparent in all the forms of tolerance?

3.2 Tolerance not only on account of the affirmation of a salvific efficacy of other religions

From the beginning, our Christian theological tradition holds that non-Christians have a chance to attain everlasting salvation. This was reconfirmed by the Catholic Church in Article 16 of the Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church "Lumen gentium."* This possibility of salvation is linked to what is true and the basic faith in God (cf. Heb 11:6), which is normally conveyed to them by their own religion, and to what is good (cf. Ac 10:35; Rm 2:10; 1 Jn 2:29), which they practise at their own religion's behest. Exactly this is what connects them to the grace of God and relates them to Christ through whom "God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things" (Col 1:20).

Therefore, if non-Christian religions are of a salvific relevance and efficacy, then for some of the pragmatists the religions seem to be equally valid

in the framework of shaping practical life in society, something that could probably lead to the compliance with an open and calm tolerance.

4. Truth is tolerant as a matter of principle

Because God is the Lord of truth, his truth is not tolerant in the sense that it is at our disposal and could become the subject of a liberal search for compromises and polite complaisance. But because God alone is the Lord of truth, truth is tolerant in human knowledge, and the believers are on their way towards the full knowledge of the full truth.

4.1 God is transcendent

The tolerance that we are talking about here does not refer to God's absolute truth. It refers to truth that is known and recognized by human beings. And this truth is not absolute, but always only relative, i. e. it remains incomplete, capable and in need of completion and perfection, because, even in revealing his truth, God remains transcendent, i. e. beyond human capacity, human terms and human usage. Paul, the Apostle, says unmistakably, "For we know only in part" (1 Cor 13:9). That is why Paul wishes the Christians: "you may [...] grow in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10). Similar is the wish in the Second Letter of Peter, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pt 3:18; cf. 1:8).

4.2 Growing in the knowledge

Therefore, the community of believers is on its way towards the full knowledge of the full truth of Christ and must grow in this knowledge. Supportive in this way, among others, is the attention paid to what is true and good in other religions, because, according to Vatican II, the other religions possess these elements of goodness and truth "by God's Providence."[1] The Church fulfills her task, if she herself sets off towards attaining the full knowledge of all the riches of Christ's truth. The plenitude of this knowledge will only be attained at the end of time. Until then, she is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who will guide her "into all the truth" (Jn 16:13).

As long as the Church, the community of Christians, is on her way, she will not encounter the other religions under the sign of a rigid claim of sole

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[1] *Decree on Priestly Formation "Optatam totius,"* Article 16.

ownership of all truth and of rigid intolerance. She will encounter them with openness and the readiness to investigate into the manifold activity of God's Spirit, count on the liberty of this Spirit and respect, recognize, support and receive what is true and good in them through his divine operation.

4.3 Abundant riches of truth

Human insufficiency to know God's truth in a comprehensive way has to be admitted not only with regard to the transcendence of God, as the subject of religious truth, and by that the need for an appropriate tolerance in the relations between people who believe in God and his truth, but also with regard to the inexhaustible riches of God's infinite truth the limitations of humankind may be felt. "So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11).

God's truth is not only infinite and beyond all human capacity, so that humankind can only grope rather than clearly comprehend it. God's truth, which is made accessible for humankind, is also in its content so complex that it needs a repeated attempt to be known better and more precisely in all its details, which details need to be realized in all their ramifications and express them in all their subtleties.

Is not history, the whole history in all its breadth and length, after all the place of God's patience and longanimity? Indeed, history is the place where his truth unfolds into the knowledge and life of individuals and communities.

In reality, the believers do not possess the truth. They do not even have the truth at their disposal. In reality, the believers get the chance to be grasped and enriched by the truth. In deep humility, they listen to God's steps and investigate his tracks in the faith and life of all people. They hope that the rays of God's truth, which again and again can be noticed in the religious traditions, can form firm bridges that interconnect believers of all communities and show them the path towards a greater religious unity.

5. Truth that is practised

Truth is not only truth that we believe and formulate and seek to argue about, religious truth, above all, is truth that we practise: "But those who do what is true come to the light" (Jn 3:21). Therefore, it is important to take truth and moral values of one's own religion as a basis to establish

friendly relations with others and to plan, together with others, a fruitful cooperation between religious communities.

This means, among others:

- to avoid unjust treatment of others,
- to overcome prejudices,
- to jointly speak up for a humane social order and
- universal solidarity of all human beings as creatures of God.

6. Practical cooperation

Dialogue between religions must lead to, and support, practical cooperation. The attitude in this context is no longer only that of partners who sit face to face to each other and speak about commonalities. The attitude is that of partners who sit next to one another and consider together problems that concern all of us:

- each one must ask him/herself and his/her own religious community what they are willing to contribute to the solution of these problems, and is entitled to demand this contribution;
- each one must ask his/her partners what they and their religion are prepared to contribute, and is entitled to demand this contribution;
- both together must make an effort to make their joint contribution;
- and finally, to jointly make their joint contribution.

7. Conclusion

Truth and tolerance, dialogue and cooperation shall open up people for each other and bring them closer to one another. They shall enable them to experience in our one world the solidarity of all with all, a universal brother- and sisterliness.

This means, with reference to our different cultural and religious systems, that they have to find a way that gets them away from the enmity of the past and leads them via a mere coexistence to new forms of living together and for each other.

