

The 3rd Scheme between Secularism and Religion

Harry Harun Behr

Society

ISSN 0147-2011

Soc

DOI 10.1007/s12115-017-0163-4

 Springer

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND MODERN **Society**

ONLINE FIRST

To Lie or Not to Lie—Where is the Question? *Amitai Etzioni*
Politicized Science *Richard E. Redding*

Symposium: Modern Virtue and Lockean America

Locke, Darwin, and the American Science of Modern Virtue
PETER AUGUSTINE LAWLER

Lawler, Locke, and the Lord
C. BEN MITCHELL

Lockeans, Progressives, and Liberationists
PETER C. MYERS

John Locke's America
GEORGE THOMAS

Locke, Hegel, and the Economy
WILLIAM ENGLISH

Locke's Neglected Teaching on Morality and the Family
THOMAS G. WEST

Markets, Morals, and Modern Virtue
FREDERICK TURNER

Infantilizing Americans One Mouthful at a Time
ROBERT WEISSBERG

Whither Individualism?
RALPH C. HANCOCK

"Choice"—The Converging Value of Right and Left
DANIEL CALLAHAN

The Confidence Game: Madoff and the 17th Floor Ensemble *Lionel S. Lewis*
Our Lincoln *Barry Schwartz*
The Qur'an's Guidance to Readers *Steven D. Ealy*

REVIEW ESSAY
Jewish Historians and American Capitalism *Edward Shapiro*

BOOK REVIEWS
Richard M. Waugaman on Shakespeare's Education · Megan Turchi on Becoming Right · Bryan S. Turner on From the Closet to the Altar · James Wright on Dixie Bohemia

Volume 50
Number 5

September/
October
2013



Your article is protected by copyright and all rights are held exclusively by Springer Science+Business Media, LLC. This e-offprint is for personal use only and shall not be self-archived in electronic repositories. If you wish to self-archive your article, please use the accepted manuscript version for posting on your own website. You may further deposit the accepted manuscript version in any repository, provided it is only made publicly available 12 months after official publication or later and provided acknowledgement is given to the original source of publication and a link is inserted to the published article on Springer's website. The link must be accompanied by the following text: "The final publication is available at link.springer.com".

The 3rd Scheme between Secularism and Religion

Harry Harun Behr¹

© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2017

Abstract Muslim societies and Islam in the West are in need of an anthropological shift in Islamic thought. Global regimes abuse the religious argument for the purpose of obedience towards totalitarian rule. Hence, Islam as a kind of regal religion becomes the basis for the violation of the ethical standards it stands for: peace, justice and security. However, the contingent situation between religious and secular world-views requires new pragmatic approaches in terms of conflicting assumptions of authority. The Koran entails some intriguing answers to this challenge that deserve further attention.

Keywords Islam · Theology · Education · Religion · Secularism

The Situation

The ticking of the daily news claims that religions are dangerous. World-views with central holy books are said to be increasingly intransigent towards plural forms of expressing faith, dissident thought, or religious criticism. Despite their respective endemic criticism against religion which is part of their intellectual heritage, the weighty Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions with their civilizing patina are viewed as part of the problem and not as part of the solution when it comes to the big five challenges of global displacement: dismantling democracy, promoting racism and economic nationalism, looting natural resources, enslaving women and

children, and violating human rights. At the moment, the tensions between fundamental secular and religious convictions tighten as soon as Islam and Muslims are put on the agenda. How can those who seem to preach religious particularism contribute to universal peace?

The tilt between the perception and ascription of the religious *self* and the religious *other* aggravates the daily educational work with young Muslims. They feel touched by the current global discourse of accusation and suspicion against them and their religion. The ambiguity of being Muslim in terms of social role and liability makes them spiritually vulnerable: The intense “othering” of Muslim religious and cultural affiliations and the demonization of Muslim life-styles contribute to the diffusion of their social identities and loyalties. The sentence of losing normality and of losing their future by gambling their membership in the civil society makes them amenable to religious rigidity. And those who offer radical ideologies, luring them into violent networks, seem to know exactly how to address them.

Demands for Pacification

The question is how Islam, framed as spiritual education in public schools for example, can contribute to some kind of pacification here. This shifts the hermeneutics of the Koran from the mere *traditional* to a more *intentional* reading, bringing about an anthropological turn within the contemporary exegesis of the Koran. With regard to *competences* as the pillars of modern curricula design, religious education should be geared to the intellectual, spiritual and habitual attentiveness, to the empathy and willingness as the attitude of the self. Systematic religious knowledge and instruction, predominantly addressed to the demeanor and the formation of members of the religious in-group, will not suffice.

