

İhvan-ı Müslimin'in lideri Hasan el-Benna'nın torunu olan *Tarık Ramazan* 1962 Cenevre doğumlu ve İsviçre vatandaşı. Avrupalı müslümanların kimlik sorunları üzerine çalışmaları bulunan Ramazan, İslam ve felsefe alanında iki doktora sahibi. Fribourg Üniversitesi'nde İslamî araştırmalar ve Cenevre'de Saussure Koleji'nde felsefe profesörü. Tarık Ramazan "Bizler kimiz" sorusunu soruyor ve Avrupa'da doğan Müslüman kuşakların yeni bir "Avrupalı İslam" oluşturduklarına inanıyor. Avrupa toplumlarıyla yardımlaşmanın ve sağlıklı bir ilişki geliştirmenin gerekliliğine vurgu yapan Ramazan'ın önemli kitaplarından birisi de "Avrupalı Müslüman olmak" (1991)'dir. Aşağıdaki karikatür eşi de Fransız bir Müslüman olan Ramazan'ın Fransız politikacı Philippe De Villiers ile katıldığı bir TV programı sonrasında gazetelerin tartışma hakkındaki izlenimlerini yansıtıyor.



# European Muslims and The Qur'an -Interpretation and Integration in Diaspora-\*

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Atıf/©: Gökür, Necmettin (2008). Avrupalı Müslümanlar ve Kur'an - Diasporada Tefsir ve Entegrasyon-, Milet ve Nihal, 5 (3), 189-237.

**Özet:** Bu makalenin temel konusu, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası Avrupa'da hızla artan Müslüman nüfusun, Kur'an anlayışlarındaki değişim ve buna paralel olarak metodoloji arayışları olacaktır. Konunun öncelikle tarihsel arka plan değerlendirilecek ve "Toplum-Kur'an" arasındaki diyalektik ilişkiye teorik olarak dikkat çekilecektir. Avrupa Müslümanları tarafından kullanılan yaklaşımlar değerlendirmeye tabi tutulacak ve İslam ülkelerindeki geleneksel yapı ile mukayeseleri yapılacaktır. Makalede ele alacağımız "zorla veya gönüllü olarak "vatan"dan uzakta yaşamak" anlamında teolojide de sıkça kullanılan "diaspora" kavramının İslami terminolojideki karşılığı "hicret"tir. Bu terim Hz. Muhammed'in Mekke'den Medine'ye göçünü ifade etmekte ve Müslümanların kullandığı takvimin başlangıç tarihidir. Terminoloji İslam literatüründe sıkça kullanılmaktadır. Hz. Adem ve Havva'nın cennetten çıkarılması ve yeryüzünde yaşamaya zorlanması, bize insanlık tarihinin diaspora ile başladığını göstermektedir. Ayrıca birçok Kur'an kıssasının konusu pey-

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gamberlerin ve toplumların vatanlarından uzakta yaşamasıyla ilgilidir. Mesela, Hz. İbrahim halkıyla birlikte doğduğu topraklardan çıkmış ve Kenan'a yerleşmiş, Hz. Yusuf Mısır'a zorla götürülüp köle olarak satılmış ve hayatının geri kalan kısmını burada geçirmiştir. Hz. Musa'nın kavmini firavunun zulmünden kurtarmak için Mısır'dan çıkıp vaat edilmiş topraklara yolculuk etmesi de buna örnek olarak verilmektedir. Günümüzde "diaspora" kelimesinin, Yahudilere ait bir terminolojisi olarak kullanılması "vaat edilmiş" topraklardan uzakta yaşamayı ifade etmektedir. Terminolojiyi İslam'da -Müslümanlar için bir toprak/vatan sınırlaması olmaması (bkz: Nisa 97) nedeniyle -kullanmak ne kadar doğrudur? Bu sorun makalenin içerisinde değerlendirilecektir. Kısaca, terminolojinin Müslümanlar için de kullanılması, teolojik nedenlerden dolayı mümkün olmadığı, ancak Küreselleşme ve göçler neticesi oluşan farklı etnik kimliklerin, hakların ve özgürlüklerin korunması için diaspora teriminin kullanılabilmesi iddia edilecektir. Ayrıca bu terimin kullanılmasıyla Müslümanlar Hz. Peygamberle kendileri arasında dini duygusal bir bağ kurma olanağı sağlaması açısından da önemlidir. Nitekim Hz. Peygamber'in Medine'ye göç etmesi, Avrupa'ya göç eden müslümanlara bir örnek oluşturmaktadır. Avrupa müslümanları Kur'an'ı yorumlarken bu tecrübeyi kendileri için model kabul etmektedirler. Ayrıca Müslümanlar Geleneksel yorum bilim enstrümanlarını kullanılmaya devam etmek ile yeni sosyal yapıya uyum sağlayacak yeni metodoloji arayışları içerisinde de bulunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Diaspora, Avrupalı Müslüman, Kur'an, Yorum.

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## Introduction

This study will make some preliminary observations about crucial shifts in the interpretation of the Qur'an, in particular, after the impact of western values in the context of diaspora. The objective of the study will seem to show the impact of European social concerns on understanding the Qur'anic texts and to demonstrate the changes of theological attitude towards the issues in accordance with contemporary political and social values. In other words, the real purpose of the study is to show that the European circumstances and conditions have affected the reception and the perception of the Qur'an. Therefore, the study very much hopes to stay with this line of inquiry and of this kind of questions: "What does the Qur'an mean today to those Muslims living under European values?" "How can they usefully make a link between changing configurations of society and the Qur'an?" "How is the Qur'an explained by new concepts or in other words how is it interpreted in Europe?" However, the foremost objective is to show the dy-

namic and creative character of Tafsir/interpretation of the Qur'an.

In general, I argue that the Qur'an has been persistently affected in different societies and culturally interwoven with systems. Regarding the interpretative process, the main hypothesis of this study is that reading the Qur'an in the history of Islam has not been independent from context corresponding to political, intellectual, and ethical concepts, and in particular, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the traditional understanding of the Qur'an has been modified and redeveloped to an extent that is unprecedented in its long literary history. With the postcolonial development, one of the major features of this change has been the increase in the number of commentaries. The postcolonial period for Muslims is indeed a crisis for every element of the political and intellectual systems of Islam as they encountered with the enlightened and more or less secularized Europe. The Islamic world faced both a physical and an ideological challenge. As a solution, Muslim scholars suggest urgent reinterpretation of Islamic sources, in particular, the Qur'an for the changing society in the light of western political and social systems. What about diasporic society? Can the same thing be accommodated for immigrant European Muslims? How do they interpret the Qur'an in the light of the western values? Indeed, the case of Muslim Diaspora will be very good tester both for Islam and for the West. It is a good test for Muslim community to see to what extent they accommodate European and global values. It is also test for western world to see to what extent they are welcoming Muslim communities on the name of their own values, like multiculturalism, diversity, equality, and liberalism etc.

Reading the Qur'an in diaspora has obvious peculiar character and is very far from the traditional meaning since the context and Muslim society have changed. Yet, Qur'anic interpretation since 19<sup>th</sup> century has been immensely transformed. The modern exegesis of the Qur'an began, not due to academic problems, but to colonial and modern world affairs. This has not just been a matter of diverse approaches and contents, but also of fundamental dif-

ferences about what the Qur'an is, what the authority of classical Islamic sources in interpretation is, and which questions and issues within the interpretation are to be given priority.

It is notable that post-colonial interpretation of the Qur'an since the beginning of the nineteenth century has been under the influence of Western imperialism.<sup>1</sup> In that period, the reliability and applicability of Hadith and other traditional literatures are deeply questioned by these postcolonial thinkers. The existence or applicability of Islamic sources is questioned by many of them. This means that these Muslims often drop traditional interpretations of the Qur'an which they find too conservative, preferring instead readings which are more adaptable to modern and postcolonial society. Most Muslims reject derivation of Islamic sources from literal readings of single Qur'anic verses.

In terms of the character of Postcolonial Interpretation of the Qur'an, we can clearly observe a general paradigm shift from the traditional style of interpretation of the Qur'an, the definition of the revelation, values and moral lives in accordance with new perspectives inspired by Western intellectual and cultural developments. A number of scholars in Europe and in the Muslim world began to re-interpret and to re-read the Qur'an through these postcolonial perspectives. They have pushed the limits of transformation and attempted to reinterpret the Qur'an according to the realities in the light of western values.<sup>2</sup> In this period, Muslim societies, on the other hand, have experienced significant transformations in practices. In the light of global values, for example democracy, social justice, liberalism, liberation and freedom, gender and race equality, tolerance, human rights etc, they call re-interpretation of the Islamic sources for new political and social spheres, relying on the assumption that Islamic values are compat-

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<sup>1</sup> For further discussion see: Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London 1993), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> For further information see: Gökür, Necmettin, "Critical Interpretation of Religious Texts in the West and the Reflection on the Study of the Qur'an" *Milel ve Nihal*, v. 4 (2005), pp. 19-64.

ible with modern values. They have criticized existing institutions and mentalities and have worked to provide some alternatives and foundations for many programs of traditional Islam. In spite of variety, they have re-shaped the conceptual world and re-set the terms of Islamic culture.

As the result of this postcolonial impact on Islam, the notion of absolute equality of all humanity, human rights, women rights and their emancipations, the place of women in Islam, modern gender roles in Islam and Islamic feminism became the major concerns for new interpretations of the Qur'an. Because of this influence, liberal Muslims are often critical of traditional Islamic legal interpretations which allow polygamy for men, as well as the traditional Islamic law of inheritance under which daughters receive less than sons. It is also accepted by most Muslims that a woman may lead the state, contrary to traditional argument.

In this sense, European Muslims may even have to engage in Islam, or understandings and interpretations of the Qur'an that were formulated in wholly different environment and conditions so as to find out traditional dynamism. In order for Muslims to be able to abide according to the teachings of the Qur'an in European society, they rethink, reinterpret, and reconstruct the Qur'an in civil society and the family. They also redefine the role of Muslim men and even more that of Muslim women, as self-responsible, maybe liberal individuals and at the same time as the members of the Muslim family, Muslim community and European civil society.

### **The Concept of Diaspora and Its Modern Usage in Islam**

The term "diaspora" was first used to describe the scattered or displaced Jewish peoples who have left their original homeland either by force or by choice, but have continued connection and identification. Etymologically, "diaspora" derives from Greek *dia* (through) and *speirein* (to scatter). The word is used more broadly to refer to the cultural connections maintained by a group of people who have been dispersed or who have migrated around the

globe. In Islamic terminology, the term “diaspora” is *hijra* which indicates forcedly or voluntarily to live outside of home-country and to immigrate. The term of *muhajir* which literary means who has undergone the migration has more specifically been used to refer to those companions of the Prophet who migrated from Meca to Medina. This event was very significant and marked the dawn of a new era of progress for the Muslim community. From the Qur’anic narratives, “diaspora” is a long way and over-lasting story for human beings. The story starts with Adam and Eva as they expelled from paradise and had to live in the earth.<sup>3</sup> Abraham spent most of his life out of his land<sup>4</sup>; Joseph was forcedly brought to Egypt<sup>5</sup>; Moses led his people on a mass immigration from Egypt to the “Promised Land”.

