

ISSN: 2621-6582 (p)  
2621-6590 (e)

# Living Islam

JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC DISCOURSE

VOLUME 6 NOMOR 2 Juli-November 2023



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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI (UIN) SUNAN KALIJAGA YOGYAKARTA**

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JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC DISCOURSES

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Volume 6 Nomor 2, Juli-November 2023

**Living Islam: The Journal of Islamic Discourses** is an academic journal designed to publish academic work in the study of Islamic Philosophy, the Koran and Hadith, Religious Studies and Conflict Resolution, both in the realm of theoretical debate and research in various perspectives and approaches of Islamic Studies, especially on Islamic Living of particular themes and interdisciplinary studies.

**Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses** published twice a year (June and November) by the Department of Islamic Aqeedah and Philosophy, the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought, Islamic State University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

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## RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE IN THE ARAB MEDIA

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### Abstract

The goal of oral and written Arab media is to send a message both inside and outside the country, to correct a misconception, or to spread a negative opinion about a particular aspect of politics, society, or the economy for a variety of reasons. Under the guise of modernizing the religious discourse, condemning its past, emancipating itself from religion, or restricting itself to international norms, this discourse had a presence in the Arab media. On the other hand, a different discourse seeks to portray Islam as a religion of peace, rights, and responsibilities as well as an embrace of others free from prejudice. The 2011 attack contributed to the growth of Islamophobia, which necessitates an inclusive conversation for understanding. This study will examine the consequences of this prevalent discourse on social cohesion in the Arab world. For this purpose, many institutions and scholars try to clarify the issue to improve social and religious life.

**Keyword:** *religious discourse; Islam; Arab media; Islamophobia*

### Abstrak

Tujuan dari media Arab lisan dan tulisan adalah untuk mengirimkan pesan baik di dalam maupun di luar negeri, untuk mengoreksi kesalahpahaman, atau untuk menyebarkan opini negatif tentang aspek politik, masyarakat, atau ekonomi tertentu karena berbagai alasan. Dengan kedok memodernisasi wacana keagamaan, mengutuk masa lalunya, membebaskan diri dari agama, atau membatasi diri pada norma-norma internasional, wacana ini hadir di media Arab. Di sisi lain, wacana yang berbeda berupaya menggambarkan Islam sebagai agama yang damai, hak, dan tanggung jawab serta merangkul orang lain yang bebas dari prasangka. Serangan tahun 2011 berkontribusi pada pertumbuhan Islamofobia, yang memerlukan percakapan inklusif

untuk pemahaman. Studi ini akan mengkaji konsekuensi dari wacana lazim tentang kohesi sosial di dunia Arab ini. Untuk itu, banyak lembaga dan ulama yang berupaya mengklarifikasi isu tersebut untuk meningkatkan kehidupan sosial dan keagamaan.

Kata kunci: wacana keagamaan; Islam; media Arab; Islamofobia

## Introduction

Talking about religious discourse in the Arab media leads us to understand its media nature to assimilate its use and its role in the influence and orientation of public opinion. In order to define the affected media discourse of what is thought to have an impact on the recipients using the means used; researchers who are interested in the discourse have used a variety of methods. Given the diversity of definitions, you can propose one that is mine: "The media discourse is directed at a recipient to persuade him of a certain subject and influence him, to modify his behaviour, his vision of things or both at the same time using means of persuasion".

The goal of the religious book is to persuade the readers on a pious subject by employing various persuasive techniques to change their behaviours, perceptions, or both at once. Many problems arose in the Arab countries because of a lack of communication or deaf communication. That means, there is no willingness to listen to others to understand their actions and their way of thinking... It is as if you hear a single voice from one side. Sometimes both sides believe they can do everything without asking for help... At other times, they turn to someone unfit to advise on the subject they are dealing with... The importance of good communication is absolute and has an important value in the welfare of societies. Their lack can cause problems at the social, political, economic, and religious levels... Religious communication is part of that dialogue that we must have among all... Renewing religious discourse represents a topic that deserves to be discussed because of the continuous evolution of societies at the social, cultural, economic, and other levels.

Communication needs to be presented in an appropriate manner to be accepted by others. It can be an argument, its explanation, an image, a sound, etc. All these media and communication techniques are used to generate a change, but it is necessary to ask: To what extent has a suitable religious discourse been used to gather the dispersed instead of dispersing what has been gathered? How much is legitimate arguing dialogue used? Would it be possible to renew religious discourse? What is the relationship between renewal and change of religious principles?

Given the importance of speech, the lack of knowledge of its media leads to the bankruptcy of communication. When inappropriate dialogue is used, problems can arise between the two sides, as happened with Charlie Hebdo in 2020 in France. The cause was the publication of the cartoon she published and she was considered offended by all Muslims. Some used violence as a protest, because the difference between freedom of expression

and attacking the most sacred of Muslims has not been made! We must “avoid the spread of gratuitous offense and racist speech.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, religious discourse in the Arab media has known these levels of influence. The results vary according to the level of the recipients; of the people who reason, and of others who do not. Lack of reasoning leads to extremism. The aims of this research have to do with giving a pulse to an environment that favours fruitful dialogue and understanding of others. The measures used by both parties can be improved by goodwill without opening windows of disagreement on the main principles, taking into account that today’s societies are not as they used to be and their religious concerns must be resolved according to today’s circumstances. The methodology chosen to carry out this study is to rely on the documents on the subject, to monitor what happens in the Arab media as debates at the level of religious discourse, its renewal, and its impact on societies. It is important to criticize the views of each party to better observe the matter. Depending on this, this research is done according to the following plan: Introduction. Epistemological approach. Justification. Section 1: The attack on religious discourse. Section 2: The call to renew religious discourse. Discussion. Conclusion.