✉ Harry Harun Behr
hb@em.uni-frankfurt.de

¹ Institut für Pädagogik der Sekundarstufe, Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main, Campus Westend PEG HPF 43, Theodor-W.-Adorno-Platz 6, 60323 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Islamic education must aim at the ability of young people to mediate the divergent perceptions between the *self* and the *other* mentioned above. They are challenged to find their religious ways and means. In the seventh century after Christ, the Koran formulated this hinge to the ideas of the *humanum* and of the *individual* as a response to the fragile alliances and confessional demarcations that defined the late antique religious territories and spiritual topographies around the Mediterranean. A term like *pace* (Arabic *saʿī*; such transliterations given in brackets follow a simplified standard) in surah 92:4 (read as chapter 92, verse 3 in the Koran) hints at the scope of development that is needed for the arrangement of religious education: find out who you are, clarify who you want to be, take God's hand and try your own pace. The related notions of leading a good life in the Aristotelian sense are illustrated in the Koran by further concepts, underlined by the respective Arabic terms: *self-guidance* (*tazkiya*), *conscience* (*istiḳāma*), *confidence* (*tawakkul*), *sound judgement* (*hukm*), taking personal *standpoints* in the face of common sense (*ʿazm*) and the *localization* of the self as an individual in the face of the collective (*tasāwin*).

Taking these patterns into account, reformulating the religious motives that are embedded in religion, though not necessarily identical with it, can help to rediscover and to mobilize religion as a resource for spiritual education and coping. Against this optimistic view of the religious scheme, the dangers of new radical ontologies of religion run rampant: the capricious revivalism of tradition, the tribalism of religious belonging, the disrespect against would-be deviant theologies and minorities, the decree-mindedness of religious and political institutions, the hate against secular thought, the apologetics against humanism as an alleged Western concept, the rationalizing of irrationalism, the growing distrust against science, and finally the totalitarian imagination of the religious self. At the moment, these *retrodox* reconstructions of religion can be met in several countries with a political system under Islamist impression and under narcissistic rule. Such transformation of the civil society towards simultaneously legal and religious obedience rightly fuels the common discomfort against the renaissance of the religious scheme within the secular patterns of the middle-class.

In article 7, the German constitution mentions religious education as a subject in public schools that at the same time deserves and requires special attention. In the prevailing interpretation of the law, religions (in the plural) are seen as a valuable part of the social capital of German society. Religious education is expected to contribute to the state as a functioning system by immunizing against the abusive phenomena of transcendental or political ideologies. The rationale behind this seems contradicting, if not puzzling in the light of the current debates about Islam: A stable religious identity supports citizenship in terms of morality. What is intended here is the balanced religiousness (*rex mixta*) between the

religious subjects, their homes and families, the religious communities and the state at the administrative level. From the viewpoint of Islamic theology, this refers to the equilibration between the openness and closure of religious teachings. But from the viewpoint of teaching Islam in schools, this refers to the juggling with *mobilizing* and *domesticating* religious hearts and minds.

From the viewpoint of the sociology of knowledge, the case of Islam in Germany entails the dilemma of *progressive* thought within theological expertise on the one hand, and the *retrograde* motives of the transmission of cultural conventions and invented cults and cultures, especially when these are perceived as alien towards home culture, on the other. Here, religious Muslim education is suspected as being vulnerable to the hidden agenda of the covert islamization of German society. Part of the theoretical paradox is the evidence that Islamic tradition is hesitant to frame *religion* as a substantial body of systematic teachings. Sometimes the literature of Islam discusses words like the Arabic term for *what is due* (*ḍīn*). It describes a religious lifestyle instead of a legal definition, following the Islamic grammar of the pluriform modes of spiritual *denomination* instead of the *confession* of the subject. This is to some extent similar to the pre-rabbinic Jewish understanding of religion (compare 36:11 or 39:9), and of course similar to the pluriform modes of secular thought. Here, the Koran builds a bridge between the religious and the secular scheme: It universally underlines woman and man as religious individuals in comparison to the religious collective in particular, thus strengthening the ethics of responsibility against the sole affiliation to the religious group. Educated composure brings good behavior about, not the other way round. Islam does not build man from the outside in, squeezing his mind – it builds man from the inside out, widening his horizon.