The first diasporic event in Islamic history, however, occurred to a land on the African Continent to a country known as *Habash* (Abyssinia) where was ruled by a Christian King, *Najashi* (Negus). It is very interesting that direction of immigration which is towards to the West, to Africa, in fact, was also seen in the stories of Prophets Abraham, Joseph and Jesus. This direction identified in the Qur’an as “*from darkness into the light*” (65/11). The King Negus, after listening to the Qur’an, gave the refuge for Muslim to live and to practice their religion freely. They lived in Abyssinia ten years and re-immigrated to Medina when Muslim community was established. As the most prominent author who concerns for the meaning of first Muslim’s immigration and living in diaspora, M. Ali Kettani discusses the subject as like:

Islam itself began as a minority, a minority of one person, namely that of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him)... Islam discourages a Muslim to acquiesce willfully to a state of minority if he cannot exercise his right to worship the One True God. In this case the Muslim is required to emigrate to a land more congenial to the practice of his faith, with the intention of returning to his

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<sup>3</sup> See: Surah al-Baqara, 2/38.

<sup>4</sup> See: Surah Maryam, 19/48-49; Surah al-Ankabut, 29/26.

<sup>5</sup> See: Surah Yusuf, 12/19.

original homeland and securing his right to live according to the teachings of Islam. Emigrating for the protection of one's belief is an act of religious merit; in some cases it is even a religious duty. Such a man is a *muhajir*, but not a refugee. He is required to work hard to prepare for his return, and the Muslim community at large is required to help such muhajirs even if there might be no other way for them to return except by resorting to force. This is the case of the first Muslim wave of emigrants from Mecca to Abyssinia during the Prophet's lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

The second most important immigration in early Islam was from Mecca to Medina with the entire Muslim believers. So important was this event for Muslims that it became later the starting time of the Islamic calendar (*hijra*). However, Muslim migrants are not merely concerned as foreigners or minorities in the Qur'anic discourse. In other words, diasporic situation which refers scattering and living outside of the "home land" has not merely a Qur'anic basement. Since the concept of "land" in the Qur'an are not demarcated geographically for Muslims as in the case of "Promised Land" for Jews.

As a modern discussion, Muslims particularly in Europe came about as a result of contemporary *hijra*, immigration which has its roots in European colonialism and more effectively in economic reasons right after World War Second.<sup>7</sup> Muslims mostly came to the West as immigrants to gain employment, raise family and live quality in the new host countries. But, today Muslims are no longer primarily immigrant communities but rather second and third generations participating in civil societies and professional economic life, in spite of the fact that they continue to be mistakenly identified as religious minorities. On the other hand, the converted Muslims, as being originally French, American or British and religiously Muslim at the same time, cannot be naturally identified as

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<sup>6</sup> Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today*, (London: Mansell Publishing 1986), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> See: Jorgen Nielsen, *Muslims in Western Europe*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1995), pp.1-7.



minorities and the situation can not be called as diaspora. However, conceptualizing the Muslim community in Europe as minority or diaspora may be dealing with the global discourse of "identity". In the global sense, the Muslim community finds legitimacy for their demands to recognize their cultural distinctiveness and social rights.

Conceptualization of diaspora may be also dealing with the justification of the situation. Since, regarding to discussion, the relevant Qur'anic narratives, prophetic models, historical samples i.e. leaving home in search of a new life where one can freely practice his/her religion have been intensively used as reference in order to legitimate and to endow their situation with Islamic meaning.

### **The Meaning of the Qur'an for "Diasporic" Society**

The Qur'an is the main religious source and supreme authority in Islam, as it is Speech of Allah (*Kalam al-Allah*). The Qur'an as being the divine guidance of Allah for humans establishes a living and dynamic relation between Allah and humans to provide a basis for the integration of individual and also social life and- in the final stage- for the creation of culture and civilization. Muslims, therefore, have always approached the Qur'an as a dynamic source and a prescriptive guidance for the society and its welfare. Accordingly, Muslim scholars have solved the concrete problems by applying the rules derived from the Qur'an. Abdulaziz Sachedina says regarding this point, "[a]s long as the belief about establishing an ideal order on earth remained the major component of the living community's faith and active response to the divine challenge, there remained the need to clarify the Qur'anic impetus in order to promulgate it at each stage of the community's drive towards its ultimate destiny."<sup>8</sup> Muslim intellectuals, throughout the history, hence, have produced an on-going and progressive way of interpretation and a fresh understanding by recontextualizing the

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<sup>8</sup> Abdulaziz Sachedina, "The Nature of Scriptural Reasoning in Islam" *The Journal of Scriptural Reasoning*, v.5/1 2005.

Qur'an in the society. The most dynamic aspect of the Qur'anic revelation is its invitation to Muslims to reflect the meanings of messages in order to seek right guidance for establishing an ideal society. The main key to prosperity for this construction is the interaction between revelation and the processes of reasoning.

Islam is not only a religion but also a way of life, which prescribes, exhorts, admonishes, and tells its adherents how to live individual and social lives. Hence, it is at once a religion, system of laws, social order, ethics, politics, economics etc. In other words, it is everything that every Muslim needs to live his or her life in this world. Because this guidance is from Allah, that is, the Muslim believes it is universal and eternal and valid and, therefore, right and proper, binding and inviolable in the life and living of the Muslim man, woman, and child, and in the collective life of the community. Therefore, Muslims have tried to determine the situation in which certain passages of the scripture had been revealed; the context of the Qur'an was reconstructed. Throughout the Islamic history, the Qur'an has been always taken out of its own first society and transferred into new societies. Every society and every individual assesses its own world and creates its own identity. This is inevitable, because every developmental stage presents problems, questions, and dilemmas of its own, which demand timely, suitable, and practical answers. As history would have it, Islam did spread beyond the boundaries of Arabia and today it is the global religion with hugely different faces and practices in the various parts of it. The question, therefore, is: How can Islamic scripture, the Qur'an be so read and interpreted and their meanings so understood, constructed, and applied by Muslims, living under hugely different ways of life in accordance with the fundamental teachings of the Qur'an? Islam was a practicable religion for Arabs in the time of the Prophet and even brought uplifting and beneficial change in Arab society. Is Islam an equally practicable religion for a variety of people in various parts of the world today?

The Qur'an as the scripture of Islam can provoke a new reflec-

tion on thinking and practice in every society. This is the process of on-going reception and reading of the Qur'an and very essential for the progress of theological thinking. This is what exactly Gadamer says that "to understand a text always means to apply it to ourselves and to know that, even if it must be understood in different ways, it is still the same text presenting itself to us in different ways."<sup>9</sup> Gadamer also identifies the application of the text in different places and times as a sharing of common understanding and agreement in content.<sup>10</sup> Interpreter or reader who already possesses his personnel and cultural senses and prejudices which he brings to bear on the text, according to him, makes a conversation with the text.<sup>11</sup> Going further, he claims that these personnel and cultural possesses are the preconditions for understanding. However, he distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable prejudices by introducing the notions of authority and tradition in this regard.

Therefore, personally or culturally all acknowledges engaged in understanding are concerned with the tradition. Gadamer say: "Understanding is not to be thought of so much as an action of subjectivity, but as the placing of oneself within a process of tradition, in which past and present are constantly fused."<sup>12</sup> As it is connected with tradition, understanding is to be conceived of merely as a reproductive procedure which is achieved in three dimensions: understanding (*intelligere*), interpretation (*explicare*) and application (*applicare*). The usage of the first two concepts, namely 'understanding' and 'interpretation' are identical. The concept of 'application' is, however, considered by Gadamer as a determinant in the processes of understanding or interpretation: "the interpreter dealing with a traditional text seeks to apply it to himself."<sup>13</sup> But later, it will be clearly concluded that application sub-

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<sup>9</sup> Hans Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed and Ward 1979), p. 359.

<sup>10</sup> Gadamer, *Ibid*, p. 260.

<sup>11</sup> Gadamer, *Ibid*, p. 331.

<sup>12</sup> Gadamer, *Ibid*, p. 258.

<sup>13</sup> Gadamer, *Ibid*, p. 289.

sumes every particular interpretation in the process of understanding so that all three concepts are after all seen as interchangeable.<sup>14</sup>

The traditional scholars of interpretation essentially provide the principles that were applied in the development of Muslim society and its ever-expanding legal and ethical scope. In this intellectual process of providing exegetical principles for reflective reasoning, these scholars stand within a long and creative history in the development of the Qur'anic exegesis in Islam. Their approach has been to search for historical precedents and for extracting doctrinal and juridical principles from precise references in the Qur'an that are relevant to contemporary situations. Indeed, theologians most-systematically have set about accomplishing this task. The question is to what extent of the Qur'an, the foundational text of Islam is to be based and does it give sufficient evidences to every tradition of theological interpretation or is recourse to outside of the textual source also necessarily used as the key to the meaning of the revelation. In fact, the Qur'an constitutes the decisive source of the Islamic theology and faith systems. In relation to legal interpretation, reading the Qur'an is again not too much oriented on the literal sentence and verse. Instead law generates its own problems and hence systematizes them in different societies, strictly referring to textual source, the Qur'an to develop its traditional thinking. In this dynamic structure, the interpretation and society seem to be intertwined (Text and Context). That is to say that Interpretation of the Qur'an has been accepted a kind of dynamic system regulates needs of the constantly changing society. what about, then, the relation between the Qur'an and diasporic society who are immigrant Muslims in Europe living outside of Islamic world and tradition.

Many Muslims in the West, after a period of settling down, are becoming more enthusiastic, organized, assertive and active to be European citizen. However, this creates very complicated and obstacle questions: are they European or Muslim? If they are Mus-

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<sup>14</sup> Gadamer, *Ibid*, p. 360.

lim what about compatibility of Islam with European value system, like secular and liberal democracy, pluralism, diversity, gender equality? Or if they have European identity what about then to be a part of the global Muslim *umma* /community and what about the Islamic traditional value systems.<sup>15</sup> In other words, is there any theological barrier which restrains citizenship or muslimhood? On the other hand, having being living in the secular and liberal western society, can Muslims in Europe technically be free from the systems and authorities of Islamic references? Instead, in order to successfully integrate them into Western society, they have very deeply referred to main Islamic references, particularly the Qur'an. Why this emphasis on the Qur'an? We know that the Qur'an is the main and supreme authority in Islam as it is the word of Allah and the Qur'an has always been regarded as one of the sources of Islam. Since the Qur'an is the prime authority for the social, political, ethical and legal system of all Muslims, new challenges and concerns for European Muslims can/should be accommodated, integrated and legally justified through the applicable interpretation of the Qur'an as it was in every hermeneutical tradition in the history of Islam.

