

# **Contemporary Islamic Presentational Approach: Distortions, Confusions and Superficialization**

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The scholars, thinkers, educators and the educated elite of the Ummah are called upon to take a serious and comprehensive stand in order to review the Ummah's general contemporary culture, thought and presentations in order to identify and diagnose the defects; and in order to reshape the thought, the methodology, the culture and the **Presentational Approach**. Through this, the Ummah can regain its ideological, cultural and educational well-being.

## **Problem of Presentational Approach between Ideological and Political**

There is no doubt that the attention paid by the Centre for Islamic Research and Studies to the issue of Islamic presentational approach in this stage of the Ummah's contemporary journey is, ideologically, of utmost importance. For, this Ummah has been beset by weakness, disunity and ignominy it has never experienced before throughout its history. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the enlightened Muslim scholars, thinkers, educators and educated elite to seriously feel a sense of responsibility. This is because; the presentational approach directed towards the Ummah, is not up to the required standard. The presentation is supposed to be accurate and effective diagnosis of the Ummah's situation and serve as a guide to the remedy for its diseases, and as an illuminating hope for its future and the future of its coming generations. As long as this presentation has not risen up to this desired standard, it will remain – in its substance – mere idle talk that has contributed immensely to the degeneration, weakness and backwardness of the Ummah.

Members of this Ummah are not bound together by a single race, colour, region or language, yet they share in common the misfortune of backwardness, disunity, corruption, weakness and downfall of public institutions. The only interpretation for this sorry situation is the common culture shared by peoples of this Ummah and the way this culture addresses members of this Ummah and its generations.

In spite of the difference among the Muslims scholars, thinkers and reformers that the Ummah is suffering from, at least, a thousand-year old existential crisis, the major problem is what Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali has diagnosed in his two great works: '*Ihya Ulum ad-Din*' and '*Tahafut al-Falasifah*'. In the first work, he made it clear that the Ummah's religious culture and thought were suffering from a crisis; and in the second work, he indicated that the Ummah's philosophical and civilizational culture and thought were suffering from a crisis.

Since that time (a thousand years ago) until our present time, the Ummah continues to suffer from crises that kept increasing with time though its efforts in confronting the challenges of these crises kept diminishing. This is in spite of the occurrences that have taken place in its history, from that time till today, such as emergence of reform movements all over the places. Although, the Ummah has undoubtedly benefitted from these movements, they have certainly not awakened the Ummah; neither have they stopped the degeneration of its situation. This means that the cultural crisis and the crisis of Islamic presentational approach – in its religious and universal aspects –

are still there and the reform efforts made so far have not been not deep enough, neither have they met the desired level. If it indicates anything, it is the fact that there is still a long way to go as far as reform efforts are concerned.

This project is heavily dependent on the effort of the reformers. There is a dire need of giving intellectual aspect of the reform a wider role so that it could partake in reforming the Ummah's thought and culture, and the resultant intellectual, social, psychological, sentimental and educational distortions that made the greatest part of the Ummah's thinking – in its substance, impact and practicality – mere idle talks. For, this thinking emanates, in most of its aspects, from distorted thought and culture, and distorted mentality and sentiment in which words are not matched by action.

The present-day reform movements' focus on politics, means and tools are not but a mere attempt at escaping from confronting the reality with required passion and courage. This phenomenon is as a result of the hindrances created and used to cover the Ummah's cultural deficiency and methodological inefficiency of its thinking and education in the general inherited Islamic intimidatory presentational approach.

The political action movement alone, without reviving the waning Islamic thought and sentiment, cannot solve the Ummah's problems neither can it really help in developing its energy and capabilities. As a result, depending on the political action alone – in the light of the current cultural and universal struggles – will only lead, in many cases, to unintentional energy sapping and wasted efforts. And the consequence will be continuous degeneration of the Ummah and increase in the crises it is suffering from.

Hence, a chance must be created for ideological, intellectual, educational and sentimental aspect to play its role in the reform project and intensely and courageously present effective and sound Islamic vision for the Ummah. This vision should properly represent the Ummah's situation, guide to ways by which this situation can be corrected, and give the Ummah a hope in the future, overcoming – in the course of that – cultural hindrances and intimidatory orations that have their origins in lethargic ages in which overemphasis was laid on texts that are taken in their superficial senses and quoted out of context, thereby misusing the religion by turning it to 'sacred subjugation' from its being 'sacred guidance'.

Therefore, actualization of educational and intellectual reform, and subsequently, the reform of Islamic presentational approach, is the foundation and the starting point towards the Ummah's reclaiming of its creedal wellbeing, sound ideological methodology and pure intellectual culture and healthy educational attitudes. It is then that the Ummah can reclaim its Islamic civilizational and cultural impetus.