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Questions and Interventions

SCHABESTARI In his presentation, Professor Khoury was linking faith with certainty. What do you mean by that? Do you mean that a believer never can question his faith the way he understands and consequently also formulates it? The problem comes up because there is no experience of faith without it being interpreted by the one who believes. However, if experience and interpretation of faith are interconnected, all intellectual challenges, all the questions and subjective uncertainties may become part of faith too. Consequently, this also must have its effect on the concrete phrasing, on the language of faith, so that we may well be sometimes uncertain also with regard to our personal way of expressing our faith. So the question arises whether a believer may remain a believer notwithstanding his/her rational doubts.

experience and interpretation of faith are interconnected

KHOURY I think we have to differentiate in this question between two aspects: the content of faith that is guaranteed to the believer through the authority of God and his word, on the one hand, and the fact that for various reasons we can address to this content of faith certain questions in order to get things more straight, to eliminate difficulties, and develop and deepen our own personal understanding, on the other hand. The content of faith always also will be subject to questions because otherwise we cannot advance in the knowledge of truth. In this context, certain reservations and doubts may come up whether we have understood our faith so far in the best possible way or if certain corrections or emendations would be appropriate. Such problems do not necessarily give occasion to the believer to negate his faith in God or to deny what has already become intelligible for him in matters of faith. On the contrary, they do not result in turning one's back on God, but may lead us all the more to turn towards him and request his help and guidance, as the Qur'ān says in Sūra 20, verse 114, "O my Lord! advance me in knowledge."

questions may stimulate us to advance in the knowledge of truth

KHODR The great religious and social philosopher of dialogue is Martin Buber; I only remind you here of his basic work "I and Thou" (1923). He was of the opinion that unless you consider yourself to be under question, you are not really open for dialogue. But can the believer in this way regard himself to be under

many questions are necessary to free ourselves from the burdens of the past

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question? I would answer on behalf of the Christian part that first, we have to consider our own Church history as being under question. We will certainly concede that some of the Church's positions could be complemented or re-written, etc. If we look into our history, could we not start questioning whether all that, what was announced and written in the course of history, is still necessary and helpful today? If only I think of all these conflicts between the main Churches, between Roman and Orthodox Churches, the so-called Jacobite and Nestorian Churches, for example – are these conflicts still necessary today? And also in the past, did they ever have a true foundation at all? Have they not been based on terrible and of course most bloody misunderstandings for centuries? Being separated for more than fifteen centuries after the Council of Chalcedon (451), we strongly feel that we lost much of our time with struggling one against the other. Then, something really is under question.

... also to clarify things and remove misunderstandings The first goal of dialogue will therefore always be to clarify things. I cannot possibly enter into a dialogue with a Muslim, if I pretend to have a comprehensive understanding of Islam. They will have to explain themselves. As a reader of the Qur'ān, mainly in the original text, I can of course ask myself or a Muslim friend here and there whether they really believe this or that at which one could take offence. The same is true for Muslims who also are very good spiritual people, when they want to ask us Christians, whether we could really be so simple-minded to believe things that are hard to understand. So, it will always be the first step to clarify things in order to eliminate misunderstandings, and not to consider others to be foolish enough to believe this or that, what perhaps seems to be out of place.

a learning process is necessary to get people closer to each other As an example, I would like to raise the question who, in the Qur'ān, the Christians in fact are. Are they really the Naṣārā (cf. Qur'ān 2,62.111.113, etc.)? Where does this term stem from? From the Hebrew of Arabia at that time? The Naṣārā, are they or are they not Christians? Sometimes, the Qur'ān turns against these people. So it is important that we try to clarify together – first the Muslims because it is their holy Book, but then also we Christians who, like myself, study this book – who these people in fact are, who in this way is addressed by the Qur'ān. This is only an example for a learning process that is necessary in the interest of a sincere dialogue which aims at getting people closer to each other.

BSTEH For the believer, God always is the one who takes the initiative, and we humans are those who are called by him. The fundamental design of our answer to God's calling is not knowledge, but prayer, which also includes moments of falling silent vis-à-vis his divine incomprehensibility. This prayer may assume the most varying forms: thanksgiving, petition, hymns of praise, complaint, search, and also wrestling, as Jacob did (cf. Gn 32:23–33). The open nature of our faith will always have to do with the fact that in all things of faith, God will have the initiative. He is the one Lord, the Lord also of our faith. Therefore, as believers, we are not people who know, but people who pray, "Show us the straight way, the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace" (Qur'ān 1,6 f.), for His thoughts are not our thoughts nor are our ways His ways (cf. Is 55:8; Mt 16:23). This means for the faithful that she/he is permanently called to walk into what is unexpected and inscrutable, so that questions, critical and sometimes also doubtful questions, arise and have to be answered, whether this or that is really wanted by God and corresponds to God's truth. In the request, "Show us the straight path", the whole human existence is included, nothing verily human excluded, it includes day and night, light and darkness, birth and death.

human response to God's calling is not knowledge, but prayer

MARBOE I am very grateful to Professor Khoury to have raised three reasons why we may address questions to the contents of our faith: first, to overcome lack of clarity, second, to eliminate problems and finally, to create opportunities for further development. And I wonder whether it could get us further on our way if we became more conscious of the fact to what extent the individual believer in his own personal attitude is conditioned by various historical facts like birth, education and sometimes even by mere coincidence. As grown-ups, we begin to feel ourselves responsible for who we are and what we are. Why should it then not also be helpful to take into account the conditions for our being a believer at all and, concretely, for our being a Christian and not a Muslim, or vice versa, a Muslim and not a Christian?

historically conditioned nature even of our faith

KHOURY The first steps in religious education are certainly made in the community into which a human being was born. What was founded there and further developed in the years of childhood must then be re-enacted when we become grown-ups, so that we may more and more realize the act of faith as an act

faith generally is at first mediated by the community into which we were born

of personal commitment, as an act of devotion to the word of God by means of our will and reason – including the capacity to raise questions and to further develop all this through religious education in school, through the communities in which we live, through sermons held in the services, etc. Of course, there are many other things which are suitable for mediating the contents of faith and deepening the certainty of faith, like literature, adult education, etc.

between coincidence and personal responsibility

MARBOE   Nevertheless, is not faith, to a large extent, exposed to coincidence, beginning with the family into which we were born?

KHOURY   In fact, the beginning of faith, as many other things in our life, is also conditioned by a whole set-up of historical circumstances. With all that what happened to be in our life under certain historical conditions, even so it could have happened differently. We have to deal with it in our whole life and try to integrate it into our own responsibility by turning this coincidence into a matter of our personal decision.

a believer is somebody who is in search of God

SCHABESTARI   For quite some time I am asking myself, whether it would be more appropriate not to use 'certainty' when speaking of faith. Perhaps we should rather say that we are in our life permanently in search of certainty, but perhaps unable to really attain it. In this case, faith should be conceived of as an attempt to attain certainty because it will not be possible for us to attain certainty unless we have realized truth. Certainty, *yaqīn*, perhaps is something that can be reached only by a few people. When faith is defined, we should therefore rather say that a faithful is somebody, who is in search of God. Difficult as it may be to find certainty in faith, it is easy to become a seeker. As for the rest, we can notice that we are living in a period of history in which certainty, in other fields too, has got lost: in the fields of science, philosophy, politics, etc. So, humankind quite generally becomes obvious in present-day and age as somebody, who is on his/her way, and the believer as somebody, who is on his/her way to God.

why do we set off for seeking God?