Many European Muslim thinkers tend to go back to the sources and read for themselves, exercising good judgment and trusting in their own personal opinions as to what the texts mean for Muslims in Europe today. There is a definite and urgent need to rethink the Qur'an in European society. Indeed, Muslim immigrants in Europe usually living their lives in much the same way, or as far as it is possible, according to what they were familiar with and habituated to in their old country. But whereas Muslims in the western world can still choose to live by traditional way, they can also choose to reinterpret and adjust the issues like authority, loyalty, polygamy, gender equality and so on and so forth. Muslim societies and families can reestablish the Muslims' statuses, dignities, and rights in Europe. One of the prominent religious scholars,

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<sup>15</sup> For the relevant discussion see: Necmettin Gökür, "Political Language of Tafsir" *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2007/15, pp. 245-272.

writing specifically for Muslims in Europe, Nadwi urges them to undertake "a fresh study of the Qur'an...not with the aid of commentaries but with the depths of your hearts and minds...You should read it as if it were not an old scripture but one sent down for the present age, or, rather, one that is being revealed to you directly."<sup>16</sup> European Muslims are hence told to imagine themselves as first people who just as the Qur'an was revealed to them in a particular setting in space and time, so must its message be made to speak to the particular circumstances of European life.

An important name, Tariq Ramadan who frequently uses the term "European Muslim", calls for a new way of reading the Islamic sources for Muslim living in the West. He is the grandson of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan al-Muslimin*) in Egypt. Ramadan's parents had to leave in diaspora. He hence encourages Muslims to concern to social and political engagement with non-Muslims. He suggests that as a community, Muslims possess responsibilities and duties in relations with non-Muslims. Ramadan says:

"[This] approach...therefore enables us to define the European environment as a *space of responsibility* for Muslims...Muslims now attain, in the *space of testimony*, the meaning of an essential duty and of an exacting responsibility: to contribute, wherever they are, to promoting good and equity within and through *human brotherhood*."<sup>17</sup>

Having called for engagement, Ramadan calls for reinvigorating and reinterpreting the classical sources of Islam so as to adhere to Islamic identity as well. Ramadan writes:

"...Muslims will henceforth have to ask questions, not alone, not against the whole society, but now with their fellow citizens through a sincere and genuine shared preoccupation...The Mus-

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<sup>16</sup> Nadwi, Abul Hasan Ali, *Muslims in the West: The Message and Mission*, (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation 1983) p. 190.

<sup>17</sup> Ramadan, *To Be A European Muslim, A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context*, (Leicester: Islamic Foundation 1999) p. 150.

lims' religion commands them to strive for more justice, but this certainly does not mean that they should be concerned only with themselves and not collaborate with all those who try to reform society for the better, in the name of human dignity and respect."<sup>18</sup>

European Muslims need to think about, interpret, and reconstruct Islam in their new environment, and the new conditions of life in which they have to live Islam. Needed urgently is an Islam rethought as a European religion, because only as a European religion can and will Islam help them to survive, succeed, and flourish as Europeans. In this sense, European Muslims may even have to engage in Islam, or understandings and interpretations of Islam that were formulated in wholly different environment and conditions so as to find out this dynamism.

Muslim, in general, as they encounter the problems of integration in western world, are tends to solve them first with their own tools, the heritage of Islamic *usul al-fiqh* and *usul al-tafsir* which were specifically developed to deal with these kinds of challenges. Since the Muslim believes that there will be no more revelation to guide society after the death of the Prophet, they developed some systems to respond to change and to extend and apply the rules which are derived through legal reasoning. One of these dynamic methodological systems is formulated within the concept of *al-maqasid* (the intents). *Maqasid* literary refers to understand the meaning of the Qur'an not only in its literal text but also in the intention of God/Allah and hence application to the divine guidance because of changing times and changing conditions in a society so that the Qur'an remains "dynamic and creative, always applicable and always invigorating society."<sup>19</sup>

The Qur'an provides a creed, a set of doctrines, a rite of prescriptive practices, and moral-ethical-spiritual attitudes and also a civilizational force that shapes the Muslims response to social-political and individual realities in every historical stage and in

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<sup>18</sup> Ramadan, *Ibid*, p. 230.

<sup>19</sup> Mumisa, Michael, *Islamic Law Theory and Interpretation*, (Maryland: Amana Publications 2002) p. 15.

every society. However, the Qur'an, by its nature, does not deal with these ideas directly or at least systematically. It is therefore important to trace the development of these ideas by examining the ways in which Muslim interpreters, theologians, jurists, sufis, activists, modernists, reformists and even European Muslims have reconstructed in accordance with their social realities and necessities. The brief outlook of interpretative tradition has already confirmed that there has been a progressive/on-going and a dynamic relationship between the revelation and social context; the Qur'an and Muslim society. This is obviously because of the fact that every text (i.e. the Qur'an and also the written documents of every interpretative tradition) speaks and reflects the language of its own society. The on-going relationship between text and society in traditional Islamic hermeneutics hence provides a persistent system to discover the divine legislation for all community in all times. In the history of the Qur'anic exegesis, the interpretation based on various political and theological trends in the community was most prone to contextual considerations and social developments. Ironically, it is the inherently subjective nature of interpretation that deals with many decisions within the interrelationships of society with the text. There has been a constant need to explain the revelation so as to uncover the principles that were applied in the development of Muslim society and its ever-expanding legal and ethical scope.

The role of the Qur'an as the sole provider of the life-orientational directives is even more critical in diasporic society. More importantly, if the legitimacy of European values, liberalism, equality, multiculturalism, diversity etc. depends upon Islam, then it has to institutionalize the role of scripture in formulating their policies covering all the aspects of society. It is here that the Qur'an and society need to reinforce each other in providing substantial solutions to the problems of times. Muslim scholars have throughout their social and political history developed hermeneutical principles to direct their interaction with the Qur'an in order to find ways of generating confidence that Allah and his revelation is the



ultimate guide of the community. But in this process, Muslims have also used their rational-reflective abilities, *ijtihad*, *ta'wil* etc. derived directly from the revelation. That has been always resulted as rethinking of the Qur'an in every contemporary experience in every society.

### **Integration Trough the Interpretation**

Muslim societies have today become part of the West as the result of complex nature of migration process. Because of the immigration to the West, Muslims now are the citizen of Europe. Muslims mostly came to the West as immigrants to gain employment, raise family and live quality in the new host countries during the last half of the century. But, today Muslims are no longer primarily immigrant communities but rather second and third generations participating in civil societies and professional economic life, in spite of the fact that they continue to be identified as religious minorities. But the converted Muslims, as being originally French, American or British and religiously Muslim, cannot be identified as minorities. This produced very complicated and obstacle picture: are they European or Muslim? If they have European identity what about compatibility of Islam with western value system, like secular and liberal democracy, pluralism, diversity, gender equality? Or if they are Muslim what about then to be a part of the global Muslim *Umma* /community and what about the Islamic traditional value systems.

Indeed, Islam is not a new phenomenon for the West not the West is new ground for Muslims. The relationship between Islam and the West; Muslims and Western society starts with the beginning of Islam when it expanded out of Arabia towards to the West. Muslims ruled Spain and some areas of southern Italy and Sicily.<sup>20</sup> The first encountering is, in fact, in the scene of battle, continuing with the Crusades. The Ottoman Empire has ruled Balkans and Europe from Hungaria to the part of Austria, from Greek to Alba-

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<sup>20</sup> For the Muslims of Sicily see: M. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia* (Catania, 1933-39), 5 vols.

nia for centuries. However, Muslim had to withdraw from Spain first in 1492, and then from other part of Europe. Muslim communities still live in geographical Europe, consisting the eastern countries like Bulgaria, Greek, Romania, Albania and Bosnia and the number of Muslims are approximately more than 40 million.<sup>21</sup> Today several centuries later, Islam has returned not to occupy or to invade the West in this time, but to live together as the second or the third largest religious minority immigrants or converts. The capital cities for the Muslims are not only any more, as Esposito says, Cairo, Khartoum, Istanbul, Mecca, Riyadh, Amman, Damascus, Islamabad, Delhi, Kuala Lumpur etc. but also Paris, London, Manchester, New York and Berlin etc.<sup>22</sup>

The European Muslim, of course, contains a variety of people with certain diversities even in religious forms and expressions. The main distinction between Muslims in Europe is on the date of their existence in the region. The former Muslims in Eastern Europe have their own traditions. The newcomers are different from each other in ethnic, language, culture including traditions in the various regions and countries of origin. They also came from a society in which religious, social and national identities were closely interwoven. However, their next generations confront contradictions in their individual identities, collective identities, other Muslim identities and European identities. A third group also identified as European is who are converted Islam. They have supposedly own their European identity and values.

Despite these different colours of Muslims, similar questions have been raised throughout the region. These questions mostly relate to places for worship and religious education, to the slaughter of (*halal*) meat, to the Muslim festivals, to the integration to the societies and to their identities.<sup>23</sup> European Islamic discourse, eventually, has emerged and gradually developed after two generations

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from: Jamal Malik, *Ibem*, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> See: John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, p. 203.

<sup>23</sup> For further discussion on the initial problems of Muslim immigrants see: Jack Goody, *Islam in Europe*, (Cambridge: Polity 2004), pp. 95-109.

of immigrants. They now increasingly want to strip off immigrant minority position and integrate themselves into Europe with the contribution on the culture and civilization of Europe. With citizenship, they enable to carry out their religious duties on one hand, and on the other, they are demanded a high degree of social responsibility to the host society. This is not only because of their civil responsibility and also religious duty. "The Sharia", Tariq Ramadan says, "requires honest citizenship within the frame of reference constituted by the positive law of the European country concerned".<sup>24</sup>

Many Muslims in western society believes that their values are compatible with modern values. However, the earliest, especially the classical Muslim jurist-theologians, broadly speaking, refused to recognize equally co-existence between Muslim and non-Muslim people and considered jihad as the Islamic war instrument. However, there has been a dramatic transformation in society and politics of Muslims existing in the European context. The majority of Muslims in Europe now view "Europe" as their home.

In order to successfully integrate them into Western society, they have also undergone a kind of religious reformation which reconstructs the systems of society and politics. For seeking to be accepted by the European countries that hosted them, Muslims, for instance, have determined to adapt Islam as a personal ritualistic religion detached for the most part from daily-life and to minimize any differences in their appearance, taking a language that fits with the liberal values. Therefore, on an individual and even on community basis, Muslims could or can successfully integrate themselves into Western society, or at least enable to live in a dialogue and empathy, on the condition that they accommodate the western values. So, they will be European citizens and Muslims at the same time.