To analyze religious discourse in the media, the way it is presented should be reviewed. This method is understood from the writings of scholars of the Islamic religion (ULAMA) to explain the concept of “renewal”. Does the term have the same meaning as in the media? This requires a critical examination of publications and videos. The world knows changes, which offers tools to participate in what is happening. That is what Hall calls “political vocation” or “political will”<sup>2</sup>. So you can ask: To what extent do these changes influence him? Moreover, to what extent is it accepted? Especially since they had tensions in the discussions.

To understand this issue, the following variables should be taken into account: politics, economy, culture, and religion. In conclusion, cultural and religious studies represent an epistemological approach that allows us to study the opinions expressed in the Arab media. This study will try to discuss this issue to understand the meaning used in the renewal of religious discourse and its characteristics seen in its importance for inclusive coexistence.

At that time, the Arab world is experiencing a series of debates at the local, regional and international levels. Resolutions of problems emanate from the mentality and perceptions of their owners. That is why it is normal to have disagreements depending on where you are going. The goals you want to achieve influence the issue. The colonization of the Arab world in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century had economic, strategic, ideological, and political consequences. Those who speak of the positives of

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<sup>1</sup> Grau, Carmen Innerarity. “La protección de lo sagrado en Francia: De las caricaturas a la ley para reforzar el respeto a los valores de la república”. *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, no. 195 (2022), 13-39.

<sup>2</sup> Restrepo, E. “Teoría social, antropología y desarrollo: a propósito de narrativas y gráficas de Arturo Escobar”, 6. *Boletín de Antropología Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia: Universidad de Antioquia Medellín*. Vol. 20, no. 37, (2006), 307-326. <http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/557/55703716.pdf>



colonialism claim that: (1) It has provided infrastructure. (2) It has ended local wars. (3) It has integrated modern education into colonized countries. Critically, everything the colonizer did was in his interest: (1) The infrastructure was to be used. (2) End local wars to build an economic market that needs stability. (3) Education to form the elite that would be your spokesperson.

Thus, one can understand why the issues discussed in the West take their place in the Arab world. Furthermore, human rights must be respected. The question is: Is there conformity of these rights with the customs and principles of the colonizer? The answer to that question would help to understand why there was talk of renewing such discourses, using all means to communicate information and influence others. This study examines the theme of the renewal of religious discourse in Arab media. It deserves to be addressed, above all, because of the ambiguity of the word “renewal”: Is it a change of religion?, Modification of judgments and principles not to violate human rights?, Rectifying the distortion of religious discourse for peaceful coexistence, and proposing solutions to emerging issues?

## Results and Discussions

### *The attack on religious discourse*

#### **The Western attack on religious discourse**

In the social networks of the Arab world, especially after the attack of September 11, 2001, a new type of religious discourse has appeared, used by people belonging to the religious camp, and others who are far from being. This triggered a debate between the two sides. There is no doubt that the stereotyped image spread by the West through the media has had a great impact on public opinion. It is an image that presents Muslims as terrorists, that Islam carries a terrorist ideology whose foundation is the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah* Prophetic... Lewis Bernard speaks of Muslims as a people suffering from a complex: they are unable to keep pace with Western progress, deplore the glories acquired by their ancestors, and question their sovereignty in their own homes<sup>3</sup>. All this cannot be tolerated or avoided by an outburst of anger against those unfaithful forces, who destroyed his body, broke the fabric of his society, and violated the sanctity of his home. That was based on the clash of civilizations between the West and the Arab World. That is what has led to contempt for the West and the will to destroy it. This image is what Lewis Bernard tried to present in his article (The Roots Of Muslims Rage), as well as in his two books (Where's the Wrong?) and (The Crisis of Islam).

That trial that Lewis Bernard disclosed is not reasonable, you cannot judge all Muslims for all the centuries that are bad or terrorists. Nor can Islam be judged as a religion of hatred, based on a specific act of certain Muslims limited in time for special reasons. The

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<sup>3</sup> Lewis, Bernard. “The Roots Of Muslims Rage”. *The ATLANTIC MONTHLY*, 266, 3 (1990), 47-60.

late Columbia University professor Edward Said, author of the 1978 book “Orientalism,” accused Lewis of “demagoguery and absolute ignorance,” and more recent critics have accused him of fanning the flames of Islamophobia<sup>4</sup>. In 2012, Lewis Bernard said according to the Chronicle of Higher Education: «for some, I am a great genius. For others, I am the devil incarnate»<sup>5</sup>.

Regarding the above, the return of Islam represents a danger for the West, according to Lewis Bernard, who calls to treat Islam and Muslims with violence, because they do not know democracy and deserve these deals. This serious prejudice against Muslims comes from an anti-Islamic mentality. Thus, objectivity is absent in his writings and seminars which represent a fierce attack against Islam and Muslims; using an easy-to-understand style to reach a large audience. The character of the university researcher is absent since it relies on historical events well selected to support his idea to direct public opinion towards the desired objective, and then the generalization of his judgment on Muslims throughout history. Naturally, events limited in time and space are not generalized to all societies before and after! Its interpretation of all events is based on the clash of civilizations between Muslims and the West, thus confirming the inevitability of the conflict between the two parties!<sup>6</sup>. It also relies on systematic lying, that is, lying in its pretensions and presenting its lies in a way that is difficult to verify. He aims to give a bad image of Islam and Muslims. For example in the statement: “Most Muslims are not fundamentalists and most fundamentalists are not terrorists, but most terrorists of our time are Muslims and are proud of their identity”<sup>7</sup>, if the first and second premises were acceptable, the conclusion would not be, because it contradicts the statistics published by the FBI. If we go back to the official website of the FBI, the percentage of terrorism in the country between 1980 and 2005 committed by Muslims is insignificant as you can see in that diagram<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Daphna, Berman. “Revered and Reviled: Bernard Lewis”. *Moment*. (September-October 2011), 1-8. <https://momentmag.com/revered-and-reviled-bernard-lewis/3/>