KHOURY   When somebody sets off for seeking God, he/she has an initial certainty that God exists. However, in human certainty we may identify various stages – there may be here and there a perfect certainty, a very strong or a less strong certainty, etc. But there must be an initial certainty because otherwise humankind, under the drifting conditions of present-day and age, would not set off for seeking God.

a dark night in the desert – will we be able to escape from there?

SCHABESTARI   There are great mystics, who prefer to compare their experience with a dark night in the desert in which they are living but at the same time trying to escape from where they are. It is especially Ḥāfiẓ who speaks in this way. But they do not know how to get out from this desert – this is the night, and it is very dark there. Sometimes they speak of their situation as being that of a wrecked boat floating on an immensely wide sea, and surges threatening them permanently. In this situation one looks out for a God – however not to be understood in the sense of Feuerbach – and yearns for finding him, yet this kind of seeking also may be under the sign of failure – just as somebody who is thirsty, is looking for water, but never can be really sure of finding it in time.

... and in their being forlorn too they are longing for God

KHOURY   I agree with it. The mystics in Islam, in Christianity, and also in other religions are talking in a similar way about their experience of being in a tunnel that is thoroughly dark. Groping in the dark, they experience their being abandoned, their being forsaken by God. But also in this situation they are longing for a God who could save them from their being forlorn. And by that they experience in some way the transition from the state of being forlorn to that of an encounter with God. From the certainty of their hope that on the other side of the tunnel the divine light will re-appear, the mystics are living.

religious education shall qualify for a dialogue with all those with whom we are living

BELARBI   I would be pleased if Professor Khoury still could explain in more detail what was understood in his very rewarding paper by the term 'community of believers.' In the centre of his presentation was the dialogue between religions. But there are other communities too and many of them do not believe. Should all of us be concerned in sharing through cooperation and dialogue, then dialogue should be extended to all people and not only to those who believe. In other words: if dialogue is needed in our world, education should in fact be oriented quite generally towards dialogue, towards the dialogue between religious communities, cultures and civilizations.

KHOURY   In the framework of this meeting, I had to speak about religious education, and it is for this reason that I had to remind the religious communities of their promise to practise dialogue and to educate their followers in the spirit of dialogue. On the other hand, once this foundation is established in order to make people realize that dialogue is imperative and if we show

sincere interest in developing positive relations between people in general, it is no longer relevant whether my partner in the dialogue is a believer or a 'semi-believer' or no believer at all. If there is a chance for dialogue, then religious education should be conducive to practise this dialogue with all people. Therefore, we do not want to limit the practice of dialogue to our fellow believers or other believers, but we wish on principle to keep it open for all our fellow beings with whom we are living together. Nobody should feel excluded from the believers' readiness to practise dialogue and cooperation and thus, as I previously have formulated, dialogue should increasingly become an expression of the solidarity of all with all.

MAHMOOD S. S. Professor Khoury's presentation has generated so many inputs for everybody around the table, and I get the impression that all contributions to the discussion mainly focus on faith and truth. Following Professor Schabestari's comment, we should not link faith with certainty. But how do we know what truth is and what certainty is? Faith is not certainty, faith rather makes us convinced of what is true. By consequence, what exactly truth in itself is, remains questionable from the perspective of the others. If it is faith that tells us this is the truth, you cannot separate faith and belief from truth. Because truth may be related directly to that particular faith, truth may not be the truth that everybody agrees to be the truth. But truth itself is generated by faith and belief. Belief leads to faith and that to truth.

you cannot separate faith from truth

As for Martin Buber's reference that we come to dialogue only when we think that we are under question, it often happens that we go to dialogue because the other one is under question. Doesn't dialogue challenge us to make neither this nor that, but to make just dialogue?

the meaning of dialogue is dialogue

And concerning Professor Schabestari's statement that believers are those, who are in search of God: aren't believers those, who have *found* God? I think they are not just in search of God, at least they believe that they have found God. So 'belief' and 'truth' are directly related to each other.

they are not only in search of God, but they found him

BSTEH Doesn't experience teach us that we become seekers of God to the extent that we have found Him? In practice, do not the two concepts of 'finding' and 'searching' in this context turn into concepts that do not exclude each other, but call for each other? The

seeking and finding – concepts that call for each other

very fact that I am seeking God, is it not at the same time a criterion that I have already found him, or more correctly, that he has already found me and has shown me the way? I think that seeking and finding perhaps are both fascinating elements in our faith which call for each other, a paradox, maybe, which however corresponds with reality.

Can we not discover in our interpersonal relations a mirror of this wonderful field of tension? The more I have found the other one, the more I may again feel called to set off for him/her. And the more I am longing for and seeking the other one, the more I may be sure that I have found him/her already. In seeking I find, in finding I become again a seeker. The unique Biblical "Song of Songs" is filled with this amazing and fascinating paradox of love.

on the paradox of love

MAHMOOD S. S. If we speak about seeking God, we should not forget also to speak about pleasing God. Indeed, this is the important thing. The main commitment of the believer is to find God *and* to please him. We found him, but we want more, we want to please him. This is what the faithful strives for.

we do not only wish to find God, but also to please him

KHOURY The fact that the believers in the various religious communities have varying contents of faith remains only the point of departure for the readiness to dialogue. We must endure this diversity, and this demands patience. From there, all the other steps result: the elimination of those misunderstandings which in the course of years and centuries accumulated, the exploration of existing commonalities, the accurate definition of extant differences, etc. It is a long way to go and it needs patience.

the path of dialogue – it is a long way to go and needs patience

The Bible looks upon history as the time of God's patience. Paul, for example, speaks of "the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience" (Rm 2:4; cf. 15:5). And the Second Letter of Peter says, "The Lord is not slow about his promise [...] but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (3:9). If, in the course of history, it were possible to get closer to one another, this would be wonderful; to the extent that this is impossible, we must bear up under this situation. The final word is not with us but with God, to him we must and may leave this word.

the final word is not with us, but with God

GABRIEL Still one word about the obligation to distinguish between the claim to absoluteness and the claim to truth. Much as there cannot be any claim to absoluteness under contingent conditions, for only God is absolute, a claim to truth is indispensable, both in our personal sphere and in our religious communities, and notwithstanding our contingency and deficient perfection, and all the sinfulness of our existence.