Around the world, some Muslim thinkers have, indeed, produced a considerable body of liberal thought within Islam. They interpret the Qur'an and Hadith, the main two sources of Islam, from modern and global perspectives rather than from the traditional Muslim point of view. Their main difference with more conservative Islamic thought is in orientation of interpretation of how to apply global values to Islamic thoughts. It is therefore not surprising to find that Muslims in the West has turned away from traditional religious leadership and authority. Intellectually they have tended towards major figures within the wider Muslim world such as, Fazlur Rahman, Abdolkarim Soroush, Mohammed Asad, and most deeply Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Simultaneously, there has emerged within Europe itself a new breed of Muslim leadership, often focused around highly-educated, relatively young, professionals and intellectuals. Some of the key figures in Europe, and more specifically the UK, are Ziauddin Sardar and Tariq Ramadan.

Tariq Ramadan, in particular, employs a particular mode of analysis focusing on sociological and historical reconstructions of society in Europe. For the discovery of the changeable and mutable meaning to reconstruct the historical context of the revelation-event compares it with the context of European Muslims. According to Ramadan, Muslims re-interpret the Qur'an and Islam in the context of Diaspora in Europe. Rereading of Islamic traditional examples is also important. Muslims in Diaspora, for example, resemble their minority situation with Prophet's immigrant from Mecca to Medina as the first community was established together with other religiously and ethnic groups. By doing so, they bypass the traditional political attitude against non-Muslim minorities in Muslim land and avoid to tackle with the other contextual understandings.

Relying on their ideas, this book underlines how exegetical writings are linked to, or generated by, various religious and/or secular discourses and debates in particular within these values (democracy, liberalism, individualism, equality etc.). As Islam has

become global religion, and it's radically changed manifestation in the world has turned into a predominantly "non-Eastern religion", its new European face shaped by European Muslims which is manifested most prominently in society, individual, gender, family and ritual practices hypnotically beckon our attention to study how the new reality is accommodated. We will follow the questions particularly on the the question and the idea that cultural ethics emanating from secular, liberal even multicultural global world has created internal transformations within European face of Islam; reshaped the lenses for reading the Qur'an. It is, therefore, of interest to see on the extent of global values and ethics within the circle of European Muslim community. By doing so, we can better understand the integrative function of Interpretation in the context of and cultural dynamics of the Globalization.

#### **Islamic Model of Society, "Umma" and its Definition in Diaspora**

The term of *umma* etymologically comes from Arabic roots أم (amama), meaning 'to seek', 'to go intentionally forward', and 'to seek the right path'<sup>25</sup> or أم (umm) meaning 'mother'<sup>26</sup> and hence seems more likely to refer to 'people and community' who shares some commons.<sup>27</sup> These two roots may signify the existence of matrilineal system in early Arab society. Maysam al-Faruqi, in this regard, maintains that "it was through the mother (*umm*) that one identified with a 'tradition' (*umma*), namely the maternal tribe's ways and customs".<sup>28</sup> It also refers to a way of life comes from tradition. "That is why *umm* can be used as a synonym of *imam*. It

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<sup>25</sup> See: Jamaluddin Muhammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, (Bayrut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah 1990), v. 1 p. 44-45.

<sup>26</sup> R. Paret, "Umma", *First Encyclopedia of Islam 1913-1936*, (Reprinted) (Leisen, New York Kobenhavn, Köln: E. J. Brill 1987), v. 8, p. 1015. And also see: F.M. Deny, "Umma" in *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Second Edition) (Leiden: Brill 2000), v. 10, p. 859.

<sup>27</sup> For further information see: F.M. Deny, *Ibid*, pp. 859-863; Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim: Re-imagining the Umma*, (London and New York: Routledge 2001), pp. 69-81; Maysam J.al-Faruqi, "Umma: The Orientalist and the Qur'anic concept of Identity" *Journal of Islamic Studies* v. 16 (2005), pp. 22-34

<sup>28</sup> See: Maysam J. al-Faruqi, "Umma: The Orientalist and the Qur'anic Concept of Identity", p. 23.

is clearly, therefore, used in the sense of 'path', 'tradition', 'way' and 'goal' throughout pre-Islamic literature".<sup>29</sup> Hence, the word of *umma*, in fact, refers to the group who is gathered together voluntarily in the tradition, law or religion, while the ethnic and tribal community who shares common race and language are expressed by the words of *jama'a*, *qawm*, *qabila*, *sha'b* etc. The ultimate meaning of the word with these roots, claimed, seems to signify that "'group' or 'people' is not a primary meaning for umma but a derived one: only the group that follows a certain law is an umma, not any group."<sup>30</sup> Although the usage in the meaning of "community" is debatable, its importance for Muslim culture started with the Qur'an. Whereas W. M. Watt believes that "*umma* was the sort of word that could be given a new shade of meaning and it was capable of further development subsequently"<sup>31</sup>, some other western scholars<sup>32</sup> are on the opinion that the word was essentially tribal, it came eventually to assume a religious dimension.<sup>33</sup>

For most western scholars<sup>34</sup>, the term of *umma* in pre-Islamic Arabia refers to tribal communal system in the synonym of "*qawm*". This thesis clearly expressed by Watt. Watt generally maintains that the concept of religious community/*umma* is a late invention that could not have occurred to the Prophet in a time and place where only a tribal structure not a religious communal system.<sup>35</sup> Based on this postulate, they have speculated that the word is borrowed from other sources in origin from Hebrew (*umma*)<sup>36</sup>, Aramaic (*umma<sup>e</sup>tha*)<sup>37</sup> or from Akkad (*ummatu*) brought into

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<sup>29</sup> al-Faruqi, Ibid, p.23.

<sup>30</sup> al-Faruqi, Ibid, p.24.

<sup>31</sup> W.M. Watt, *Muhammed at Medina*, (Oxford 1956), p. 240.

<sup>32</sup> For instance see: R. Paret, "Umma", p. 1015 and F.M. Deny, "Umma" p. 859.

<sup>33</sup> See: Maysam J. al-Faruqi, Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> For the discussion see: Maysam, Ibid, pp. 1-34.

<sup>35</sup> See: W.M. Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1987), p. 9-14.

<sup>36</sup> R. Paret, Ibid, p. 1015.

<sup>37</sup> J. Horowitz, "Jewish Proper Names and derivatives in the Koran", *Hebrew Union College Annual*, v. 2 (1924) p. 190. And also see: R. Paret, Ibid, p. 1015.

Arabic language through Christian and Jewish usage.<sup>38</sup> They support with this argument that since umma had only limited usage in pre-Islamic Arabia and is found in other Semitic sources where it refers to “tribe”, it must then be borrowed and strictly means tribal system. But this common usage of the term may not imply a foreign origin.

The Qur’an uses the term sixty-four times; fifty-three in Meccan, eleven in Medinan surahs and the plural *أمم* (*umam*) form in thirteen cases. The term in the Qur’an primarily refers to a group of living beings having certain characteristics in common. The Qur’an says: “*There is not an animal in the earth, or a flying creature flying on two wings, but they are umam (groups) like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book (of our decrees). Then unto their Lord they will be gathered.*”<sup>39</sup> Each species is an *umma*<sup>40</sup>, originating from a common mother/source (*umm*). Therefore, from this point of view, the human being is also a single *umma*, since it has a common origin, as the Qur’an says: “*Mankind were but one community*”<sup>41</sup> According to the Qur’an, the first *umma* of human being whereas started as a single community, it was divided into various communities; The Qur’an says: “*Had Allah willed He could have made you (all) one umma*”<sup>42</sup>, but he in fact created a number of *umam* (plural of *umma*) with their own characteristic religious rituals.<sup>43</sup>

In the Qur’an, as a religio-communal term, *umma* basically refers to a community sharing common religion. The Qur’an says: “*And for every umma there is a messenger*”.<sup>44</sup> It indicates also a gener-

<sup>38</sup> Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’an*, (Baroda: Oriental Institute 1938), p. 69. For further information see: W.G. Lambert, “The Names of Umma” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, v. 49 (1990) pp. 75-80 and E. Giannakis, “The Concept of Umma”, pp. 99-100.

<sup>39</sup> Surah al-An ‘am: 38.

<sup>40</sup> See Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan an Ta’wil Ay al-Qur’an*, v. 11 p. 345; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Azîm* (edition critics: Muhammad Ibrahim al-Banna et. all. İstanbul: Kahraman 1985), v. 3 p. 238.

<sup>41</sup> Surah Yunus: 19. And Surah al-Baqara: 213.

<sup>42</sup> Surah al-Nahl: 93. And also see: Surah al-Shura: 8.

<sup>43</sup> For instance see: Surah al-Hajj: 34.

<sup>44</sup> Surah Yunus: 47.

ation of contemporaries sharing a common belief and value system as in this verse: *“And they say: If the Beneficent One had (so) willed, we should not have worshipped them. They have no knowledge whatsoever of that. They do but guess. Or have We given them any Scripture before (this Qur'an) so that they are holding fast thereto? No, for they say only: Lo! we found our fathers following a religion, and we are guided by their footprints. And even so We sent not a warner before you (Muhammad) into any township but its luxurious ones said: Lo! We found our fathers following a religion, and we are following their footprints.”*<sup>45</sup> In a similar way, the Prophet Abraham's model of righteousness is also described as *umma*.<sup>46</sup> The term of *umma* sometimes means in the Qur'an a particular time of period<sup>47</sup>; the life span of each community which is fixed by Allah and many passed away.

Above verses mostly belong to Meccan surahs and has meanings fit to its context. As a matter of fact, in Meccan surahs, the term has comprehensive meanings which are the community of beings, well-knit community, belief and value system, model of a community and the lifetime of a community. In the Medinan verses, specifically the “Muslim society” in history and in the period of Muhammad is in agenda. The word firstly used in the context of Abraham's prayer for his offspring for being submissive (Muslim) community as saying: *“Our Lord! And make us submissive unto You and of our offspring a community submissive unto You”*.<sup>48</sup> The verse explains what Muslims (مُسْلِمِينَ) means and who they are. The followers of previous messengers are frequently described by the expression of *Muslim* in the Qur'an, and their religion is named as *Islam*. Indeed, the term of *Islam*, the name of only religion of Allah, consists not only that of Prophet Muhammad but also of who are before him. Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Jesus were all Muslim, according to the Qur'an, because they surrounded to the will of Allah and followed His guidance as their way of life. The Qur'an says about the discussion on Abraham's religion hap-

<sup>45</sup> Surah Zuhruf: 20-23.

<sup>46</sup> For instance see: Surah al-Nahl: 120.

<sup>47</sup> For instance see: Surah al-'Araf: 34 and also see Surah Yusuf: 45.

<sup>48</sup> Surah al-Baqara: 128.



pens between Jews and Christians: “O people of the Book! Why do you argue about Abraham, when neither Torah nor Gospel were revealed until after him! Have you no sense? Indeed, you are those who argue about that of which you have some knowledge; why then do you argue concerning that of which you have no knowledge? Allah knows, but you do not. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but was an upright man who is a Muslim.”<sup>49</sup> The disciples of Jesus are also concerned as Muslim.<sup>50</sup> Thereafter, the followers of Muhammad are charged with responsibility of the term as a final community and defined as a group of believers with a special role as follows: “And thus We have appointed you to be a balanced community in the middle way.”<sup>51</sup> And eventually the followers of Prophet Muhammad formed the best community<sup>52</sup> ever created by Allah. However, the chronological development of the meanings of *umma* in the Qur’an both in Mecca and Medina period from the human being communities to a more focused reference to the “Muslim” community with the historical development of the prophetic message.