This approach yields quite controversial debate in the post-secular Arabic transformation societies on how to design the new *constitutional documents* (*daṣātir*) after the Arab spring. These debates have qualitatively gained traction after the sobering experiences with the *shariatic constitution* (*dustūr sharʿī*) in Egypt during Muhammad Mursi's bad governance. More and more, Muslim scholars, as well as their respective national fellows of a more secular stance, fear the fascist overprint of their countries, induced especially by a menacing religious laity. It is the secular constitution of an assumed Muslim country, renouncing any shariatic allusion, which seems to be solely capable of guaranteeing Islamic values. In the long run, this will be the only way to carry their people to the safe haven of peace and prosperity. Such values need to be translated from the hermetic registers of Islamic theology, jurisprudence, and tradition into the open realm of modern Muslim thought, and they need to be made plausible to societies which are heterogeneous in terms of their religious or

non-religious affiliations as well as their shared experiences, interests and hopes.

Currently particular *islamicities* are en route. This expression points at spiritually and habitually unbalanced religious identities and articulations. They are framed by the amateurish reconstruction of Islam along different counter-horizons of allegedly non-Muslim schemes. Such essentialistic presuppositions are likely to cloud intellectual enlightenment and thwart economic and societal development. A focus on Islamic universalism might be capable of substantially altering this. For this purpose, the Koran from its very first days has steered the view away from the self-centeredness of the religious scheme towards focal points like the solidarity with society as a whole (a perspective the post-migrational Muslim communities in Western Europe are not yet acquainted with). This has to do with pragmatism as a 3rd scheme between the claim for authority and leadership that oscillates between secular and religious regimes. A new reading of Islamic theology especially in its strong and proven bonds towards both Eastern and Western philosophies as well between the Global North and the Global South has the chance to perform this multilateral translation process.

The precondition for this development is its preparedness to explicitly refer to such focal points not only on the *narrative* but also on the *normative* level. This does not mean that Islamic theology has to give up its spiritual, ethical or aesthetic reference to religious tradition by mutating into a technocratic variety of post-modern, post-secular and post-religious ethics. On the contrary, the Koran has never driven the spirit against the world. Rereading the scripture not only as God's spelling but as a document that reveals negotiations between the religious and the worldly argument would prevent it from being perverted into God's spell. In any case, the Arabic noun *qur'ān* less denotes what is written in a book but what is brought up as the *spoken word* (compare 12:1–3).

The Hermeneutics of the 3rd Scheme

The philosophical declinations of Islam make ideas available which help to trace criteria of the 3rd scheme in more detail and in terms of the ethics, the metaphysics, and the logic of Islam. As regards religion as a general segment of education (which sounds less self-referential compared to *religious education*), such an approach towards a new culture of Islamic thoughtfulness requires a revised culture of pedagogic leadership: looking more thoroughly at things, listening more carefully to each other, talking more honestly, developing a more comprehensive vision of a common future, getting more acquainted with each other more empathically – and reading more literature instead of religious books only.

As regards the exegetical roots of such a concept, the Koran invokes different images of following a *path* or *way* which

connect to the concept of *pace* (saʿī) explained above (see 6:161–165). These images point towards the past when referring to religion as *collective human memory* (*milla*), and they point towards the future when referring to religion in its *programmatic* goals and *utopian* facets (*sirāt*). The exegesis of the Koran and the religious epistemology of Islam afford both directions, looking back and looking forward. Looking back hints at the human soul which *remembers its origin from the eternal garden* (*an-nafs al-unsuya*) and which draws its aesthetic creativity and spiritual identity from this memory. This brings about the latent mental state of being *at home* in the world and at the same time being *alienated from* it, spurring the human soul to look forward in *expectation of returning home* (*an-nafs al-khalfiya*) somewhere in the future by rethinking and reformulating the religious assets. The first might as well be described as *taking religion*, the latter as *making religion*. The hope that life will succeed even when we fail to accomplish our tasks or to reach our goals is based on experience. In the Koran, this is reflected in the Arabic expressions of *tawakkul* for *confidence* and *an-nafs al-mutma'inna* for the *pacification* of the human soul (89:27).