Consequently, one of the most important reform efforts of this stage is that political reformers should actually give a chance to ideological criticism to play its role in the reform project; and to contribute in resuscitating the Ummah's values that had been dead, in awakening the Ummah's latent energies and in giving its excellent impetus a fresh life. This will provide the 'political reformers' the strength, energy and achievement.

Hence, it is pertinent to start from intellectual aspect by understanding the reasons for the failure of intellectual efforts in reforming the '**Modern Islamic Presentational Approach**' and elevating it to the level of the civilizational crisis which the Ummah is currently experiencing. In order to achieve that, it is inevitable to understand the nature of the presentational crisis, the depth of its roots and the elements and

impediments that make solution to the inefficiency of this presentation – up to till today, as a result of the resistance from the rigid traditional thinking and domination of rash superficial ‘political reform’ – one of the most difficult things that should be confronted. This understanding will enable the Ummah put a stop to its own decline, prevent its existential crisis from getting deeper and more complex and protect it against getting weaker, more disunited and more humiliated.

The distortion of the ‘Presentational Approach’ and its negative impacts started – as far as we are concerned – when men of Al-Madinah School were defeated; firstly, by members of the political elite of the racial and tribalistic Arabs; and later, by the racist non-Arabs. It was then that the coffin of the spilt that occurred between the Islamic intellectual elite and the political elite was nailed. This crack and estrangement succeeded in imposing academic inertia on the intellectual elite. The inertia gradually changed the ideology of practical application, independent judgment, reform and creativity – that were the hallmarks of the first generation – into that of a closed textual ideology in which signs of independent judgment were lacking. It became an ideology that was based on imitation whereby, according to some of them, a weak text that is probably not really authentic was given priority over an opinion based on judgment, and weak text was regarded a proof. This was in spite of the fact that the rejected opinion could essentially be an interpretation of objective analysis and a product of a precise general vision, or – in the case where analogical deduction could not produce the result that concurred with the spirit of the Shari‘ah and its general rules – dependent upon *Istihsan*<sup>1</sup> based on consideration of the spirit and goals of the Shari‘ah.

So, this conceptual and intellectual decline should naturally reflect on the type of the presentational approach and its goals, on its impacts on the general Muslim outlook and on the development of a Muslim’s mind, sentiment and personality.

The distortion of the general vision of any people or society is one of the most serious calamities that could befall nations and societies. This is because it represents the framework that activates the Ummah’s concepts, values and efforts. Without the general vision, the society will be like a person who has unique tools for productivity but these tools are a bundle of scattered pieces. However good the quality of the tools may be, they cannot be of any productive use as long as they are not properly arranged and assembled. This is the situation of our values and concepts that are the treasures of our civilization. In spite of our affinity to them, our pride in them and our incessant talk about them, our life is devoid of their proper usage and practical application. For, these concepts and values are different components of a tool that represent the vision of the Ummah. They are meant to be activated in the Ummah’s practical life. Therefore, if the vision is disjointed and distorted, the parts (i.e. the values and concepts that are its components) will lose their effectiveness. They become useless in the life of the Ummah; just like a dismantled tool whose parts are scattered.

Distortion of the presentational in those historical circumstances came as a natural result of the ideology of estrangement that occurred between the intellectual leadership and the political one. This, generally, has nothing to do with the intentions. Hence, the inevitable consequence of transformation of religious oration – from that of idea, thought, reflection, conviction, interaction, practice; expression of effective

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<sup>1</sup> *Istihsan* is the preference given to one rule of Shari‘ah over another due to the former’s presumed preponderance.

general and comprehensive vision that generates an ability to undertake Jihad and independent judgement and reform and creativity, and able to deal effectively with the changes of time and place – into an intimidatory and suppressive oration that emanated from one-sided and partial vision. As a consequence, the presentational approach became distorted, hiding – as a result of intellectual weakness – under the cover superiority of religion. It also led to exaggeration in adhering to the religious texts without purposeful general vision, without comprehending the factors of time and place and without adequately understanding the readings of the text in relation to the universe.

In most of the situations since that time, the Ummah's presentational approach had been based on heaps of weak reports narrated by careless people, fraudsters, storytellers and people with ulterior motives. Equally, it had been based on misinterpretation and confusion of authentic texts that were actually meant – in many cases – for the deniers of the truth, the disbelievers, the arrogant ones and those who waged war against the Muslims. So these distorted and partially quoted texts – as a result of weakness of the intellectual elite who had been made subservient to the political elite – were directed to the generality of the Muslims – who had already been overwhelmed by abject poverty, ignorance and diseases and plagued by the terrorism of the autocratic political elite with their corruption, tyranny, subjugation and oppressions.