The concept of *umma*<sup>53</sup> in Islamic tradition is, Hamilton Gibb argues<sup>54</sup>, the key-word for seeking the historical development of Islam. As a matter of fact, the first *umma* of Islam was established as a society with political authority and autonomy, as well as religious and socio-political characteristics that is described<sup>55</sup> originally as a sort of ‘defense alliance pact’ which united the city of Medina’s clans in a pledge to protect the Prophet Muhammad and the first believers of Mecca people and codified in a document known as the “Constitution of Medina”. This alliance system provided a sense of authority of Muhammad and a complete loyalty to him as

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<sup>49</sup> Surah ‘Ali ‘Imran: 65-67.

<sup>50</sup> See: Surah al-Maidah: 111.

<sup>51</sup> Surah al-Baqara: 143.

<sup>52</sup> Surah Ali ‘Imran: 110.

<sup>53</sup> For specific information about the concept see: E. Giannakis, *Aspects of the Concept of Umma in its Formative Period*, (Unpublished Dissertation) The University of Birmingham, 1981; idem, “The Concept of Umma” *Graeco-Arabica*, v. 2 (1983) pp. 99-111.

<sup>54</sup> Sir Hamilton A.R. Gibb, “The Community in Islamic History” in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, v. 108 (1963), p. 173.

<sup>55</sup> For instance see: Peter Mandaville, *Ibid*, p. 71.

the leader of Medinan communities including local clans. It is disputable whether Jewish were considered inside or outside of this first *umma*. W. M. Watt, think that they with their various tribes belonged to the Medinan *Umma* of Muhammad.<sup>56</sup> Rudi Paret, in this regard, claims that they were in the alliance pact but later, because of political conditions they were declared a separate *umma* with a separate religion.<sup>57</sup> However, R.B. Serjant<sup>58</sup> and Frederick M. Deny<sup>59</sup> have denied that they were inside of the *umma*. They think it was a kind of "tribal confederation" not a kind of religiously unity in the sense of Medinan verse. Indeed, preserved by Ibn Ishaq<sup>60</sup> in his *Sira*, "The Constitution of Medina" is a collection of documents issued on various occasions during Medinan period and is of very valuable historical evidence as a unique source of ideas underlying the Islamic community in its early formative period.<sup>61</sup> The term *umma* occurs twice in the documents and reveals that Jewish community was considered within the first *umma* of Islam in the political sense not in religious. They are recognized in some fashion the validity of their community. Still, the Muslim community remains the "best" and "balanced" community and is the true inheritor of Abrahamic line. Hence they are still invited to

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<sup>56</sup> W. M. Watt, *Political Thought*, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> R. Paret, "Umma", p. 1015.

<sup>58</sup> R.B. Serjant, "The Constitution of Madinah", *Islamic Quarterly*, v. 8 (1964) p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Frederick M. Deny, "Umma in the Constitution of Medina" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, v. 36 (1977) p. 44.

<sup>60</sup> Ibn Hisham cited from Ibn Ishaq in his *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, *Kahirah*, (Dar al-Fikr (no date), p. 527-31). For English translation of Ibn Ishaq see: A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah with Introduction and notes*, (Karachi, Oxford, New York Delhi: Oxford University Press 1967), pp. 231-5.

<sup>61</sup> This statement dealing with the treaty with Jews in Medina was made in the fifth month of Hijra (For its dating see: al- Imam al-Shaykh Husayn b. Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Diyarbakri, *Târikh al-Khamîs fi Ahwâli Anfasi Nafis*, (Bayrut: Muessesetu Sha'bân, (no date but based on a manuscript published in 1283 of Hijra) v. 1, p. 353). R. B. Serjant has published its English translation with commentary: "The Sunnah Jami'ah, Pacts with Yathrib Jews, and the Tahrim of Yathrib: Analysis and Translation of the Documents comprised in the so-called 'Constitution of Medina' ", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, v. 41 (1978) pp. 1-42. This document is, Serjant admits, "unquestionably authentic" in his "The Constitution of Medina", *Islamic Quarterly*, v. 8 (1964), p. 3.

be the member of the society: *“O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not with Him, and do not some of us take others as Lords, apart from God. And if they turn their backs, say: Bear witness what we are Muslims.”*<sup>62</sup> The Qur’an seems to call on Christian and Jews to recognize the mission of the Prophet on a religious basis, presenting it as a continuation of the earlier missions. Christians and Jews are referred to as inside of the *umma*, defined by their religious beliefs. Ahl Kitap is not regarded as non-Muslims, on the contrary, are within Islam. They are frequently described by the Qur’an with similar names, such as, *muslimun*, and *mu’minun*. Indeed, the term of Islam consists not only the Religion of Muhammed but also of who are before him. For instance, the religion of Abraham is named *“Islam”* in the Qur’an. The Qur’an says: *O people of the Book! Why do you argue about Abraham, when neither Torah nor Gospel were revealed until after him! Have you no sense? Indeed, you are those who argue about that of which you have some knowledge; why then do you argue concerning that of which you have no knowledge? Allah knows, but you do not. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but was an upright man who is a Muslim...”*

The term, indeed, underwent important developments immediately after Prophet Muhammad and became as a central normative concept which appealed for unity across only the global *“Muslim”* community not referring to Ahl Kitap. However, the term in the Qur’an particularly in Medinan verses indicates a multicultural, or in another word, very inclusivist sense. The main criterion is to believe in One God as in the society of previous Muslim Prophets, Abraham, Jesus, Moses etc. Hence, the term has no any sectarian or religious exclusion as explained by both traditional Islamic and Orientalist scholars but it has literally and essentially very *“multicultural”* sense.

By the end of the nineteenth century, most of the Muslim lands had come under the colonial rule of the European powers.

The colonial situation created completely new notions of community in Islam. The multicultural character of *umma* was replaced by western-dominant notion of nation-states. Many Muslims under the citizenship of their nation-states felt culturally separated and free from the global *umma*. The concept of Pan-Islamism, as the foremost and influential one, was anti-national in orientation. Muslims were asked by this concept, to be loyal not to their nation-state authority but to a greater and more collective notion of community, *umma*.<sup>63</sup> However, the contradictions between the traditional Muslim notion of *umma* and its modern reading as "nation" intensified in post-colonial period.<sup>64</sup> And finally the second term, territorial nationalism has come to the scene. The notions of *umma* and *dar* (land) became two different concepts which have no any link to each other. The territory of the community became limited for only political citizenship of certain nations not all the community which has a common belief or value system but a common state, language, race etc. The Muslims are linked to other Muslim communities only through their status of citizenship. Subsequently, the idea of Muslim *umma* has been gradually transformed into national *umma*.<sup>65</sup> Each nation formed a specific system with its own internal coherence, a superstructure which was practically self-sufficient.

Because of the immigration to the West, indeed, Muslims eventually are the religious minority in Europe. The majority of Muslims in Europe now view "Europe" as their new (*dar*) land, home and territory where was before classified as outside of the *umma* land (*dar al-harb*) to live with others who were identified before as a non-believer (*harbi*) by classical thinkers.

Indeed, the current presence in the West is of a very new situation for Muslims. They have certainly experienced the fact of being a minority in the history. But in that time, as Tariq Ramazan

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<sup>63</sup> For further information see: Manzooruddin Ahmed, *Ibid*, p. 80. And also see: Peter Mandavilla, *Ibid*, p. 76-77.

<sup>64</sup> See: Abdullah al-Hasan, *Ummah or Nation? Identity Crisis in Contemporary Muslim Society* (Leicester: Islamic foundation) 1992.

<sup>65</sup> For further information see: Ahmad S. Dallal, "Ummah" *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, v. 4 (1995) p. 269.

says, this is a different kind which Muslims are witnessing.<sup>66</sup> Muslims are living in the Western civilization with its “machinery values” that make difficult for every Muslim to define what their social and individual identities are Muslim *Umma* or European citizen. Whereas they are staying within the boundary of global/transnational Muslim community (*umma*), in order to successfully immigrate and integrate them into Western society, they have underwent a kind of interpretation which reconstructs a “community” fit to their own situation as a European citizen. Ramadan maintains:

Before being a means of protection, however, Islam is an affirmative Faith which carries within itself a global understanding of creation, life, death, and humanity. This understanding is, or should be, the source of Islamic rules of thinking and behaviour and, at the same time, it should be shaped by a specific type of worship which encompasses the sphere of worship (*‘ibadât*) and more widely, the whole domain of social affairs (*mu‘amalât*). One finds, expressed throughout the Qur’an, a perpetual movement, back and forth, between a global vision of the universe and humanity –which is given birth to by the very essence of Faith- and, consequently, its implications in practice with the five daily Prayers, the annual payment of zakat, the fast of Ramadan and the duty of permanent social involvement. The latter are all acts of worship and, in turn, they reinforce, strengthen and mould Faith itself.<sup>67</sup>

The Islamic communal identity, argued by him, can be remained by understanding the identity in this kind of global vision, universality. In this perspective, the Islamic essentials must be explained in the light of new context within European society.<sup>68</sup> The first essential, for instance, must be redefined is the concepts of *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* which in the past refer to the land for Muslim *umma* to live. These two terms has lost their essentially bases. Instead, in the new context, the land has not any geographi-

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<sup>66</sup> See: Tariq Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim*, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ramadan, *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> See: *Ibid*, p. 117-8.

cal restriction; the whole world (*al-'alam*) is presented for Muslim *umma* to live. Ramadan rationales this new interpretation as like:

It was the 'ulama who, during the first three centuries of Islam, by considering the state of the world –its geographical divisions, the powers in place through religious belonging and influence as well as the moving game of alliances- started to classify and define the different spaces in and around them. This process was necessary for at least two reasons: first, by making out the Islamic territories, the 'ulama were able to point out what the essential conditions making a space or a nation Islamic were and what the rulings determining the political and strategic relations with other nations or empires were. Second, it allowed them to establish a clear distinction, as regard legal issues, between the situation of Muslims living inside the Islamic world and those living abroad or those who traveled often such as traders (and who thus required specific rulings).<sup>69</sup>

These two concepts have been appointed in the Islamic law. But, because of two reasons, they are not utterly appropriate and hence should be redefined by taking into consideration the new vision of world, global culture. Ramadan continues:

Based on the idea of two virtual entities (*dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb*) having to come to an agreement, it seems impossible to use such a concept without precaution in our contemporary world. These entities do not have real and defined existences and the treaties, because of intricate political influences and imbalanced power struggle cannot be considered as expressions of agreement between two or more independent ad free governments.<sup>70</sup>

This idea is commonly shared by other Muslims scholars<sup>71</sup>, whereas some others<sup>72</sup> keen to go on the traditional understanding. However, this is the discussion on the territory of Muslim commu-

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p. 123-4.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 128.