<sup>5</sup> Hakan. “Bernard Lewis: éminent historien du Moyen-Orient, est décédé à l’âge de 101 ans”. *TURKIE NEWS*. (mai 22, 2018). <https://www.turquie-news.com/bernard-lewis-eminent-historien-du-moyen-orient> Daphna, Berman. “Revered and Reviled: Bernard Lewis”. *Moment*. (September-October 2011), 1-8.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, Bernard, “The Roots Of Muslims Rage”, 56-60.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, Bernard. *Azmat al Islam*. Tran.: Hazim Malik Muhsin. (Bagdad: Dar wa maktabat Adnan. ed. 1), 141.

<sup>8</sup> The FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation

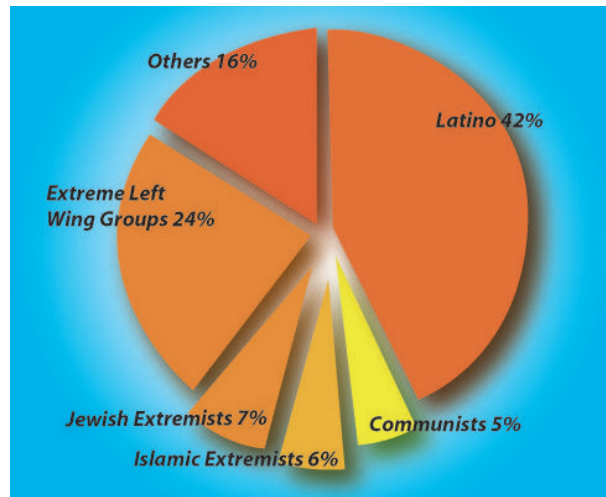


Figure 1. The percentage of terrorism in USA between 1980 and 2005.

What is strange is that some not only rely on lies but also justify the use of non-authentic hadiths, as Nuldkeh says: “... But the invented hadith may contain a certain truth...”<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, he rejects authentic hadiths because they do not serve his point of view. This attitude has nothing to do with logical reasoning; it had to accept what is accurate and deny what is not.

The echo of the western attack on religious discourse in certain Arab media

Echoing Orientalist thinking, he found in the Arab world those who appealed to the need to renew religious discourse and to purge the religious heritage of everything that opposed human rights, calling it terrorist thought. Since then, the *daichism*<sup>10</sup> accusation has spread to every thought that adheres to the Islamic conception. Some question Al-Bukhari and his *Sabeeh*, and others deny or misinterpret the peremptory judgments contained in the Holy Quran. Thus, a current was born that aims to attack the Islamic heritage, starting with the Holy Quran claiming its historicity, and the authenticity of the *Sunnab*. It’s about the Quranic<sup>11</sup>, modernism<sup>12</sup>, and secularism<sup>13</sup>.

*.Tarikh al Quraan*. (Hildshayim- Zurich- New York: Dar al Nashr Jurj Almaz. ed. 1, 2000), 15 .Nuldkeh, Theodor 9

<sup>10</sup> *Daich*, is an abbreviation of a group that wants to build an Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. It has used violence to achieve its ends. He was rejected by the whole world except some who believe like them.

<sup>11</sup> The Quranics are a group that claims to understand the Holy Quran without returning to any other source like the *Sunnab* or the explanations of the scholars of Islam. Thus, they reject all studies of Muslims. They appeared around 1900 in India. The result is the dissemination of knowledge that makes no sense. Thus, all judgments that are not in the Holy Quran are invalid. The *Sunnab* that does not have its origin in the Holy Quran is not accepted. BAKHACH, Khadim Hussein Ilahi. *Al-Quraanun wa chobobotobom banla al-Sunnab*. (Saudi Arabia: Maktaba al-Sadiq, 2000), 19-24.

<sup>12</sup> Religious modernism is a movement of the late nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, its aim is to harmonize Christian doctrine with the philosophy and science of the modern era, and which favoured the subjective, sentimental and historical interpretation of many religious contents. According to Diccionario de la lengua española. For more information, see for example: Pascendi, Dominici Gregis. “CARTA ENCÍCLICA”, (8 de septiembre 1907), 39-40. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikisource/es/4/4f/Pascendi\\_Dominici\\_gregis.pdf](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikisource/es/4/4f/Pascendi_Dominici_gregis.pdf) JOSE, María Martínez. 2008. “Modernismo literario y modernismo religioso: encuentros y desencuentros en Ruben Dario”. *Cuadernos del CILHA*. Vol.10. no.1, (ene./jun. 2009), 38-57.