MAHMOOD S. S. Semantically, there is a difference between an 'absolute claim to truth' and a 'claim to absolute truth'.

GABRIEL My problem stays with the word 'absolute' under contingent human conditions.

Education to Overcome Fundamentalism

Nasira Iqbal

We have discussed the right of all persons to education and equality of opportunity. This is guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various international covenants as well as by the constitutions of most of the members of the United Nations. But it remains in most cases a distant dream although the eight Millennium Development Goals all hinge on the right to education. Responsibility for education rests with the member States, but who is to determine the nature and content of education? Is religious education to be voluntary or mandatory? Can private schools be made to follow uniform curricula with State managed and funded schools? Is it possible to reconcile the beliefs of different faiths and of factions within different religions while formulating a unified curriculum which can be adopted across different geographic and ideological boundaries?

Misconceived ideas, and wrong religious education are developing a group of people in all faiths to work as tools for destroying the communal harmony in the world, known for its tradition of peaceful coexistence of different faiths and opinions for ages.[1] In this context we must reflect carefully what kind of world and what kind of States we consider to be desirable and how we may get down to evolving and implementing a strategy to implement the ideal. Today we stand at the crossroads of our existence. Shall we move further away from one another or move closer together as unique individuals sharing common values that allow us to unite as one human family?[2]

Fundamentalism is essentially a product of the twentieth century. Till the advent of the modern world it was relatively easy for Jews, Christians and Muslims to acknowledge the words of their respective Scriptures to be self-evidently true, as well as being divinely revealed. This is no longer the case. The emergence of new independent States based upon their own specific ideologies, coupled with the knowledge and information explosion has brought about a radical change in the way of thinking of those who cling to their own dogmatic beliefs as an anchor in a rapidly changing world.

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[1] Shahriar Shahid, *Islam Ki Bole, Aamra Ki Kori*? (What Islam Says; What We Do?) Padma Productions Ltd. Dhakka, p. 14.

[2] Hassan Bin Talal. Website: www.elhassan.org.

What all fundamentalists have in common is not a set of specific beliefs but an attitude of mind. It is the conviction that they possess knowledge of absolute truth of which they have become the divinely ordained guardians. They become crusaders, bent on defending and spreading the truth as they see it. The task of interpreting their religious beliefs in a way which is relevant to the changing cultural context has brought about many different sects and creeds within the same faith. This has led to the modern extremist religious attitudes of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism breeds intolerance for it makes people absolutely sure that they know the mind and will of God on any subject which particularly concerns them. Religious fundamentalists cling to particular beliefs and practices and regard them as absolute and fixed for all time. They regard tolerance as a form of moral weakness, an unjustifiable compromise with falsehood and evil. Intolerance, in turn, quickly leads to fanaticism. Fanatics are impervious to reasoning and will stop at nothing to achieve their ends, passionately believing them to be not their own ends but God's.

This is in absolute contrast to the original teachings of all faiths which invariably advocate tolerance and respect for the beliefs of others. Both Christianity and Islam have a history which shows how, at their best, they have accommodated themselves to changing circumstances. Each has a living, evolving tradition. By contrast, today's fundamentalists stifle religious creativity and deny their faith the opportunity to continue on its evolving path as it responds to the challenges of newly emerging knowledge.[3]

Very often fundamentalism is fostered by nation States or vested interests within nation States in order to strengthen their unity or to promote ideas of self-righteousness to convince their followers that they are superior to all others. Hitler preached his own brand of fundamentalism which was blindly accepted by his followers in much the same way as the fundamentalism of the neo-conservatives is accepted today in the US to the extent that many declare that they are fighting a crusade and that they won the war because their God is stronger than the God of those whom they think they have vanquished.

Some States use religion to prevent people from getting the benefit of education. In some underdeveloped States education is discouraged, since this liberates the mind and enables people to think for themselves and loosens the grip of the ruling elite on the masses. On the other hand,

powerful, developed States also use their religious or philosophic doctrines to convince their citizens that they must subdue those religious, cultural or ethnic groups who do not subscribe to their way of thinking, although the real motives behind such hegemonic ideas may be more economic than religious. This is leading to the 'Clash of Civilizations' as propounded by Samuel Huntington.[4]

How can we attain a form of accepted wisdom that permits all persons to sit at one table and discuss with greater openness the various problems up to the point where it becomes possible even to advocate different opinions on various issues? Today the democratic form of government is considered to be conducive to respect for diversity and there are in fact many countries that have introduced democratic systems. However democracy cannot be restricted to mean organizing free elections. Real democracy is what we need day in, day out, in our home, at school, in our family, in our world of employment, on all levels of society. The modern democratic civil society cannot become a strong stable and prosperous conflict free society unless religious diversity or pluralism is accepted as a legitimate way of life. This awareness has to be cultivated in children at home and through educational institutions all over the world.

Only those nations can progress who give priority to education in their planning. Education develops thinking and improves a person and society. According to the International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences:[5]

'Education can be viewed as including all communication of knowledge and shaping of values, since it is synonymous with socialization.'

Illiteracy and lack of knowledge of basic human values may not be responsible for a poor quality of life for all, but it is definitely a crucial part of individual development and social participation. The development of any society, spiritual, material, social and economic basically depends on the kind of education provided to the children in schools.