Rereading scripture from a more critical perception of Islamic theology, the familiar orchestration of paradise and hell, which in the Koran appear to be distant event horizons we are subjected to, emerges as the depiction of the human soul and of the social realities we ourselves create. This provides an example of the anthropological turn within Islamic thought. Such a way of looking at the texts is not entirely new, since philosophical scholars like Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (twelfth century after Christ) already addressed it, at least to the extent that was possible then – in times that were not yet acquainted with *theology* as it can be understood today. Razi thought of paradise lying in the depth of the soul and not in the heavenly height, a state of real existence a person enters at the instant of death. He already did what most of the Muslim students demand in the classrooms today: Discover plausible approaches between religious and secular concepts that help to *understand* existential perceptions that actually cannot be *explained* although they seem to be *plausible*.

From the viewpoint of educational science, the question arises to what extent theological curiosity and deep structure of human moral grammar do or do not emerge from religion or rather account for it – and whether the 3rd scheme they entail is acquired naturally or must be learned by instruction and intention. Although a word like *human disposition* (*fitra*; see 30:30) is often narrowed into an anthropological category of the *religious capacity*, other texts in the Koran offer a less dogmatic understanding. Above all, the Koran strengthens the *understanding* (*anamnesis*) in face of the empirical *explanation* which underlines the importance of the *narrative* as the archetype of the narration (*qasas*) – comparable to the Latin word *legendum* since the noun roots in the Arabic verb *quss* for *follow*, *trace* and *collect* (see 28:11). One of these

narratives is the presumably (the interpretations differ here) pre-existential scenario of all human souls being assembled in front of God and giving their oath of allegiance to him in 7:172. Such exegesis, however speculative it may be, has effects on the fundamental hermeneutics of the Koran. As was explained above, the underlying texture of the Koran is *speech*, not text. There even is a warning against wrapping God's words into *paper* (qirtās, see 6:7–8). The divine *expressionism* addresses human *impressionism* both of which form religious *memory* (dhikr).

The Koran reminds of things that are already known. In 3:39, *Christ, Jesus, Son of Mary* (al Masīh ʿĪsā ibnu Maryam) blows life into the figure of a bird he just formed out of the mud from the banks of a river. Miraculously it becomes alive and flies off his caring hands. To be precise here, Jesus just awakes the life that is already enclosed in everything even if it appears to be nothing more than dead material. The verb *to blow* in this narrative is nafakha with the connotation of *heat*, other than nafasa for *to breathe* with the connotation of *air*; and nafatha for *spit* with the connotation of *moisture*. To some extent, all three notions – air, moisture and heat – are preconditions of life.

A reading like this supports the idea that religious learning which aims at the competences of the 3rd scheme can rely upon substantial knowledge that already should be at hand. It needs to be animated and activated by suitable arrangements of instruction and learning. This kind of knowledge is older than all religions, it is universal, it is transcultural, it is not exclusively in the hands of religions, and of course it is not the private property of a single religion. Just as a reminder: We are talking about Islamic theology here, not about *natural theology* or about *philosophia perennis*. The patterns of the 3rd mode need to be put into shape by the ways and means of discourse as the combination of communication and action.

The Koran is very clear when it points at the undercurrents of such discourse: Religion – whatever religion it may be, even Islam – is nothing more than a tool that helps to achieve the humanitarian standards religion stands up for. Religion by itself cannot replace these standards. One prominent example of this can be found in 2:177 – here in a less literal but more functional translation, using the indicative of competences:

You don't have *firm ground* (birr) by just turning your faces towards East or West. You stand on firm ground when you believe in God and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers. You spend of your substance, *out of love* (ʿalā hubbihi), for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves. You are steadfast in prayer. You practice regular charity. You fulfil the contracts which you have made. You are firm and patient, in pain and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. You make religion *become true* (sadaqū) and hold God in *high esteem* (muttaqūn).

The humanitarian signature behind these pronouncements must be reformulated by Islamic theology today. They must be

formulated and translated into the 3rd scheme and must be eked out if necessary. This makes it necessary to take into account what Islamic tradition describes as istihsān or maslaha: The negotiation between *common welfare* and *personal welfare*. The Koran mentions the personal welfare in texts like 80:4, where an expression like manfaʿa alludes to the anagogical perspective of personal religiousness. In the manifold English translations of the Koran, Muhammad Asad translates it as *help*, Yusuf Ali as *profit*, Marmaduke Pickthall as *avail*. The meaning is evident though, since it can be compared to other sequences of the Koran, for example in 31:12: “*Who is thankful (towards God) is thankful towards his own self ...*” (wa may-yashkur fa ʿinnamā yashkuru lin-nafsih).