<sup>71</sup> For instance see: Faysal Mawlavi, *al-Uusus al-Shar'iyyah li al-'Ilaqat, bayn al-Muslimin wa Gayr al-Muslimin*, Menilmontant 1987.

<sup>72</sup> For further information see: Ramadan, Ibid, p. 141-2.

nity. What about the identity of the community; does it also belong to European society with global characteristic values? Is the Muslim to be defined in the context of traditional Islamic notion of *umma* or simply a citizen of any European country? Is Muslim insider or outsider of the European society? These kinds of question will be asked in the terms of Ahl kitab/non-Muslims in Muslim society. For seeking to be accepted by the European countries of course, Muslims have answered the questions very affirmatively and determined to adapt Islam as a personnel ritualistic religion detached for the most part of daily life and to minimize any differences in their appearance, embracing a language fits to the western values. Therefore, on an individual basis, Muslims could or can successfully integrate themselves into Western society, or at least enable to live in a dialogue and empathy, on the condition that they contextualize the western values. So, they will be European citizens and a member of Muslim community/ *umma* at the same time.<sup>73</sup>

### **Religious Liberty and Freedom in Diaspora**

Muslim societies have today become part of the West as the result of complex nature of migration process. Muslims immigrate for social or economic reasons not necessarily religious ideas or duties. Many of the North or West Africans, Turks, or South Asians who migrated to European countries in search of work have remained profoundly attached to their countries of origin. In this respect they resemble the transnational movement in Europe and certain transnational practices are tied to religious practice. and to religious organisations. One of the most prominent in Europe is the Tablighi Jama'at which has its origins and centre in northern India, and sends followers out to urge Muslims residing elsewhere in the world to return to keep on the practice of Islam and also to maintain ties and communication between new places of residence and their centres. This and other religious groups maintain particularly strong ties to their homelands and maintain these ties across gen-

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<sup>73</sup> These questions frequently are under discussions. For further information see: Ramadan, *Ibid*, pp. 153-211.

erations. In that respect these transnational religious movements develop a diasporic character. In Germany, for example, Islamic organisations has a great deal of attention is paid to the ties to Turkish homeland islamic movements.

However, Muslims in Europe have also been attempting to develop forms of Islamic life and institutions compatible with the range of Western norms, values and laws. This sense of 'european Islam' as a public space of reference and debate draws, of course, on Islam's history of movement, communication and institutional innovation. Other features of Islamic religious practice promote the sense of a global community, the *umma*, among ordinary Muslims. The perduring role of Arabic as the primary language of worship made possible universal form of prayer among Muslims in all over the world. The standardisation of the Qur'ân, the requirement to pray in Arabic, and the popular enjoyment of reciting and writing verses of the Qur'ân promote among ordinary Muslims the sense of participation in a universal message. The annual pilgrimage brings Muslims together with fellow pilgrims. Five times daily, Muslims turn their bodies in the direction of Mecca in order to carry out the obligatory rituals of worship (*salât*).

Even those Muslims who refer to their identity to different sects like would deny that Islam is or should be defined or bounded by local or national borders. This sense of Islam's global character derives its power from the ways in which rituals reproduce the duties and practices of Muslims in every societies. This consciousness in turn supports the legitimacy and indeed the imperative of searching anywhere in the world for the highest authority on Islamic matters. This imperative creates specific networks of authority, learning and communication that are more historically and sociologically specific than the general sense of global *umma*-hood.

As the result of immigration, transformations of Islamic societies show a predominant "western" influence. However, when Muslims did integrate this "western" material in their cultural



framework, they pronounce the character of transformations as if it was "Islamic". From a historical point of view, claiming that these values are an Islamic legacy has a dramatic underestimate of the long political tradition that has no direct achieve these values. It is no coincidence, for instance, that the Islam officially endorsed human rights and freedom of religion as late as after 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of modernization process. In other words, it is simply not true that these values developed naturally or organically from theological roots deeply ingrained in Islamic tradition. Nonetheless, historically again, these concepts and values cannot be identified neither as Christian origin.

The concept of liberalism refers to a modern doctrinal theory that seeks to remain as possible as neutral between the various ethical and moral fractions, traditions, religions in a society and seeks "reasonable pluralism as a permanent feature of complex society."<sup>74</sup> As we said, the political liberalism and pluralism impact on Muslims who persistently encounter the western values. Liberalism is generally dealing with individual differences. That is to say that political liberalism allows individuals to define and pursue their own ambitions, desire, values, ethics and goals and it is considered to be neutral as it is not committed to the pursuit of any given purpose. These all dealing with the impact of global values on Modern Islam are very well known or at least can be easily observed. However, to legislate the implementations of liberal values in the life of European Muslim society is very problematic, since, in liberal system, laws are value-neutral and allow individuals to make their own choices eclipses the presence of cultural differences in society. However it is very problematic even for liberals to allow: *polygamy, sacrifices of animals, capital punishments, and so on*. On the other hand, it is very problematic for the Muslim community to welcome: *adultery, lesbian and homosexual marriages etc*. If the state or religion does not legislate on these matters, it indicates that it does not consider them sufficiently important to the moral well-

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<sup>74</sup> Andrew F. March, "The Demand of Citizenship: Translating Political Liberalism into Language of Islam" *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, v. 25(2005), p. 317.

being of the community to require a collective, uniform and compulsory mode of behaviour. If they legislate, they take a specific stand.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, Multicultural Laws and Ethics proceeded in the history Islam may enable to legitimate global values and ethics from the Islamic point of view.

According to traditional practices, Islam is defined such a religion that has theological, ethical and social norms which are dominant in both state and in the life of every individual Muslims. Islam postulates for individuals two different spheres, religious-spiritual which is inner-life of believer and religious-legal which is outer-life including law, civil and even form of religious prayer. The first sphere is called system of Faith and generally accepted as a personal, private and deeply matter. It means that as one of the components of Islam, individual has a deep and sincere commitment to Allah to believe his existence and unity. The spiritual acceptance is strictly between God and individual. The compulsion or external mediators, even Prophets cannot involve in this relation. The Qur'an say: "Had God willed, they were not unbeliever and we have no appointed you a watcher over them, neither are you their guardian"<sup>76</sup>

The second sphere is involving of the system ethics and religious practices. The relationship between these elements is very complex. The Qur'an puts the faith into the component of religion together with ethics and ritual by distinguishing between *mu'minun* and *muslimun*.<sup>77</sup> That is to mean that the invisible faith sincerely held will lead to correct ethical and ritual behaviour and the visible rules of ethics and the practice of religious rituals will lead to strengthen faith. And of course practices of all things by people together will lead more changes in the social, economic and cultural environment.

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<sup>75</sup> See: David Herbert, "Religious Tradition in the Public Sphere" in *Muslims in the Margin*, (Netherlands 1996), pp. 66-79.

<sup>76</sup> Surah al-An'am, 6: 107.

<sup>77</sup> See: Surah al-Hujurat, 49: 14.

In terms of the first sphere of religion, the Qur'an emphases absolute freedom as follows: "There should be no compulsion in Religion. Truth stands out clear from Error. Whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God have grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. God is all-Hearing, All-Knowing."<sup>78</sup> For unbelievers, the Qur'an declared that belief is a deeply inward and a matter of heart: "Say: -O unbelievers, I serve not what you serve and you are not to serve what I serve, nor am I serving what you have serve neither are you serving what I serve. To you, your religion and to me, my religion."<sup>79</sup>

The question of apostasy is particularly important for understanding the religious liberty in diaspora. How could it be "no compulsion in religion" and a punishment for apostasy? It is indeed obvious that the aim of Islam is constitute a moral obligation to create a just society who "commands good and forbid evil"<sup>80</sup> And the punishment is only for inner society in the case of breaking the agreements and for only those who treat the society. That means there is no direct link between religious liberty and the punishment of apostasy in Islam. The former one is the issue of believing and faith whereas the latter is political social order of the state.

The Qur'anic notion of apostasy is functionally and exclusively represented by the concept of *irtidat*. Yet the other term, *kufir* is synonymously used in the Qur'an to refer to same meaning.<sup>81</sup> However, the Qur'an distinguishes between these two terms. The first is used for who first believe in God but later turned and back and the second is used for who never believe and remain in his statement.

Upon the Prophet's death Muslim armies engaged in a number of battles that came later to be known as the wars of apostasy. The Arabs rebelled against the political authority of new Caliph,

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<sup>78</sup> Surah al-Bakarah, 2: 256.

<sup>79</sup> Surah al-Kafirun, 109: 1-6.

<sup>80</sup> Surah Ali Imran, 3:104.

<sup>81</sup> For instance see: Surah al-Nahl,16:106

Abu Bakr and refused to pay the taxes. However, some of them were religiously revolt, challenging the religion of the state in Madina as they were led by so-called prophets, such as Musaylima in Yamama.

In Islamic law, apostasy is defined as heretic and punishment is death. The male apostate is given a three-day period to reconsider his decision. If he ask forgiveness and believe again there are no legal consequences. If he does not then he legally deserve to be executed according to all jurists.<sup>82</sup> However, these legal statements were formulated in a context when apostate can easily escape to non-Muslim territory (*dar al-harb*) since the punishment can be changeable if the apostate is a woman according to Hanafi sect, for instance. Other legal consequences of the apostasy are that the property of the apostate is confiscated by the state and his wife or her husband is forcedly divorced which are not mentioned in the Qur'an nor in in Hadith sources, and hence very political and contextual decisions.

However, today in western society, Muslims promote absolute liberty both in practice of religion and of thought as secularization and liberalization process in active. The people and the community are also losing the traditional identity and refer to less religious symbols stressing more on the social and communal relationships. There are a number of Muslims who define themselves as "non-practicing believers" who still respect at a minimum the important duties, like circumcision, marriage, burial, etc. They generally are selective to observe and modify the injunctions of Islam as a function of his/her personal situation. Very frequently one meets young people of both sexes who accept the rules of Islam avoid prohibited foods, pray from time to time and fast during Ramadan and practice the religion as a matter of spirituality and

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<sup>82</sup> For legal discussion on apostasy see: Wael Hallaq, "Apostasy" *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill 2001), v. I, pp. 119-122.

personal ethics.<sup>83</sup>And finally they refer again to the verse of the Qur'an "No compulsion in Religion".

### **Political Authority and Loyalty in Diaspora**

The issue of authority of Muslim in diasporic society is of extreme importance as Muslims try to understand question of faith, practice, and identity in a new country and new culture. Who is has the authority to interpret Islam in a European Muslim community? This question is increasingly getting important.