<sup>13</sup> According to Charles Taylor, the Canadian philosopher, born in 1931: “secularity consists in the decline of religious belief and practices, in the alienation of people from God and in the absence of church”. TAYLOR, Charles. “La era secular”. (Barcelona: Gedisa Editorial. 2014), T1, p. 19. <https://www.gedisa.com/promo/DossierLaerasecular.pdf>

## Mohammad Shahrur and religious discourse

In Syria, a person who has nothing to do with Islamic sciences, engineer Shahrur Mohammad, wrote about so many topics related to Islam; claiming to have brought a new jurisprudence. Thus, the Hijab, for him, is nothing more than a purely social concept...<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, the Holy Quran mentions it, on three occasions, as a duty (24/31, 33/53, 33/59). It has three basic functions: (1) Conceal private body parts. (2) Avoiding sexual seduction in public. (3) Identify the person as Muslim<sup>15</sup>. Each religion mentions how to dress. In Islam, there are directives to avoid creating sedition by showing the beauty of women to outsiders. It is a way to avoid adultery or other abuses. Shahrur pretended that it is only a social dress, that is, that you can change at any time to wear a bikini to bathe. It is clear that Shahrur targets people who like to see naked women. It must be remembered that ideas make changes in societies. Thus, Shahrur tries to influence the mentalities of certain Muslims and succeeded with a group that fascinates him with that way of life.

Alcohol is allowed according to Shahrur, pretending that the Holy Quran only mentions a council to Muslims that would be better to get away from him, but drunkenness is forbidden<sup>16</sup>. As for the Holy Quran, when he mentioned wine in (4/90-92), it was not to give advice, but an order to avoid approaching the wine. That's stronger than talking about their ban. Adultery is allowed, it is a consensual relationship... It is allowed for a single mother to have a child of her own if she wants to<sup>17</sup>. With that, Shahrur does not speak of Islam, but of his ideas, because it is clear that adultery is illicit in Islam. In order not to fall into it, it is forbidden to approach it (17/32) and there is a definite punishment for whoever commits it (24/2-3). Those opinions find people who can accept them because they want to live like this.

Shahrur, therefore, appeals to a contemporary reading of the Holy Quran that is not subject to the controls of the *ULAMA*, but rather subject to the understanding of each. Each person can interpret the Holy Quran according to what he understands. Those who read his books will find that he is far from interpreting the Holy Quran according to the criteria of the *ULAMA*. He interprets the Quranic and prophetic texts to his liking to spread nakedness, adultery, alcohol, and more... hence the danger of the media and its abusive use in the religious sphere.

<sup>14</sup> SHAHRUR, Muhammad. *Nahwa usul jadidat lil'fiqh Al-Islami: fiqh Al-Mar'a (al wasiat- Al-Irth- Al-Qiwamah- Al-Taeadudiab- Al-Libas)*. (Syria, Damascus: Al-Ahali liltibaeat walnashr waltawziea. ed. 8, 2000), 378.

<sup>15</sup> Amdouni, Hassan. *Le hijab de la femme musulmane*. (Casablanca: Najah el Jadida. 2001), 38-46. <https://www.muslim-library.com/dl/books/fr2539.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVENWrWQ3cE>

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yXyBIbnj\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yXyBIbnj_M)

### Mohammad Talbi and religious discourse

Mohammad Talbi, from Tunisia, whose specialty is Islamic history, from the Sorbonne University and president of the International Association of Quranic Muslims, calls to limit himself to the Holy Quran to understand it... He mentioned that he founded the Association for two reasons: (1) The renewal of religious culture. (2) The abolition of *charia'a* (Islamic jurisprudence).

Mohammad Talbi stated that there is nothing in the Holy Quran that forbids a woman to go out completely naked, that prostitution is allowed “*halal*” and that what a woman can get out of it is allowed as well. What is illicit “*haram*” is forcing her to do this... The Holy Quran for him, in its entirety, is prayer and there is none of that in it... The jurisprudence was not elaborated until the second century after the migration of the Prophet Mohammad, with Al-Shafi'i. Muslims lived without law from the age of the Prophet to the age of Al-Shafi'i. Anyone who wanted a judgment, believe a *hadeeth*. Abu Nawas<sup>18</sup> forged a *hadeeth* with his chain of valid narrators. That's how they created the *hadeeth*...<sup>19</sup>.

Mohammad Talbi's words are not based on a serious academic study, rather they are prejudices to present an opinion that points to a new reading of religion away from the recognized principles... The *ULAMA* have taken out of the Holy Quran and the prophetic *Sunnah* the judgments jurisprudential. Some judgments are due to *Jitihad* and may be changed according to the needs recognized by Islam. All societies are governed by laws, otherwise, you would be dealing with a society governed by the laws of the jungle. Given its importance, Napoleon is accompanied by a scientific commission in Egypt to study its heritage and Islamic jurisprudence to establish a right for France<sup>20</sup>. This means that Muslims have deeply studied the laws governing the Muslim nation, so they influenced Western studies.

Moreover, the Holy Quran is not only a cult, as Mohammad Talbi claims, but it deals with everything related to life. There are different themes in the Holy Quran, you can divide them into seven thematic blocks as Mahmoud Chaltût said: (1) The Faith. (2) Morality. (3) Meditation on the kingdom, the heavens, and the creation of the world, to strengthen faith in Allah (God). (4) Stories of ancestors to show how Allah treats the righteous and spoilers of His creation. (5) Warnings and warning against sin. (6) Many practical laws and orders of the Holy Quran that Muslims should follow<sup>21</sup>. That shows that what Talbi wants has nothing to do with reality.