The *humanum* in the Koran is based upon the idea that each human being is born free from religious determination (which bears another semantic connotation of the above mentioned fitra). The Koran depicts the *divine* setting of the world as the *numinous* setting of life, restricting God's intervention to the utmost existential necessities. Both God and man are equal to the extent that they are free from corruption. Neither of them is thrown back to formal religion which stands for a kind of universal *freedom* (barāʿa) from the culturalization and ethntization of a particular religious system. This can be retraced in Abraham's development and controversy with his father and his people in 6:74–83: “[...] *such is the better argument we gave to Abraham to face his people* (wa tilka hujjatunā ātaināhā li-ibrāhīma ʿalā qaumihi).”

Woman and man can only be guarded against spiritual over-determination and religious manipulation by their strong *ties with God* (hablun minal-lāh; 3:112) and their sole trust in his *guidance of the hearts* (wa mā tashāʿūna illā ay-yashāʿal-lāh; 76:30, 81:29). However, they are not left alone but carried and secure, *borne over land and sea* (hammalnāhum fil-barri wal-bahr) – the Arabic verbal stem hammala refers to *pregnancy* and in the figurative sense to God's *motherly care*. Thus, the human *ties with each other* (hablun minan-nās; 3:112) which are of greater interest when talking about the 3rd scheme, need to be tight and loose at the same time – *tight* in the phylogenetic and *loose* in the ontogenetic categories of human life. This inner tension, with special attention to the explorative juvenile discovery of the self, can be found in the Koran in 31:25 which is part of the famous dialogue between Luqman and his son: “[...] *if your parents strive to make you associate other with me, and you don't understand what's going on, then be disobedient to them, but comfort them with kindness* [...] (wa in jāhadāka ʿalā an tushrika bī mā laysa laka bihi ʿilmun falā tutiʿhumā wa sāhibhumā fid-dunia maʿrūfa).”

The 3rd scheme also lights up in other normative compendiums of Islamic texts, for example in the *prophetic traditions* (hadīth) that contain Muhammad's *life-style* and *custom* (sunnah). Around March 628 after Christ, Muhammad, representing Madina, and the Meccan emissary Suhayl ibn

Amr, son of Abu Sufian who then was one of the fiercest adversaries of Muhammad, meet to sign a truce which would later enter history as the famous Treaty of Hudaibiyah. When Muhammad rises to put his signature as *The Messenger of God* (Muhammad rasūlul-lāh), Suhayl objects with the argument that if he had accepted him as God's messenger, he would not have waged war against him. Suhayl urges Muhammad to change his signature. Muhammad asks his young companion Ali bin Abi Talib to scratch it off (this is the way so called palimpsests came into existence, and researchers today have such palimpsests with early Koranic texts), but Ali refuses to do so, sensing adrenalin flooding his endocrine system. Finally it is Muhammad himself who scratches his prophetic signé from the parchment and replaces it by his civil signature, *Muhammad, son of Abdullah, grandson of Abd al-Muttalib* (Muhammad ibn ʿabdil-lāh ibn ʿabd al-muttalib). Had it not been for the urge of immediate peace (the towns of Mecca and Madina suffered from severe hardship and famine after years of war), the negotiations might have taken another turn. In the end, pragmatic reasoning steered the minds and hearts, allowing for a very intriguing intervention into the inner realms of religious truth and identity (as can be seen by Ali's denial of Muhammad's explicit order).

Another event in Islamic history that can be summoned in favor of the 3rd scheme between religious and secular declinations is the encounter between Muhammad and Muʿādh ibn Jabal. Muhammad is about to send him as his emissary to Yemen. The compendium of hadith collected by at-Tirmidhī mentions by authority of Hārith bin Amr, that both had the following dialogue on the eve of ibn Jabal's departure:

Muhammad: "How will you decide over there (kayfa taqdī)?"

Muʿādh: "I follow what is in the Koran."

Muhammad: "And what will you do if you don't find anything in it (fa-in lam yakun fī kitābill-lāh)?"

Muʿādh: "Then I shall follow your *custom* (sunnatu rasūli-lāh)."

Muhammad: „And what will you do if you don't find anything in it (fa-in lam yakun fī sunnati rasūli-lāh)?"