Muslims communities have very different policies as to how to organize the authority in Europe. Some of them are under influence of leaders and organizations in overseas countries, such as *Jama 'at al-Islami* in Pakistan and India, *Ikhwan al-Muslimun* in Egypt, Syria etc. An Imam in the Mosque generally can be the represent of these groups. However, Imams who have been trained in traditional Islamic cultures and institutions and arrive in Europe to lead in Mosques and Islamic organizations often know little of the societies into which they are suddenly thrown. This can lead to tensions within Islamic communities, especially when those communities are now composed of second and third generations who are themselves well acclimated to living in Europe. They try to replicate a traditional Islam that is not relevant to Muslim life in the West or a version of faith, practice that are so culturally bound that it reflect a strange life style of a country rather than of Europe. This kind of external authority has sometimes disintegrative function in multicultural societies. Hence, European Muslims are seeking new kind of leadership trained, located within, having knowledge about European culture and civilization, on one hand, having full of traditional understanding but ability to adopt to new situations on the other hand. This new kind of authority, then, has a high level of education and skills to reinterpret Islam to be relevant for the time and place and also to serve as an intermediary between host European and Muslim cultures.

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<sup>83</sup> Jocelyne Cesari, "Modernisation of Islam or Islamisation of Modernity? Muslim Minorities in Europe and the Issue of Pluralism" in *Muslims in Europe. From the Margin to the Centre*, (New Brunswick and London: Lit 2004), p. 97.

This is, however, for recognizing the authority within the Muslim community itself and does not resolve political and social integration of Muslims into western society. The concept of authority which is expressed in Islamic terms should be translated into western paradigms. If the *umma* concept is already changed into the meaning of citizenship, then the theory of the leadership should be modified respectively.

The idea of authority can be changed into the loyalty in favour of the state of citizenship in order to full integration and truthful participation into Western society. By doing so, they enable to carry out their religious duties on the one hand, and on the other, they are demanded a high degree of social responsibility to the host society. This is not only because of this citizenship consequences and also religious legal duty. "The Sharia", Tariq Ramadan says, "requires honest citizenship within the frame of reference constituted by the positive law of the European country concerned".<sup>84</sup> Indeed, Ramadan is the foremost but not the last voice of a long story of Muslim minorities in Europe who is trying to make their diasporic lives meaningful with the help of Islamic interpretative devices. However, there exist most problems for Muslims now. Since the state is clearly and naturally entitled to full of loyalty. But to problem is to what extend is it? And what about the doctrine of absolute loyalty to a global Islamic community in the case of full integration of Muslims and not being a minority but being a part of the society?

As a historical sample, the first Muslim migrant community in Abyssinia was loyal to Negus's authority and recognized his as their sovereign. In this regard, Tariq Ramadan states:

The Muslim thus lived in a non-Islamic environment under the authority of a leader they respected for he was fair, trustworthy and generous. Umm Salamah, who lived in Abyssinia for several years within the small group of Muslim immigrants, explained later how they had appreciated this ruler and how they had hoped

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<sup>84</sup> Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim*, p. 172.

that his army, although he and his people were not Muslims, would defeat its enemies.<sup>85</sup>

Imtiaz Ahmed Hussain justifies also and recommends Muslims to be loyal to authority of their host country as saying:

Perhaps the Muslim community in the West, hence, does not have a problem with expressing its loyalty to the sovereign. However, when they see far right political groups rallying around national symbols such as the flag and these being used as instruments of racial exclusion, they find it difficult to express their loyalty and belonging within such an exclusivist concept of what it means to be British.<sup>86</sup>

What about the doctrine of absolute loyalty to a global Islamic community, *Umma* including special duties not to kill fellow Muslims in the case of conflict? Let's read possible scenarios from Andrew F. March:

A Muslim is permitted to join a non-Muslim army so long as that army is not engaged in hostilities with a Muslim army, here defined as an army with a predominant Muslim composition.<sup>87</sup>

Non Muslim is permitted to join a non-Muslim army voluntarily or through conscription as long as that army is engaged in hostilities with a Muslim army. Any Muslim so conscripted must refuse to serve.<sup>88</sup>

Non Muslim is permitted to join a non-Muslim army voluntarily or through conscription as long as that army is engaged in hostilities with a Muslim army. However, if a Muslim enjoys security and the freedom to manifest his religion in his non-Muslim

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<sup>85</sup> Ramadan, *Ibid*, p. 168.

<sup>86</sup> Imtiaz Ahmed Hussain, "Migration and Settlement: A Historical Perspective of Loyalty and Belonging" in *British Muslims Loyalty and Belonging*, (ed by Mohammed Siddique Seddon, Dilwar Hussain and Nadeem Malik, Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2003), p. 31.

<sup>87</sup> March, *Ibid*, p. 326.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p. 327.

country he is not allowed to actively harm that country or its interests.<sup>89</sup>

Non Muslim is permitted to join a non-Muslim army voluntarily or through conscription as long as that army is engaged in hostilities with a Muslim army. However, if a Muslim enjoys security and the freedom to manifest his religion in this non-Muslim country he may contribute to that country's well-being and defence as anon-combatant.<sup>90</sup>

No Muslim is permitted to fight in any non-Muslim army, even to defend a territory in which he lives and is not oppressed, even when the aggressing force is not a Muslim one.<sup>91</sup>

In the last scenario, the duty of citizenship will be ignored and hence he would be legitimately punished. Because his homeland is under attack but he refuse to contribute to defend it as other citizens and prefer to stay in pacifism. Hence it can be tolerated by his citizen fellows and authorities. However, this succeeding scenario is more problematic:

No Muslim is permitted to fight in a non-Muslim army, even to defend a territory in which he lives and is not oppressed, when the opposing force is a Muslim one.

No Muslim is permitted to fight in a non-Muslim army, even to defend a territory in which he lives and is not oppressed, when the opposing force is a Muslim one. However, if the Muslim has been given security, treated fairly and allowed to manifest his religion in that territory, he ay not join the forces of the invading Muslim army and may not engage in any acts of sabotage or obstruction of the non-Muslim state's effort to defend itself.<sup>92</sup>

All instances of non-Muslim hostilities against a Muslim force are illegitimate, even if the hostilities were initiated by a Muslim force. A Muslim force is always permitted to engage a non-Muslim

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 329.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 329.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p. 329.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 330.



force in battle if its purpose is the spread or advancement of Islam. A Muslim may never consider such use of force as unjustified.<sup>93</sup>

All instances of non-Muslim hostilities against a Muslim force are illegitimate, even if the hostilities were initiated by a Muslim force. A Muslim force is always permitted to engage a non-Muslim force in battle. However, not every single Muslim is required to join in such efforts or regard his participation as *fard 'ayn*<sup>94</sup>

### Gender Equality

There are a number of verses in the Qur'an that lay down its essential teaching on gender. The Qur'an appears to put both male and female Muslims on a plane of spiritual equality, it, on the other hand, certainly seems to put them on a footing of social, economic, psychological, and cultural inequality. In these respects, it favours what can only be described as patriarchy and sexual hierarchy, with superiority of the male over the female. We shall look at both sets of a few selected verses of each kind in the Qur'an, viz., those that favor the equality of man and woman and those that favor the inequality of man and woman. Among the verses that favor male-female equality may be included also those that emphasizes the mutuality and/or complementary of the two. The decisive verse, which favours the equality of male and female, is:

For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, For true men and women, For men and women who are Patient and constant, for men And women who humble themselves, For men and women who give In charity, for men and women Who fast (and deny themselves). For men and women who Guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in God's praise, for them has God prepared Forgiveness and great reward.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 330-1.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p. 331.

<sup>95</sup> See: 33/ 35. Other verses of the Qura'n which support the equality of men and women are: "The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another, they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe Regular prayers,

The Qur'an gives an equal status to the women in terms of created by Allah. "Mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you in the Sight of Allah is the believer who has Taqwa (i.e. piety and righteousness) and loves Allah most. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." (49/13) In principle in the Qur'an men and women are equal because both have been created from the same nafs (lit. kind, and also soul): "And Allah has given your zawj of your own nafs and has given you, through your mates children..."(16/72) Muhammed Asad, in his *The Message of the Qur'an* explains the term, zawj as one of pair or a mate of the opposite sex, either husband or wife.<sup>96</sup> And both genders will be rewarded according to their personal responsibility: "As for anyone who does righteous deeds, and is a believer withal, him/her shall we most certainly cause to live a good life; and most certainly shall We grant unto such as these their reward in accordance with the best that they ever did."(16/97)

In terms of equality, the Qur'an's basic stance is, indeed, that Muslim women are first and foremost Muslims, the religious equals of men, in particular in this verse: "*Allah imposes suffering on the hypocrites, both men and women, as well as on the men and women who ascribe divinity to aught beside him. And Allah turns in his mercy unto the believing men and women...*" (33/73) The Qur'an also refers to women and men as one another's "protectors"<sup>97</sup>. Muslim marriage is described in terms of love and mercy<sup>98</sup>, and the Qur'an describes husband and wife as "garments"<sup>99</sup> for one another.

Despite those facts, there is a very controversial problem in Islam that is the issue of authority of man over women in the family and in the society. In the above verses of the Qur'an, certainly the

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practice Regular charity, and obey God and His Apostle. On them will God pour His mercy: for God Is exalted in power, Wise." (9/71).

<sup>96</sup> Muhammed Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, (İstanbul, 2006), p. 405.

<sup>97</sup> See: Surah Tawba, 9/71.

<sup>98</sup> See: Surah al-Araf, 7/189; Surah al-Rum, 30/21.

<sup>99</sup> See: Surah al-Baqarah, 2/187.

intent of, at least, limited forms of equality of men and women are quite clear. Islam also makes the seeking, pursuit, and acquisition of education, learning, and knowledge an equal obligation of both men and women. At any rate, these verses of the Qur'an were so understood, interpreted, and constructed, and their teaching incorporated in real life that, in sum and substance, not equality in any sense of the word, but the inequality of men and women became the tradition and the general rule of Muslim life and living, and the principle of the Islamic social order.

The Muslim women in Islam has been accepted as dependent members who dedicate themselves to carry out of the tasks of catering, procreation, raising and caring for children while the men are the maintainers and protectors of women, and it is, therefore, their religious, social, moral, and legal obligation to support women. Men's responsibility has been conventionally concerned to support their wife or wives, concubines and slave girls, and other womenfolk of the family and children and keeping the household financially solvent. Muslim women seem to be discriminated, subordinated, dominated, and oppressed not only by simple authority but also "religiously" authority of men. The inequality of the gender in Muslim society had consequences not only for Muslim individual, but also for Muslims society. Inequality in the home as an individual has been translated into inequality in society at large; ruled in the home and in the society; not ruler at all in the home not at all in the society. It is because of the fact that all aspects of Muslim society have been influenced when the one part was changed. Just as in the case of political authority how the concepts have been accommodated and new institutions have been reconstructed again and again with new terms of *Khalifas* (caliphs), *sultans* (kings), military rulers of Islam, and finally *ulama* (scholars), the concept of equality of genders also under the on-going reconstruction process of the social and cultural evolution of the religious, social, political, and cultural life of the *umma*, as a whole.