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<sup>18</sup> Abu Nawás is a poet, known as a master of all genres of contemporary Arabic poetry. He died between 814 and 816 A.D. It has nothing to do with Islamic sciences. For more information, see: Anna, Gill. “Entre el delito y el deleite: la traducción del universo báquico de Abu Nawas”. *Quaderns. Rev. tran.* No. 16 (2009), 1-17. <https://raco.cat/index.php/QuadernsTraduccio/article/view/139951/191130>

<sup>19</sup> Video with the title: Mohamed Talbi: la vérité. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaAzkuN0lpY>

<sup>20</sup> Gustave, Le Bon”. *Hadarato Al Arab*. Tran.: Adil Zeitar. Egypt: Wakala Al-Sahafa wa Al-Nachr, 2018, 580, Maria, Luisa Ortega Gálvez. “La construcción científica del mediterráneo: las expediciones francesas a Egipto, Morea y Argelia”. *Hispania*. (1996), Vol. 56, No. 192, 85, Ben Khadda, Hamza. *ATHARO AL-FIQH AL-MALIKI FI AL-QANUN AL-FARANCI*. doctoral thesis. (Algiers: Abu Bakr Belkayed University. 2017), 15-18.

<sup>21</sup> Mahmoud Chaltût. *Al Islam: aquida wa shariaa*. Egypt: Dar al-Shuruq, (2001), 479-481.

His claim that Muslims rely on characters like Abu Nawas to convey the hadith is far from true. The Sages of the *hadeeth* have a strict approach to accepting narratives, stipulate in the narrator be trustworthy (*Thiqah*), and reliable in their ability to preserve that narrative, that the narrative chain (Isnad) is connected (*Muttasil*) and without hidden harmful defects<sup>22</sup>. Muhammad Talbi has nothing to do with this science (*Ulum Al-Hadith*), therefore he failed to assimilate this subject. Moreover, because these ideas alien to the constants of the Islamic religion find popularity among some people, they regard this as diligence and enlightenment emanating from a reformer of Islamic culture.

#### Modernism and secularism in the face of religious discourse

Modernists and secularists try to reconcile Islam with contemporary values. They criticize its fundamental sources for this purpose and what they believe contradicts human rights, they do not accept it pretending that the Koranic orders cannot be applied today. Thus, the Koranic texts, for them, have the characteristic of historicity. In this way, they give an alien image of Islam. They interpret the Holy Quran as they please using hermeneutics. However, to what extent is it correct.

#### Mohammad Arkoun and religious discourse

Mohammad Arkoun (1920-2010), is a modernist whose project is to reconsider and criticize the Islamic heritage through the tools of historical, linguistic, semiotic, and anthropological criticism<sup>23</sup>. Consider, also, in his book (Questions in the criticism of the religious mind - how do we understand Islam today?)<sup>24</sup>. Contemporary Islam is a product of the historical practice of human beings, so it evolves and changes<sup>25</sup>. In this sense, Arkoun speaks of Religious Thought<sup>26</sup> and the critical mind<sup>27</sup> to arrive at this opinion:

“Religious truth is relativized like all other types of truth; it needs to be criticized in an evolving context. Anthropological criticism develops this approach of truth towards the cognitive system based on the postulates of the enlightened mind...”<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Mekki, Klaina. 1995. “Daeaim Al-Manhaj Al-Hadithi, aw difaeo Al-Muslimin ean Al-Sunnah”. Tétouan: Matbaeat al Hidayah, ed. 1, (1995), 60-68.

<sup>23</sup> ARKOUN, Mohammed. "Clarifier le passé pour construire le futur". Tran by: Bénédicte Muller. (*Hiver*, (1996), 29.

<sup>24</sup> Personal translation of the title of the book. Without the mention of the press year. In Arabic: (*Qadaya fi naqdi al-aql al-dini. ¿Kayfa nafhamo al-islam al-yanm?*). ARKOUN, Mohammed. Ibid, 27.

<sup>25</sup> Arkoun, Mohammed. Ibid, 134-136. See also: Dialogue with Arkoun: La pensée islamique contemporaine, (2002). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCoIDyWWHVI>

<sup>26</sup> Arkoun says that religious reason seeks coherent explanations of religious themes, from oral or written sources, linked to archaic or modern and “rationalist” societies. ARKOUN, Mohammed. Ibid, 27.

<sup>27</sup> Arkoun mentions that Critical Thinking is never totally absent, even in contexts strictly controlled by religious orthodoxy... Philosophy is now replaced in this task by various scientific disciplines. Theology itself increasingly integrates in its elaborations the indisputable positions and methodologies of Critical Thought. Arkoun, Mohammed. Ibid, 27.

<sup>28</sup> Arkoun, Mohammed. Ibid, 27.

Thus, religion is for Arkoun a social phenomenon that is studied according to the changes that occur in societies. Political, economic and cultural factors influence their image. In conclusion: Religions will continue to be perverted in ideological systems destined to gain more power; moral sermons will mobilize false consciousness to reproduce alienating “virtues”<sup>29</sup>. The renovation would opt for modernism for him.

#### Islam Behary and religious discourse

Another example is Islam Behary who prepared a program based on four points: (1) Individual responsibility in the field of religious thought. That is, the individual need not seek advice from anyone in the religious sphere. (2) Reconstructing religious thought to produce completely new results. (3) What human thought produces does not bring holiness. (4) What it provides falls under “this is my opinion”. That is why, on its platform, it criticized the Islamic heritage and considered it the cradle of terrorism. His project is to attack the sources of Islam, and the writings of the *ULAMA*, and advocate a new conception of religion in the name of enlightening thought<sup>30</sup>.