Education about democratic citizenship focuses on providing students the knowledge and understanding of democratic government; knowledge of human rights; and explanation of what is conflict and how it can be resolved. It involves learning through active involvement in the affairs and development of the school and community through service and interaction. Learning by doing facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and understand-

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[3] L. Geering, *Fundamentalism: The Challenge to the Secular World*. Wellington, 2003.

[4] S. P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York etc., 1997.
[5] Vol. IV, New York, 1972, p. 517.

ing and the development of skills and dispositions required to fulfill roles and carry out responsibilities as democratic citizens, protect and promote human rights and learn to resolve conflict peacefully.[6]

Today our social life is more complicated and we face many more socio-economic problems than past generations. The situation now demands more liberal education, which provides basic awareness of all major religious and social doctrines and inculcates respect for the beliefs and practices of others. Education plays a vital role in minimizing social problems, resolving religious, cultural and ethnic conflicts and is a vehicle for human development.[7]

We must focus on developing holistic educational programmes which lay equal emphasis on science, technology and moral values to promote such social development. People are also looking for authentic, practical and realistic sources of knowing religion through the print and electronic media. The media can serve as catalysts by providing informative programmes regarding the common positive aspects of all cultures and beliefs and by providing forums where people introduce more issues of concern for discussion, and suggest ways to resolve their differences with practical applications in their everyday life. However, a major part of a person's adjustment and social development in society takes place through literacy.[8]

To acquire education is the sacred duty of every Muslim, even if it entails going to China. In Muslim societies, mosques function as community centres and have traditionally been used for worship, education, social, moral and economic advancement. Even the smallest village or community has its own mosque. The Friday sermon of the *imām* impresses the minds of the congregation drawn from all ages and strata of society, often including women. This is a great opportunity to educate the audience. The quality of the sermon depends upon the intellectual and educational capability of the *imām*. The mosque *imām*s are usually uneducated in secular subjects, and have memorized the Qur'ān by rote learning, with limited understanding of its philosophic content. Most worshippers view the Qur'ānic injunctions through the perspective of the *imām*. Several mosques have attached

*madrasa*s headed by the *imām* where the children of the community receive basic religious and primary education.[9]

The fetters of fundamentalism imprison the minds of most *imām*s. They adhere to the doctrine of *taqlīd* (blindly conforming to traditional interpretations of the jurists). God says in the Qur'ān: "This day have I perfected your religion for you" (Sūra 5,4). The teachings of the Qur'ān being valid for all time, Muslims need to practice the doctrine of *idjtihād* (struggle to discover something new) which is the principle of movement in the social structure of Islam.

In Christian societies also, perhaps to a lesser extent, the church plays a crucial role in developing the minds and values of the church goers. The world view of the priest shapes the opinions of the parishioners. Many children attend Sunday school where they imbibe religious and moral beliefs. The church and the mosque largely remain outside the domain of State control. However, governments can monitor and where deemed necessary, regulate the method and content of learning that is being imparted in churches. Governments should ensure that quality education is accessible to rich and poor alike and that churches, mosques and other religious institutions are kept free from politics. We need close coordination and sharing of knowledge and skills between the teachers in religious and secular centres of learning. Educators in both religious and secular centres must have basic educational qualifications and meet standards evolved by consensus and prescribed by some central authorities.

The responsibility to take decisions aimed at fostering dialogues between religious, spiritual and secular traditions has to be accepted at the individual, family, and community level. Governments of different States should also be made aware that fostering tolerance and goodwill can engender good governance. Most importantly, we must stress our common beliefs. We all believe in One God who is the same God from whom we have received the same moral law. The Bible and the Holy Qur'ān contain the same commandments to worship God, honour our parents, and the same injunctions against killing, theft, adultery and false witness.

We should commit ourselves to establish religious peace in our communities and to make all efforts towards this target. The first problem to be addressed appears to be the present dominant inequality, sense of poverty and deprivation and conflict. To resolve these problems we have to create

[6] B. L. Dean – R. Joldoshalieva – F. Sayani, *Creating a Better World: Education for Citizenship, Human Rights and Conflict Resolution,* Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development. Karachi, 2006, p. xii.

[7] G. Siddiqui, "Education and Social Development", in: Ethics, Values and Society: Social Transformation. LUMS Conference Proceedings, April 2005. Oxford, 2006, p. 78.

[8] *Op. cit.* (fn. 7) p. 79.

[9] R. Zia, "Citizenship and Education in Pakistan: An Overview", in: *op. cit.* (fn. 7) p. 91.

awareness and education to pave the way towards living in this world in dignity by reducing inequality. The diverse nations should adopt in their educational syllabi elements which concern and address shared problems and those elements which can resolve these differences by clarifying what is the common linkage of all followers of religions with each other. The focus should be on the elements of tolerance and friendship and promoting goodwill.[10]

Syllabi in schools and centres of learning should consciously remove any material which manifests historical prejudices which have developed into current myths. Without forgetting history one should look at the positive things that happened in the past including the centuries of peaceful living between Muslims and Christians. With this emphasis on positive history, the schoolbooks also need to take positive steps towards developing this foundation into a structure of common progress through cooperation. All school children should be allowed to practise their own religions; their religious and cultural practices should be shared in extra curricular activities in schools in order to foster respect for diversity.

Parents and teachers must provide vision and direction to students. All schoolchildren should be familiarized with the principles of the great faiths and the common features, aspirations and values shared by them. Emphasis on character building of students makes them good human beings and responsible citizens. Teachers should act as role models. Education should be concept based and students should be encouraged to ask questions, speak their minds openly, freely and in a constructive manner. Ideas should be heard, discussed, analyzed and accepted. The individual aptitudes of children are to be considered to train them to become productive members of society. Tolerance and ethical concepts are to be integrated in courses teaching professional and vocational skills. Democracy means freedom of thought and expression and liberty to do what one can do best.

We can summarize the common teachings of Christianity, Islam and all major religions about human conduct as follows:

Be truthful, sincere and straightforward. Don't lie or be hypocritical.
Be honest, not corrupt.
Be humble, gentle, and soft-spoken, not loud and boastful.
Be moderate, considerate and compassionate, don't be harsh to others.