The gender inequality, with the inferior statuses, rights, and

role of Muslim women in contemporary Muslim societies and cultures, however, derive seemingly from the Qur'an. Among the verses of the Qur'an, the most decisive verse that supports male-female inequality is in the *Sura al-Nisa* (the Chapter of Women), the fourth chapter of the Qur'an: *"Men are in charge of/are superior to/ have authority over women (al-rijal qawwamun 'ala al-nisa), because Allah has preferred some of them (men) over others (women) and because they (men) spend of their means. Therefore the righteous women are obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah has guarded. As to those from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to separate beds, and beat them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. For Allah is exalted, great."* (4/34) (Translation is given according to the traditional understanding)

This verse seems to be obviously concerned with domestic relations between couples. First, women are told that they are in control of men, i.e., husbands, who have responsible for their maintenance. Second, because of that men are physically stronger and take care of, provide for, support, maintain, and protect women, they are entitled to the unquestioned obedience of their wives to them, and, finally, they are told, in the event of *nushuz*, or disobedience by a wife, how the husband is to proceed in order to discipline her.

Indeed, this attitude towards the women does not exist only in the Qur'an, but the Bible tells about the obedience too: *"To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*<sup>100</sup> Bible even goes further and states that the wives are to submit to their husbands just as they submit to God: *"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything"*<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> See: Genesis 3:16.

<sup>101</sup> Ephesians 5:22-24. Another verse that is important to mention is as such: Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not

The obedience of the female partner, according to Muslim exegesis, includes the marital loyalty to the husband, decent behaviour toward him and good household management while male authority consists in the right of bodily punishment when his wife deserves it. Not only within the family and also in the political and social life, should women obey the authority of men.

Classical commentaries generally maintain that the inequality between men and women is a natural order that regulates all kinds of relationship between them. On these bases, the term of *Qawwam* which is mentioned in the verse refers to the authority and the superiority of man over women in two reasons: the physical nature of man and their social and financial position in society and in the family.

The society and individuals in Europe are, however, certainly, very different from that of what Islam emerged and developed. The message of the Qur'an is perfectly, and absolutely applicable to all times and context. As we said before, the inequality of the gender in Muslim society had consequences of forthcoming development and changes in society since a woman accepted as only a people who follow male ruler in the *umma* and as a wife of a husband who is authority in the home. This situation is very relevant and very fits to its own context and society. However, in the present day, particularly in Europe, as the society and individual are under the process of liberation and equalisation, women also play a social role in the society equally with men. Muslims women in Europe theoretically advocate or are expected to advocate gender equality raising and caring for children and sharing household tasks by both male and female members of the household as living in western society. That is to say that Muslims living in the West just begun to reconstruct the women's status interpreting the verses in ways which reflect the realities of european Muslim society and life. In the light of Western gender values e.g. justice, freedom, equality, rights etc, the women's places in the society and

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believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives." See: 1 Peter 3:1-2.

in the home as a people and as an individual is now re-interpreted. The meanings, interpretations, and ideas about the *qawwam*, or the authority of men over women, are being changed in western Muslim society.

Male power in western society is still exist in various degrees, but it has been always there as well. At any rate, it is very new that we should familiarize ourselves with what meaning, interpretations, and implications for gender relations Muslim women. The meaning of men's being of "*qawwam*" interpreted by Muhammed Asad, for instance, is "full care for women".<sup>102</sup> From his point of view, the term is used to signify that men ought to provide for women in the context of child-bearing and rearing but does not signify that all men have unconditional authority over all women all the time, as traditional interpreters have claimed. Having being accommodated to suit western values, the term is translated as (to look after, to protect). This is because of the fact that inequality can easily be regarded as being objectionable and which raises questions, such as why, because men are physically stronger, they should have the right to control women; what about the woman who works and earns her own living and does not require her husband to support and maintain her.

Amina Wadud-Muhsin also says: "Needless to say, this verse covers a great deal more than just preference. This is classically viewed as the single most important verse with regard to the relationship between men and women: 'men are *qawwamuna 'ala* women."<sup>103</sup> She continues to say: "In this verse it means that men are *qawwamuna 'ala* women only if the following two conditions exist. The first condition is 'preference', and the other is that they support the women from their means. 'If either condition fails, then the man is not '*qawwam*' over that woman'."<sup>104</sup> Muhsin tends to first show that, traditional interpretation, is unwarranted and later

<sup>102</sup> Asad, Muhammed, *The Message of the Qur'an*, p. 109.

<sup>103</sup> Muhsin, Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti SDN. BHD, 1992), p. 70.

<sup>104</sup> Muhsin, *Ibid*, p. 70.

inconsistent with other Islamic teachings. The Qur'an, indeed, does not say that 'all men are superior to or better than all women.' Nor even that Allah prefers all men to all women. Only the individual qualification is important.<sup>105</sup> Thus, this understanding for them is in fact inconsistent with other Islamic teachings, since elsewhere in the Qur'an the following verse: '*The believers, men and women, are 'awliya,' one of another*' (9/71) clearly indicates that Muslim men and women both are friends and equally protectors for each others.

### Conclusion

Islam is a religious system that provides a creed, a set of doctrines, a rite of prescriptive practices, and moral-ethical-spiritual attitudes. Islam is also a civilisational force that shapes the Muslims response to social-political and individual realities in every stage and every society. However, the Qur'an, by its nature, does not deal with these ideas directly or systematically. It is therefore important to trace the development of these ideas by examining the ways in which Muslim interpreters, theologians, jurists, sufis, activists, modernists, reformists etc. have reconstructed Islam in every stage of history. Since the Qur'an revealed in the seventh century, scholars have to create solutions/traditions in accordance with the development of Muslim society.

The role of the Qur'an as the sole provider of the life-orientational directives is even more critical in the Muslim diaspora. European Muslims in western society believes that their values are compatible with modern values. However, the earliest, especially the classical Muslim jurist-theologians, broadly speaking, refused to recognize equally co-existence between Muslim and non-Muslim people and considered jihad as the Islamic war instrument. However, there has been a dramatic transformation in society and politics of Muslims existing in the European context. The majority of Muslims in Europe now view "Europe" as their home.

In order to successfully immigrate and integrate them into Western society, they have also undergone a kind of religious reformation which reconstructs the systems of society and politics. For seeking to be accepted by the European countries that hosted them, Muslims, for instance, have determined to adapt Islam as a personal ritualistic religion detached for the most part from daily-life and to minimize any differences in their appearance, taking a language that fits with the liberal values. Therefore, on an individual and even on community basis, Muslims could or can successfully integrate themselves into Western society, or at least enable to live in a dialogue and empathy, on the condition that they accommodate the western values. So, they will be European citizens and Muslims at the same time.

Tariq Ramadan, in this regard, employs a particular mode of analysis focusing on sociological and historical reconstructions of society in Europe. For the discovery of the changeable and mutable meaning to reconstruct the historical context of the revelation-event compares it with the context of European Muslims. According to Ramadan, Muslims re-interpret the Qur'an and Islam in the context of Diaspora in Europe. Rereading of Islamic traditional examples is also dealing with issue of justification. Muslims in Diaspora, for example, resemble their situations with Prophet's immigrant from Mecca to Medina as the first community was established together with other minority religiously and ethnic groups. By doing so, they bypassed the traditional political attitude against non-Muslim minorities in Muslim territories.

Reflecting this change, this study underlines how exegetical writings are linked to, or generated by, various religious and/or secular discourses and debates in particular within multicultural and Inclusivist values. Moreover, as Islam has become global religion, and it's radically changed manifestation in the world has turned into a predominantly "non-Eastern religion" its expression has ceased to be shaped by processes primarily at work in the Eastern culture. These new processes manifest most prominently



in society that hypnotically beckons our attention to study how the new reality is accommodated. Cultural ethics emanating from secular, liberal even multicultural global world create internal transformations within European face of Islam; reshape the lenses for reading the Qur'an.

In order for Muslims to be able both to abide according to the teachings of the Qur'an and to live successfully in new society, they rethink and reinterpret the Qur'an in the light of European civil society, liberty and equality. However, within the framework of understanding of the Qur'an, there are various interpretations that are preferred by and prevalent among Islam's various sects, races, ethnic groups. This, particularly, in Europe is a new condition for living Islam. Today, Islam can be represented by different commandments, injunctions, traditions, institutions, concepts, precepts, norms. Indeed, Muslim immigrants in Europe are usually living their lives in much the same way, or as far as it is possible, according to what they were familiar with and habituated to in their old country. But there is secular and liberal society enable them choice in the matter, too. For example, they can continue to practice polygamy or monogamy in Europe. But whereas Muslims in the West can still choose to live by the instruction of the Qur'an, they can also choose to reinterpret, readjust, the teachings according to western values. In the West, they actually have a choice to do these things to integrate their societies into the western pattern with saving their identity at the same time.



## Avrupalı Müslümanlar ve Kur'an -Diasporada Tefsir ve Entegrasyon-

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**Abstract:** In Islamic terminology, the term "diaspora" is hijra which indicates forcedly or voluntarily to live outside of home-country and to immigrate. The term of muhajir which literary means who has undergone the migration has more specifically been used to refer to those companions of the Prophet who migrated from Mecca to Medina. This event was very significant and marked the dawn of a new era of progress for the Muslim community. However, Muslim migrants are not merely concerned as foreigners or minorities in the Qur'anic discourse. In other words, diasporic situation which refers scattering and living outside of the "home land" has not merely a Qur'anic basement. Since the concept of "land" in the Qur'an are not demarcated geographically for Muslims as in the case of "Promised Land" for Jews. As a modern discussion, Muslims particularly in Europe came about as a result of contemporary hijra, immigration which has its roots in European colonialism and more effectively in economic reasons right after World War Second. Muslims mostly came to the West as immigrants to gain employment, raise family and live quality in the new host countries. But, today Muslims are no longer primarily immigrant communities but rather second and third generations participating in civil societies and professional economic life, in spite of the fact that they continue to be mistakenly identified as religious minorities. On the other hand, the converted Muslims, as being originally French, American or British and religiously Muslim at the same time, cannot be naturally identified as minorities and the situation can not be called as diaspora. However, conceptualizing the Muslim community in Europe as minority or diasporic society may be dealing with the global discourse of "identity". In the global sense, the Muslim community finds legitimacy for their demands to recognize their cultural distinctiveness and social rights. Conceptualization of diaspora may be also dealing with the justification of the situation. Since, regarding to discussion, the relevant Qur'anic narratives, prophetic models, historical samples i.e. leaving home in search of a new life where one can freely practice his/her religion have been intensively used as reference in order to legitimate and to endow their situation with Islamic meaning.

**Key Words:** Diaspora, European Muslim, the Qur'an, Interpretation.

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