This person is not a specialist in religious studies, but he began to criticize religious discourse according to his opinions. He wants to change Islamic jurisprudence according to his views. Thus, all *ULAMA* books should be avoided. It can already be seen that some who negatively spoke of religious discourse are not experts in the Islamic religion. The discourse used by them is not reasonable, but a personal discourse that is not related to religion. These researchers try to study the Holy Quran as if it were a human product that can only be accepted at a given time taking into account social changes. Otherwise, the jurisprudence will have to be changed to be appropriate to the new human rights<sup>31</sup>. Such a speech always causes misunderstanding and sometimes extremism on both sides. This prompts us to reflect on how to solve the issue to avoid future problems in Arab and global societies. It is certain that far from any extremism there will be national and international peace, therefore extremism has no religion.

### ***The Call To Renew Religious Discourse***

#### The Need To Renew Religious Discourse

The Islamic religion relies on its sources to govern religious, social, and cultural life. Its sources are the Holy Quran, the *Sunnah*, the consensus (*ijmāʿ*) and deduction by analogy (*qiyās*) or deductive reasoning (*ijtihād*). This *ijtihād* was necessary because of the new problems that arose with the lack of a specific trial. Over time, schools of legal thought (*madhāb*) were founded that follow a methodology determined in jurisprudence. Studying its evolution, it can be seen that it has passed through stages: (1) Foundation. (2) Establishment. (3)

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<sup>29</sup> Arkoun, Mohammed. Ibid, 30.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Bousala-Usus Al-Tanuiri (21/01/2018). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QK5tCT57RU>

<sup>31</sup> Al-Bousala-Usus Al-Tanuiri (21/01/2018). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QK5tCT57RU>

Construction. (4) Flowering. (5) Consolidation. (6) Stagnation and decline.

Upon reaching the sixth stage, renewal was necessary to be able to solve the new problems occurring in society based on Islamic principles. That call, at first sight, is an important issue, it means solving the challenges of the time to present a discourse that is appropriate to the recipients. Thus, this concept is acceptable, it is narrated in the *hadeeth*: “At the beginning of every century Allah will send to this Ummah someone who will renew its religion”<sup>32</sup>. This could be achieved through *ULAMA*, grammarians, linguists, jurists, or others<sup>33</sup>. The renewal of the religious discourse of the *ULAMA* viewpoint “Renewing religion” does not mean changing it and proposing a new religion, but rather the rebirth of the *Sunnah* and the elimination of heresy by those who are qualified for it<sup>34</sup>.

Dr. Fahd Edin Al-Udah insisted on this subject and spoke of the renewal of religious discourse and religion. Some Muslims misunderstand religion because of social habits. The role of *ULAMA* would be to rectify their beliefs<sup>35</sup>. As for Dr. Abdullah Rushdy, he believed that the renewal of religious discourse was due to previously unknown events. The role of the *ULAMA* is to dismantle these facts to clarify religious opinions, such as the issue of surrogacy, embryo storage, road signs, etc. Also, renew the discourse so that it is well assimilated, and corrects misunderstood perceptions. While the laity wants to develop new concepts and beliefs away from religion<sup>36</sup>.

It is known that religion contains definitive principles that do not tolerate any change or *Ijtihād*, as is the case with the Faith, the permitted “*halal*” and the illicit “*haram*”, which have been explicitly stated in the Holy Koran and the prophetic *Sunnah*. Some jurisprudential judgments and fatawa are fruits of *Ijtihād* and that can be changed over time... Al-Shafi’i himself has reconsidered several judgments he has rendered. Jurisprudence takes into consideration the real and scholars of jurisprudence must take this into account in the *Ijtihād*. The claim that the *ULAMA* of jurisprudence were not inclined to renewal is far from correct because this occurred from the earliest age! They also wrote books about the renovators, even if not in detail<sup>37</sup>.

Given the importance of the subject, some Sages consecrate chapters for the *Ijtihād*. There are also Centers that study the Collective *Ijtihād* to deal with the problems of our day. In the following, the councils dealing with the subject are mentioned:

<sup>32</sup> Abu Dawud, Sulayman Ben Al-Asheath Al-Sijistani. *Sunan Abu Dawud*. (Siria: Dar Al-Risalah Al-Eilmiah. 4/512 *Hadeeth* No. 4291. Tran.: Nasiruddin Al-khattab, ed. 1, (Ryadh: Darussalam, (2009).

<sup>33</sup> Al-Sakhawi, Jalal Al-Din Muhammad Ben Abdelrahman. *Al maqasid al hasanah fi bayan katbir min al-abadith almushtahirah ealaa al’alsinab*. (Bayrut: Dar Al-Kitaab Al-Arabi, ed. 1, 1985), 204.

<sup>34</sup> Shams Al-Haq al Eathim Abadi. *Eavn Al-Maebud, Sharb Sunan Abu Dawud*. (Bayrut: Dar al Kutub al Eilmiah. ed. 1, 1990), 11/260-263.

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2L\\_GzaDZCPk&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2L_GzaDZCPk&t=3s) (video by Dr. Al-Udah on what would be the renewal of religion?).

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VX91FeImGZk> (video by Abdullah Rushdy on the distortion of religious discourse and secular enlightenment / Tahrifo Al-Khitab Al-Dini wa attanwir al-ilmani).

<sup>37</sup> Bustamy, Muhammad Said. *Mafhumo Tajdidi Al-Din*. (Saudi Arabia: Markaz al-Taasil Lidirasat wal Bohuth. 2015), 17-19.