Be tolerant, gracious and forgiving, don't be intolerant, insulting or resentful of others.
Be charitable, share and be content with God's bounty, don't be selfish or greedy.
Be cheerful, optimistic and alert, not morose, cynical or pessimistic.
Be confident and have faith in God's mercy, don't be doubtful or despairing.
Be diligent and vigilant of your duties, don't be negligent.
Be thankful to God for His innumerable blessings.

In an increasingly globalized world, where numerous and varied international conventions are prescribing world standards for citizenship both at national and international levels, the State remains the central administrative and implementing agent of enforcement of citizen's rights, obligations and responsibilities. International agencies are taking on increasing responsibility to monitor citizenship practices and initiate accountability measures. The ratification of conventions and their implementation by governments make a tremendous impact to connect education with modern citizenship. Education in any country faces an arduous task of resolving citizenship issues while keeping pace with a world that is changing at a very rapid pace. The need of the time is to produce 'informed and responsible' citizens rather than mere knowledgeable vessels.[11] Such education nurtures equality and respect for the views and beliefs of others. It is an answer to injustice and intolerance and helps us to overcome fundamentalism.

Tolerance is not only a cherished principle, but also a necessity for peace and for the economic and social advancement of all peoples, Article 4 of the "Declaration of Principles on Tolerance"[12] postulates:

"1/- Education is the most effective means of preventing intolerance. The first step in tolerance education is to teach people what their shared rights and freedoms are, so that they may be respected, and to promote the will to protect those of others.

2/- Education for tolerance should be considered an urgent imperative; that is why it is necessary to promote systematic and rational tolerance teaching methods that will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance – major roots of violence and exclusion.

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[10] N. Iqbal, "Islam, Individual and Society, How to Organize Coexistence: Muslims in the Western World: Christians in the Muslim World" at the Vienna Conference 2005 on *Islam in a Pluralistic World.*

[11] R. Zia, *op. cit.* (fn. 9), p.95.
[12] Adopted on The International Day for Tolerance, declared by UNESCO in 1995 to generate public awareness of the dangers of intolerance, and annually observed on November 16.

Education policies and programmes should contribute to development of understanding, solidarity and tolerance among individuals as well as among ethnic, social, cultural, religious and linguistic groups and nations.

3/- Education for tolerance should aim at countering influences that lead to fear and exclusion of others, and should help young people to develop capacities for independent judgement, critical thinking and ethical reasoning.

4/- We pledge to support and implement programmes of social science research and education for tolerance, human rights and non-violence. This means devoting special attention to improving teacher training, curricula, the content of textbooks and lessons, and other educational materials including new educational technologies, with a view to educating caring and responsible citizens open to other cultures, able to appreciate the value of freedom, respectful of human dignity and differences, and able to prevent conflicts or resolve them by non-violent means."

All nations need to accept these Principles on Tolerance in their national policies and inculcate these values in their citizens in order to establish a lasting and just global society. Emphasis should be on further exploring practical solutions to develop a pluralist society that accommodates religious, racial, cultural and ethnic diversity in the Third Millennium, with an emphasis on supporting leaderships that promote unity through respecting and managing diversity. The choice is between acquiescing to a world which has become an arena of conflicts, or opening our minds to a new and humane vision of a peaceful, progressive and enlightened World Order. We must give a call to choose the latter path, not only as a means for survival, but also as a collective approach towards a new horizon of unlimited beautiful possibilities of a better world.[13]

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[13] Nasira Iqbal, "Problems Facing Humanity in the Third Millennium," in: A. Bsteh – T. Mahmood (eds.), *Reading the Signs of the Time: Contemporary Challenges for Christians and Muslims* (Vienna International Christian-Islamic Round Table; 1). Mödling, 2003, pp. 75–82.

Questions and Interventions

KHODR The main problem: is it fundamentalism or terrorism? To my knowledge, we have neither a legal nor a philosophical definition of terrorism. I can imagine that there are many believers who think that because of the revelation that they have received, their religion is complete. And based on this concept of the fullness of their revelation, they are necessarily implying that there are some small or big errors in the other religions. Otherwise dialogue would not make sense because there would be no objective part for the dialogue if you believe that all people are in the truth.

the main problem, is it fundamentalism or terrorism?

I do not think that we can share this opinion that all people are right because we all, whether Jews or Christians or Muslims, have an equal part in revelation. Since Judaism, for example, does not only refer to the Old Testament, but also to the Talmud, which came afterwards and is not at all revealed, the said opinion cannot be upheld. We have to make a distinction between faithfulness to our religion and love. Faithfulness comprehends love and all these magnificent virtues, which were mentioned by Ms. Iqbal. My thesis would therefore be: peace among religions is compatible with the belief that your community received the fullness of revelation.

IQBAL The first question was, are we discussing fundamentalism or terrorism? Fundamentalism assumes that your own point of view is the only correct one, whereas terrorism thinks that the point of view of the other cannot be accepted at all and one's own point of view must be imposed on the other by compulsion. Sometimes terrorism is a reactive process. One man's terrorist could be another man's freedom fighter. Fundamentalism, however, is one of the basic causes giving rise to terrorism.

"to each among you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way"

The other question refers to the Christian point of view that their revelation is complete. The problem is that with every faith: those who come afterwards are one way or the other not acceptable, while those who have come before are acceptable, because they are mentioned in your testament and thus form part of your faith tradition.

My belief – and I think it is or should be the belief of all Muslims – is very simply stated in the Qur'ān, "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." (Sūra 5,51). And he is going to judge in the end, who did his part best.

So, I see no difficulty in keeping my faith as to my own extent and in believing that your faith is correct for you. This seems to be true not only for the monotheistic faiths – if somebody believes something different, it is up to that person to believe, because God had created that person. Many of us try to reason, and I think we should. But when we are born into a belief, we are entitled to accept that our belief is correct; at the same time we are entitled to believe that the belief of the other is correct to its own extent. I am happy to believe that anyone can reach the truth through whatever path he takes. It would be more easy to live in a society where the belief of all is accepted. So, it should not be difficult to reconcile faithfulness to one's own religion with love.