Muʿādh: "Then I shall *struggle* to find conclusions of my own (ajtahidu)."

Muhammad: "I praise God that both or *hearts are one* (waffāqa)."

In most of the Islamic traditions this event is taken as proof of a *diachronic* arrangement of religious arguments within legal

matters, the so-called *four leading principles* (al-adilla al-arbaʿa): First comes the Koran, then comes the Sunnah, then comes the scholarly consensus (ijmāʿ), and finally comes analogy (qiyās). Such dogmatic presuppositions however pose more problems than they are able to solve because they fossilize the claim for normative validity based on the exegetical outcome of people who lived in far away mental and physical regions of the world – in terms of time, space and habitus.

Instead, this dialogue is very well suited to give proof of the contrary. Why? The answer is easy and logical: The night Muhammad talked to ibn Jabal, the Koran was neither completed nor had Muhammad passed away. Both the Koran and the Sunnah were productive categories aside from personal reasoning as the third productive category. The formula that this shows why this must be read in hierarchical terms is based on the assumption that the Koran has been completed and that Muhammad cannot be asked anymore because he is dead. The Koran, the Sunnah, the scholarly consensus, and the art of drawing analogies must therefore be understood as principles in *synchronic array* (bi taʿdīl), together with other relevant hermeneutical principles which have always been discussed controversially in the history of Islamic thought: Conscientious decisions are made without referring to the Koran or to the Sunnah (raʿī), based on reason (ʿaql), following the vision of welfare (istihsān), based on real and not on theoretical aspects of life without generalizing it (istislāh), taking consensual morale (maʿrūf) and common law (ʿāda) into account.

Giving shape to the 3rd scheme in terms of the translation process between the religious and the secular scheme, for example by forming constitutional documents or in syllabus design, makes the synchronic reading indispensable. Otherwise nothing more than the Islamization of problems by second-hand Islamist ideologies will be witnessed instead of problem-solving. Yet, this perspective faces severe opposition by its opponents, all of them male scholars by the way. The democratization of religious expertise on the level of what the Koran calls *people with virtuosic expertise* (ūlul-ʿamr) challenges the institutional religious scholarship as regards the territory of exclusive proficiency. From the viewpoint of the religious functionary, official religion needs to be defended against criticism and alternative spiritual, political and social intelligence. It seems like the scholars' sigh of relief that Muhammad's speech has ceased to exist and that the Koranic letters can be put back into the rack cannot be overheard.

Muhammad had often been involved in conflicting discourses that touched the existential dimension. This can be retraced in the Koran itself. With reference to the 3rd scheme, the modalities of authority within such discourse are of special interest here. Therefore, another paradigmatic text of the Koran shall be presented. The sequence in 4:82–83 illustrates the art of mediating between the religious and secular

constellation, here again in an adaptation that pays more service to the meaning than to the letter:

Why don't they *disassemble* (yatadabbarūna) this Koran? Had it been from any but God, they would surely have found *inconsistency* (ikhtilāf) in it. And if any rumour pertaining to *joy* (amn) or *fear* (khauf) comes to them, they go public with it. If they just had it brought before the *Messenger* (rasūl; Muhammad) and those *who are expert among them* (ūlul amri minhum), such of them who have proficiency in the *art of understanding* (yastanbitūna) would indeed know [what to do with] it [...].

This is an extraordinary text of the Koran because it paradigmatically illustrates several fundamental concepts. Above all, it reveals a kind of discourse theory on a small and pragmatic scale. The information available concerning the historical background tells us that the Madina community was faced with challenges that would touch everybody existentially and independently from the respective religious or tribal affiliation. The emotional tonality is evident since words like *khauf* for *fear* and *amn* for *joy* allude to the volatility of *security* (amn), *justice* (ʿadl) and *peace* (salām). This is a contingent situation between two imponderabilia: There are as many arguments for success as there are for failure. Sentences like *ūlul-amri minhum* or *minkum, experts among them* or *among you*, point to the joint intelligence. The collective has all the competences to solve their problems without divine intervention.