- 1 The Islamic Research Academy in Cairo in 1961, led by the sheikh of Al-Azhar, was composed of fifty experienced academic members representing all Islamic doctrines.
- 2 The Islamic Fiqh Academy of the Muslim World League in Makkah Al Mukarramah, was created in 1398.
- 3 The Fiqh Council of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Jeddah during the third Summit Conference of the Islamic Countries in 1401.
- 4 The Fatwa Committee of Al-Azhar, to control the fatawa.
- 5 The Council of Superior Sages in Saudi Arabia.
- 6 The Standing Committee on Research and Iftae in Saudi Arabia.
- 7 The Association of Moroccan Scholars.
- 8 The Superior Scientific Council in Morocco, chaired by the Prince of Believers.
- 9 Al-Muhammadiyah League in Morocco.
- 10 The Fatwa and Charía'a Research Sector in Kuwait.

In addition, there are other Councils in the Western world to issue *fatawa* based on what happens in those countries and to study the problems that arise collectively. This means that the Sages study together the issues that affect society with their relationship with the Islamic religion to resolve social changes. Thus, the *fatawa* would not be the fruit of the efforts of a single person, but of a group of experts in religion who can ask experts in other specialties for help to better understand the cases that are studied in social and spiritual life. Therefore, the intense efforts of Muslims to control the *fatawa* will allow the stability of the Muslim nation without involving it in unnecessary discussions. Some channels deal with religious discourse, sometimes in the form of live or remote debates<sup>38</sup>. These debates are very important for the development of religious consciousness. Some interested people have created channels to criticize books or ideas. There is no doubt that the method used to rectify the way of thinking is a renewal.

#### The renewal of the religion discourse of opposition point

The call to renew religious discourse has also been launched by parties that have a negative attitude toward religion and religiosity. As mentioned earlier in that study, Muhammad Talbi stated that he had specified his intentions, in the law of the Association he founded, two principles: the first is the renewal of religious culture. The second is the abolition of charía'a.

This approach is very clear in the books of many who speak of the renewal of religious discourse. The need to purify heritage books from what they consider an insult to human rights appeals to hate speech, violence, and terrorism. Some dared to tell the Prophet's

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<sup>38</sup> Al-Mustakillah channel for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQzJJQx6yEU>

messages to the kings as terrorist messages! Several videos have been published by some on YouTube to criticize Sahih Al-Bukhari<sup>1</sup>, the Symbols of the Nation and the Islamic Heritage. For them, renewal consists in rejecting everything that contradicts their opinions. In the same sense, the Korans in their contemporary readings of the Holy Quran reject the *Sunnah*, while it shows the implementation of certain judgments of the Holy Quran: How to make a prayer? What is the value of *Zakab*? How to perform the Hajj rituals? etc.

The laity and modernists also found fertile ground to claim the separation between religion and life, so religion would be a personal matter. What is at stake for them is related to the Arab Renaissance Discourse<sup>39</sup>. It is noted that this speech is Western. They claim freedom of belief, expression, and conduct... With freedom of belief, there is the possibility of apostasy... With freedom of expression, one can reject the *Sunnah*, Islamic law, defamation of the symbols of the nation and the interpretation of the Holy Quran according to a modernist vision, etc. Some have dared even to oppose Allah... In the freedom of conduct, we find those who choose the right to dispose of their body and not to fulfill *Ramadan* in public...

Secularism in the Arab world used a method called enlightened religious thought.<sup>40</sup> Some lay people addressed the question of religion without declaring their hostility towards it. Thus, calls were made through various media for the renewal of religious discourse and reject everything that contradicts international laws and human rights under the pretext of the historicity of the religious text. Renew the religious discourse pretending to rely on the objectives of the trials (Maqasid) according to their whims. They then claim that these goals can be achieved with another trial that is suitable for human rights! In this way, all legal rulings would be changed and Muslims would be oriented towards a law outside Islamic law.

Ali Abderrazeq represents a typical example of the separation of religion and worldliness in his book on Islam and the origins of government<sup>41</sup>. He wrote in his premises that: (1) Religion cannot be separated from the mind that receives it, understands it, and applies it. (2) It cannot be separated from the local and international, cultural and social environment<sup>42</sup>. Systems and doctrines evolve, and so should religion. He also pointed out that Islam in its theoretical and applied history is the result of several interactive factors: (1) Principles are strict but flexible. (2) A particular environment and mentality. (3) Through the interaction of Islam with time and place, the concept of religion and its application is produced<sup>43</sup>. Thus, the case law evolves according to the evolution of the societies: if the

<sup>39</sup> Harb, Ali. 1995. *Al-Taawil wal haqiqa (gra'at tawiliyah fi Al-Thaqafah Al-Earabiah)*. (Bayrut: Dar Al-Tanwir. ed. 2, 1995), 187, and Abu Zayd, Nasr Hami. *Al-nasr wal'Sultab Al-Haqiqiah (Iradato Al-Maerifab wa Iradato Al-Maymanah)*. (Casablanca- Bayrut: Al Markaz al thaqafii Al-Earabi. ed. 4, 2000), 13-66.

<sup>40</sup> Mabrouk, Muhammad Ibrahim. *Tazyif al islam wa ukdhubato al fikr al islamii Al-Mustanir*. (Cairo: Dar Thabit. 1991), 25.

<sup>41</sup> Abdurrazeq, Ali. *Al islam wa usulo Al-Hokm*. Egypt: Edition Egypt. Ed. 2. (1925), 103.

<sup>42</sup> Abdurrazeq, Ali. Ibid, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Abdurrazeq, Ali. Ibid, 35.

interest changes, the judgment changes without the need to change the text. The interest of society determines the religious concept. Thus, religion is considered by it a social phenomenon that can evolve.