KHIDOYATOV   We must not forget that fundamentalism is only the track; in fact it is a powerful political movement. We can notice two mainstreams: one refers to the Wahhābīs from Saudi Arabia, the other one to the Ismāʿīlīs in Afghanistan. Till the end of 1970, fundamentalists could not become an influential force. Both the Russian invasion in Afghanistan and the United States taking revenge for their defeat in Vietnam, the struggle between the two superpowers in that time gave rise to this movement. This is why I think fundamentalism became a dangerous ideological and political movement in the present day and age.

fundamentalism – a powerful political movement today

IQBAL   I have already observed that fundamentalism is being exploited by different powers for their own political motivations. One of the functions of education, which is to overcome fundamentalism, is to make us aware of the dangers of falling into such kind of propaganda, which has a hidden agenda behind it, and look for what is the correct version of hegemonic inclinations.

... exploited by different powers for their own political motivations

KHOURY   I get back to the religious form of fundamentalism, which education should help to avoid or overcome; this would be the goal. But there exists also fundamentalism in human practice and life.

is dialogue possible with fundamentalists?

Therefore, my question, which occupies me for a long time, is the following: is dialogue with fundamentalists possible or not? If it is possible, I would like to know, how and in which way. So far, I had only one idea: fundamentalists are believers who absolutize their own concept of faith. On the other hand, if we speak of absoluteness, it should be obvious for every faithful that it is only God who is absolute and that nobody else can claim absoluteness. So, I wonder whether this could be a way to enter into a dialogue with fundamentalists instead of being on a collision course with them.

IQBAL   Although I have a very limited experience, I do find that so many people shy away from fundamentalists thinking that they are having a diseased mind or maybe they are carrying a virus of some kind.

One day in the recent past, I was invited by the Population Planning Division of the Pakistan government to talk to about 60 or 70 Imāms of different mosques and also teachers in the madrasas. I was a little bit fearful because, as it was said before, they might have the belief that they possess the absolute truth. Will they listen to me to what I have to say? But then I thought if I don't go there I let down my own side by default. I have to try and speak with them. Of course, they are also human beings, and all human beings are subject to error and they couldn't possibly believe that there is no error. And I started on the premises of what was our common ground and what kind of good they were spreading; they were reaching those people who had no means of livelihood, because they also provide food, clothing, shelter to children who have nowhere to go, and they educate them, etc. And I found them quite open to reason. Maybe, we are fundamentalists in that way that we think that the others, who have a different point of view, are unable to dialogue. But actually they are capable of it. For about two or three hours, we never had even a moment in this meeting when I felt that it was acrimonious or that there was a problem. They just wanted to have an exchange of ideas. And when they were leaving they all wanted to have further contact.

SCHABESTARI   Religious fundamentalism is a recent problem only, which perhaps has been emerging in the past 30 or 40 years. We may easily understand that there are people who try to live their traditional way of life and religious practice – the way their parents and grandparents did before. But this recent religious fundamentalism cannot be separated from the other type of fundamentalism which is a political movement.

caused by the miserable political and economic conditions in many countries

Research after 9/11 on fundamentalism and terrorism demonstrates that this revival of the past is mainly caused by the miserable political and economic situation in different countries where, unfortunately, all the modern reform movements in the fields of economy and politics were to no avail. This is

why in these countries many people want to return to their past, and they protest by that. The bad, inhuman economical and political conditions in their countries do not allow them to find a way out, so, one way or another, they wish to bring the past back to life. And the Imāms even would back up their opinion.

It is true that we may influence these miserable conditions quite a bit by education and similar countermeasures. But any sustainable solution of the problem would have to change in these countries the economic and political situation as a whole. In other words, education can help, but it would not be powerful enough to eliminate the said problems.

Another point, which is worth mentioning, is that quite a number of these people, who become terrorists, do not know of any religious way of life. Their biography demonstrates it clearly.

IQBAL I was only referring to the Imāms as one segment of the educated, they are not all. And I do agree that the question of fundamentalism and terrorism is more socioeconomic than religious. But what I can see is why people are turning back to the past or why these people who are not religious have become terrorists: they are like ostriches burying their heads in the sand when they cannot come to terms with a situation in which they are captives. They realize that they are being deprived and they are holding other people responsible. What appears to be a religious battle is in fact a complex of socioeconomic conflicts.

a religious battle – in fact a complex of socioeconomic conflicts

No doubt, there are serious disparities in our world. One of them becomes obvious in the question of nuclear technology: one country is entitled to it, another country is not entitled. But what is the difference between A and B? The country, which is considered to be disentitled, will it feel driven against those who hold it disentitled? A reactive tendency will be the necessary consequence. And I think the only way to get around this is to have a proactive relationship with each other which is to try and encourage the others to come up to the level of equality rather than to go downwards.

what is needed, is a proactive relationship with each other

MARBOE For all what has to be said about socioeconomic disparities and resulting conflicts, we have to pay appropriate attention to the role of education in overcoming this situation. Here again, the just distribution of access is of vital importance – as this was

the role of education in overcoming this situation

thematized in my paper with regard to the access to food. How can access to education be granted for all? As I see it, this is not only a question of money. Sometimes it is a problem of tradition that above all women do not have equal access to education. How could we improve this situation? For various reasons, even in Western countries, girls are repeatedly refused appropriate education. This may also refer to religious ideas.

IQBAL Indeed, it is strongly connected to religion. But this is a worldwide phenomenon. So far, did man try to take advantage from the fact that women are physically weaker? I think at the turn of the millennium perceptions are changing. Even though in my own country we have had a situation in which women have been very oppressed, I am optimistic now. We have at present 20 % representation in parliament and 30 % in the local government level. Women frequently have done everything to help the other women in their neighbourhood. Wherever communication is possible, education is being provided.

perceptions are changing

MAHMOOD S. S. First a comment to Professor Khidoyatov's repeated warning to watch out for fundamentalism and certain movements, like Talibans, etc. in Afghanistan. I would like to recall the fact that many countries in Central Asia, like Afghanistan, Baluchistan, are tribal territories, where no civil law would apply, instead they are applying their own law. So, what is happening there is very unique. A Jewish professor, who was seeking the 'lost tribes of Israel,' said he found them all in Afghanistan and Baluchistan. He proved by his research that the original Afghanis are living the traditional Jewish law in Afghanistan, they are the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel.