The ratio behind is proficiency and reason. What is needed to comfort the conflicting situation is a resilient basis of shared information. Furthermore, the negotiation needs to be taken from the street back to the expertise, thus combining the *forum externum* with the *forum internum*, both of which Muhammad himself is a member of. Neither does he stand aside nor does he precede the discourse. He finds himself integrated and participating in it. The momentum of *inconsistency* (ikhtilāf) which anchors *in the text itself* (fihi) finally is shifted to the minds of the participants. The verb *to find* (wajada) actually means *encounter* with the notion of *love* (wujūd). It is not the inconsistency of the text that turns out to be the problem here but the malicious intention of inconsistency by which the emotional, economic, cognitive, spiritual and societal motives of the discourse may be brought into disorder. Originally, other than *fitna* for *trouble*, a word like *ikhtilāf* in the Koran bears no pejorative signature as long as the *art of understanding* (istinbata; *to tear the veil off*) follows the *pure heart's aspiration* of truth (see 3:7).

Furthermore, the momentum of religious authority deserves more attention. At first (not hierarchically), there is *sulta* which means authority in terms of *regal*

entitlement. This is exactly what falls into the prophetic competence since Muhammad was not invited to leave Mecca and move to Madina in order to be God's messenger but to be the mediator among the conflicting tribal alliances in and around the town. Today, *sulta* is the signum of religious institutions that execute religious expertise on constitutional grounds. Secondly, there is expertise on *rational* and not on *regal* grounds (*hujja*), as was mentioned above with reference to Abraham: The better argument counts. At third, however, there is another category of authority which also finds its reference with Abraham: Finding and defending one's own standpoints, finding firm ground in the deeper grammar behind the religions (*birr*), as *surah 2:177* has it, makes *conscience* the focal point (*istiqāma*). These three modes of authority are not *religious* in terms of particularity. They open the door towards the 3rd scheme in terms of a deeper layer. They need to be negotiated at eye-level especially when religious issues pop up within their secular framings.

Conclusion

In 4:83 the Koran makes it clear that the religious argument in terms of *hujja* is not identical with the authoritative one in terms of *sulta*. Both are due to what has been described above as the better argument in terms of *welfare* (*istihsān*), and neither of them can replace *conscience* in terms of *istiqāma*. There is hardly any other sequence in the Koran where the twined dominance of *regal* authority, common wisdom, collective knowledge and personal religious identities are deconstructed and depersonalized in such a way – even when this touches Muhammad in his personal and social role as *God's messenger* (rasūl). More conservative minded Muslims might interject here, pointing to Muhammad as the central figure in this discourse. They would surely address the normative inclination of religious scholarliness in Islamic tradition, objecting its relatedness to the universal pragmatic requirement. Doesn't such relativism open all gates for arbitrary opinions? Well, this is exactly the question that needs to be cleared in more detailed discussion.

However, the habit of blind followership has become rife in the Muslim realms like a pestilence of the mind. The invocation of non-negotiable religious accuracy often masks the hyper-compensation of a deep spiritual uncertainty. In such a state of mind, the proclaimed certainty of religious rightness will push thoughtfulness aside. Teaching religion by dictatorial habit lures the young and less experienced searchers into the enclosure of religious stultification. As concerns the challenges the

Islamic societies as well as Islam in the West are facing today, a healthy amount of disobedience is needed against the regimes which violate humanitarian standards on religious grounds. Hence, the anthropological shift in Islamic theology towards the 3rd scheme must not be delayed any further.

Harry Harun Behr is Professor of Educational Science with a focus on Islam at the Goethe University Frankfurt/Main. He is the speaker of the DEGITS Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamisch-Theologische Studien (German Association of Islamic Religious Studies), member of the RfM Rat für Migration (Council of Migration) and member of the LOEWE

research programme on religious positioning, modalities and constellations in Jewish, Christian and Muslim contexts. His research focuses on the religious anthropology of Islam, on juvenile spiritual orientation as an issue of intersectional and gender-related approaches, on the life-world orientation of the hermeneutics of the Koran and on the methodology of preventive measures against ideological radicalization within secondary school. He has specialized in Islamic curriculum and school book design (see Saphir. Religionsbuch für junge Musliminnen und Muslime. Kösel/Cornelsen: München 2008, 2011, 2017). This article is part of the LOEWE research programme on religious positioning, modalities and constellations in Jewish, Christian and Muslim contexts at the Goethe University Frankfurt, promoted by the Hesse Ministry of Science and Art. This symposium is based on a conference held on October 22 and 23, 2015 under the auspices of the Academy of World Religions at University of Hamburg in cooperation with the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs at Boston University. Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Udo Keller Forum Humanum Foundation for its generous support in making the conference possible.