### ***Discussion***

The call to renew the religious discourse of this view has received the support of influential actors at the international level to bring about social change and divert its orientation. Some media took part in this speech. This spread during the “Arab Spring”.

The rhetoric of these people in their protests portrays Muslims as terrorists in the media. The image has a great influence on the general opinion of others than the word<sup>44</sup>. When it is used unfairly, dialogue is not accepted. However, all this does not prevent us from reflecting on this discourse to be updated and benefit from the scientific knowledge available in the framework of the presentation of a discourse adapted to the people of our time. A discourse that does not change the *chari’a*, but preserves its constants.

Judgments vary according to circumstances depending on emerging needs. There are new topics that require an in-depth study according to an Islamic vision such as the case of new financial transactions and the relationship with the West in the social safeguard at both national and international levels, etc. *Ijtihād*, as Dr. Qaradawy said in his visual lecture, is important for solving new issues that arise in life in general. Facts change, but Quranic and prophetic texts are limited. Therefore, the *ULAMA* must investigate to analyze them to present suitable solutions<sup>45</sup>.

Thus, it is clear that the renewal of religious discourse in the media must take into account some elements:

- 1 The exploitation of modern scientific facts to present a good speech.
- 2 The knowledge of the other before entering into a dialogue with him, as well as his mentality, for a correct choice of appropriate means for communication.
- 3 A good choice of words and styles in a speech to avoid disagreements.
- 4 Training to not become emotional if the speaker offends you. Your mission is to release your message without forcing anyone to accept what you believe.
- 5 Teamwork to benefit from the experiences of others in the field of religious discourse.
- 6 The activation of the role of the Islamic Scientific Councils in the field of defense to train preachers with a knowledge of foreign languages, speech style, and laws

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<sup>44</sup> Luz, Ena Pinto Suárez. “CONCEPTOS BÁSICOS E IMPORTANCIA DE LA IMAGEN”. *Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia* 1-9, (2016) .. <https://tecnicasentrevistacun.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/1-conceptos-importancia-y-elementos-de-la-imagen.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMB6GKm3Odk> (video presenting Dr. Qaradawy talking about the *Jitihād*, the use of the mind and the principles of Islamic law / *Al Ijtihād bayna Iemali al-aaql wa dawabit al-sharae al-islami*).

- of the countries in which the speech could take place. Some have had problems with having presented a speech in some countries that they believe that it affects the rights of citizens.
- 7 Training of specialists in the field of emerging problems and how to deal with them.
  - 8 The good assimilation of the religious text and its implementation through *Ijtihād* for a healthy life at the material and spiritual level.
  - 9 The exploitation of good techniques for successful communication. Especially the problem of the cartoon Charlie Hebdo in 2015, which has been the subject of a great debate in France<sup>46</sup>.
  - 10 The presentation of a good image of Islam linking the gesture to the word to avoid duplication in speech.

## Conclusion

The religious discourse was discussed at various levels. Orientalists regard Muslims and their roots as terrorists and describe them as suffering from inferiority to the West... Voices in the Arab world echo those of the West. Thus, there have been attacks on the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah* Prophetic. The renewal of religious discourse was addressed to avoid any extremism. For them, this new discourse criticizes the books of Muslims that include extremism, terrorism, discrimination and violation of human rights, etc. Some have even affirmed the need to abolish *chari'a*, that it does not suit us and that things should be seen differently from that of Islamic jurisprudence. The judgments in the Holy Quran have a historical character, which means that they were suitable for the time and place in which they were revealed. Therefore, they talk about the objectives of these trials (*Maqasid*) to propose others that are not in contradiction with human rights. They also fought the *Sunnah* by denying its authenticity. So, *Sabeeh* Al-Bukhari is the book they had to attack. The call for the rejection of Islamic sentences and the application of secular laws is the subject of the new discourse. Also, some Sages speak of the renewal of religious discourse, but according to an approach that does not contradict the constants of religion and allows the Sages to practice the *Ijtihād*. This coincides with the *hadeeth* of the Prophet: "Allah will raise up for this community at the end of every hundred years the one who renews his religion". For this, a system of Collective *Ijtihād* was established.

It is concluded that everyone speaks of the renewal of religious discourse, but according to a different point of view. The current that attacks religious discourse finds its support in the West in the framework of the defense of human rights and freedoms. Both parties

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<sup>46</sup> See : «Attentat à Paris : François Hollande annonce une journée de deuil national jeudi 8 janvier 2015» France. 24. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JY85JjaibQ>. «Charlie Hebdo» incendié, Guéant dénonce un «attentat», Libération, 2 Novembre 2011. [https://www.liberation.fr/medias/2011/11/02/charlie-hebdo-incendie-gueant-denonce-un-attentat\\_771918](https://www.liberation.fr/medias/2011/11/02/charlie-hebdo-incendie-gueant-denonce-un-attentat_771918)

used the media to broadcast their speeches, generating confusion and distortion of beliefs in societies. The spread of such offensive discourse would lead to extremism on both sides. In order to put this issue back on track, it is recommended to put it back on track. If in each specialty only specialists discuss scientific topics as references, the same will have to be done concerning the renewal of religious discourse to avoid all this chaos. Thus, social and spiritual stability will be maintained in Muslim countries. Finally, everyone talks about renewing the discourse on different topics. It would be important for it to be a discourse that allows guiding the welfare of societies at the social, political, economic, or religious level... Using the right speech to avoid radicalism... Extremism has no religion and is not a good idea for any intelligent community. Would it be difficult to keep your head on your back?! It is a call for a proper speech for more effective communication.

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