tribal territories would apply their own law

For the rest, fundamentalism is somehow inherent to all the various faiths. There are people, who get interested in the study of other religions, because experience in their own religious communities tells them to what extent they are infected by the same virus, which is called fundamentalism. Protestants know that Catholics finally have to go to hell, and vice versa. Everywhere the same contempt and distrust for 'the others.'

everywhere the same disgust for 'the others'

The second point, that I would like to mention, concerns our education system. All of those beautiful qualities, that had been mentioned in Ms. Iqbal's paper, indeed they have to be inculcated to the young people. But the fact is that, in our education system, we do not take the time or the trouble to teach those qualities of how to

vocational education frequently ignores fundamental values

accept responsibilities after you get married, how to establish family life, etc. Similarly we are never taught how to be a good citizen, we just assume to become this and that, but we never go to school to learn those qualities. What we focus on in our education system is to train them to be the best possible business women, the best possible designers, etc. School becomes more and more vocational training; we are just creating good business people, but we are ignoring the fundamental values and principles that make us good citizens.

IQBAL It is true, we have to train the educators to give a holistic education and not just to teach the young people to be good professionals and good business people. Self-interest should not become the main focus in their lives; professional ethics and morality should be included in whatever they are practising. Look at the consequences of the 'Food for Oil' programme, what would it engender if not terrorism? Your child is dying because there is no medicine, no medical care; all you are getting is food, and your most valuable economic asset is being taken away. Somebody else dominates just by the force of arms. Why cannot we all get together and formulate some such methodology which all countries can use in their training of educators, so that teachers are enabled to teach the children the same basic ethical pluralistic views?

MAHMOOD T. What I am going to say is equally applicable to most countries of the world and particularly in the East. If I have understood correctly, it was stated before that the inferior status of women in the sector of education is not linked to religion. I am afraid I cannot agree to it: it has a very deep link to religion, even it mainly results from religion.

Religious preachers, like the Imāms of the mosque, are those who create the problems, who aggravate the situation. If we look, for example, at Pakistan. It has begun with the great leaders like Fatima Jinnah, who was regarded by the newly born nation as the mother of Pakistan. And the same country today has produced Mukhtaran Mai. What has happened to her brings shame on the country all over the world. But at the same time we have in Pakistan very vocal human rights activists. This is true of most societies, it is true of India also, where we have all sorts of people as well. But to say there is no link between religion and this social degradation, I personally do not agree to it.

Is it not true that these self-appointed spokesmen – as one may call them with difference to religious leaders – keep on giving those weekly sermons on Friday telling their followers, "Look here, yours is the only true religion, and all others are false. You can tolerate them, but do not treat them as equal so far as the religion is concerned. And in this true religion there are certain basic features, and one of these characteristics is that women cannot be equal to men, and finally there is no place for women in it." And this is being demonstrated in practice, by not allowing women into the mosque; and if they must go to the mosque, they should pray in a separate sector. Very recently only some women tried to construct a mosque for themselves.

I think we have to do something about it. The way the sermons are delivered on Fridays in a language which perhaps many do not understand, but which has become very typical, the way the Imāms are teaching in the *madrasa*s the boy students about Islamic religion, about the exclusive claim of Islam to absolute religion, including the verse of the holy Qurʾān that men can beat their wifes (cf. Qurʾān 4,34) – all this has to be stopped.

Women have to get to themselves restored the rights which actually Islam created for them at the times when other religions could not have thought of it. If we look at the rights that Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, gave to women, he was 1000 years ahead of his time. But those 1000 years have elapsed, and today we are in a different situation. And the 'credit' for that goes only to the Imāms.

IQBAL So it is not the fault of religion, it is the fact that the Imāms are illiterate. They do not know what religion is, they are self-appointed: nobody has given them that right, they have appropriated it to themselves.

But there are also redeeming features, as for example in connection with the story of Mukhtar Mai (or Mukhtaran [Bibi]). This is a woman who was gang-raped by order of a *djirga*[1] – which is totally irreligious, un-Islamic, prohibited by Islam. In this case, it was pointed out to the community by the Imām of the mosque where Mukhtar Mai lived, and he said, "What have we come to? Is this what religion teaches us, that the *djirga* has ordered that this woman should be gang-raped? Are

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[1] An informal tribal assembly of the Pathans in what are now Afghanistan and Pakistan, with competence to intervene and to adjudicate in practically all aspects of private and public life among the Pathans (cf. *²EI*, Glossary & Index of Terms to volumes I–IX, p. 91).

we going to stand by and watch?" The whole affair got to the notice of the President of Pakistan and also to the Chief Justice and the matter was taken up.

| Mukhtar Mai an icon for the rights of women | Mukhtar Mai now became an icon for the rights of women. She rose above the oppression that she had to face. She goes everywhere and talks about the women of her country; she has collected funds and |

has opened a girls' and a boys' school in her own community, and she has the children of those people, who subjected her to that ordeal, coming to that school because she realized that it was lack of education which subjected her to that horror. Now she has opened a high school and she is opening a college. From this story we see so many redeeming features, the reaction to violence came from an Imām and humiliated Mukhtar Mai is spreading education.

So she is a role model. She was able with her resilience to overcome the situation. We cannot allow ourselves to capitulate to the Imāms, we have to regulate them. And that is partly what I have been advocating wherever I go, that all the mosques and the *madrasa*s must be subject to regulation and share a curriculum with the secular schools. It may be more difficult in India, because this is not the faith of the majority. But I see no reason why we should not be able to do it in Pakistan – if the Imāms are educated and have some basic understanding of religion, and the whole set of curricula is also prescribed. I was even trying to become a member of *wifāq al-madāri*s.

Another question has to be clarified: we have *madrasa*s for girls also in Pakistan. You find them everywhere in the country. But when I visited them, I was rather surprised to see what they are being taught: among others they had to remember the names of the goats of the holy Prophet and also those of his cows. So I said, what have these young girls to do with them? I would like to give them sewing machines, so they learn how to sew; I would like nursing training to be given to them, basic first aid, etc. So that is what I am trying to do: talk with the *wifāq al-madāri*s.

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