That was how it became easy to subject this intimidatory religious oration for the service of the political elite and their personal interests, as well as their ideological, intellectual and sentimental perversions; and the intimidatory religious oration was added to the political terrorism to perfect the project of making life difficult for the Muslim populace and worsening their humiliating situation. The ultimate goal was to make them compliant and weaken their determination to uphold their rights, participate in decision-making in matters affecting them, protect their institutions, formulate policies of their societies, and manage their resources, their nations' wealth and their own efforts through spirit of justice and solidarity.

Since the beginning of the battle of creation of confusion in presentational approach during the era of the Umayyad, the message of Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari (may Allah be pleased with him) – he was an eminent graduate of the school of the Prophetic Message – which he sent to the founder of the Umayyad kingdom did not come in vain. When the then commander of the faithful, Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (may Allah be pleased with him) stood on the pulpit, addressing the Ummah concerning its resources and the Muslims treasury and calling these resources, 'Allah's money', using that term to allude to his sole right to dispose the same, making use of religious formalities. It was then that Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) stood up in opposition and promptly corrected him, having been inspired by sound foundations of the Ummah's universal vision and its noble message. He admonished Mu'awiyah and reminded him of the right that Allah gave to the Ummah concerning its resources and wealth; he reminded him that the Ummah's rulers and their relevant employees were obliged to appropriately manage these resources and return them to their rightful owners; he reminded him of the necessity of engaging in mutual consultation (Shura) with the Ummah concerning them. He said – in words recorded by history and the light and echo of which shall abide forever –: ***“No, it is rather the Muslims' money!”***

Therefore, finding the Ummah today – at the end of a long journey – in a state of division, negativism and backwardness should not be surprising. This is because; its

universal vision has been distorted, its thinking and methodology have sunk to the lowest level, its culture has been tarnished, its institutions have collapsed and the morale and sentiment of its children have been crushed and their sense of pride and honour has grossly declined. Most of the Muslims – as we are witnessing today – have been overwhelmed by selfishness, individualism, lack of sense of collectiveness and solidarity. The view of an average Muslim concerning work and striving in life has actually become negative and devoid of civilizational dimension and spiritual significance. He has become a consuming human being with weak civilizational and leadership impetus. This has led his Ummah to become a marginalised, consuming and weak nation. This pathetic situation is an inevitable result of the distortion of the Ummah's general presentational approach culture. The book of Fiqh is an embodiment of the Ummah's presentational approach culture because it represents the substance of the Muslims' background, their religious concerns and their civilizational identity. It also (directly) addresses the Muslim, not on the basis of his being a member of the Ummah, but on the basis of his being an human individual. That is the role the book of Fiqh is supposed to play.

However, it is unfortunate that it has failed to perform this required role. The reason is that, it is primarily lacking in the general dimension that is relevant to the life of human being. There is no talk, obligation and rulings concerning mutual consultation (Shura), justice, solidarity, thoroughness, and wellbeing and efficiency of the general institutions. Rather, the goal of life has become a mere 'Dhikr' which – in its spiritual meaning – is remembrance and a means of guiding man towards living a righteous and constructive life in this world so that his responsibility of being a successor on the earth could be achieved and the trust assigned him could be discharged. So this 'Dhikr' is termed 'acts of worship'. With that, nothing remained of the matters of life, trust, responsibility, obligations and struggles of this life and making it civilised, thriving and prosperous but contract fatwas terms as 'transactions'.

There has never been a nation whose principles and the very essence of its identity and sentiment has been distorted, that disrespected reasoning, that has been so disunited, weakened and that has suffered negativism and backwardness like our Ummah. This situation is, inevitably, the consequence for any nation whose thinking has declined and general institutions have fallen apart.

The individualism, rigidity and perversion that Islamic thought has been subjected to – and consequently – the distortion of the general Islamic civilizational vision, its cultural misrepresentation and muddle of its presentational approach, have led to the weakness of its ruling class. As a result, the ruling elite became uninformed – since a long time – on how to deal with those who opposed its policies and held divergent opinions. The only means it knew was policy of deterrence and suppression, employment of whip and sword and opening of gates of prisons. All this is a result of its lack of a creative and lively intellectual base that could assist it to develop, perform satisfactorily, contain changes and face challenges.

If this political terrorism and the shackles and prisons it created were added to the terrorism of 'religious oration' that deal only with hell, and horrors of the grave and the Day of Resurrection that are awaiting the addressed believers as a punishment for their minor and major sins, we would realise some of the major reasons for the decline of the Ummah's spirit, its hibernation, its negativism, its weakness and its turning away from bearing and constructively implementing its message. We would realise the reasons for the momentary eruptions, which in most cases, are that of wretched

and hopeless people and that disappears in no time. Then another cycle of political, intellectual and religious suppression and terrorism, generating a new round of outbursts that also disappears sooner than later. This is how the historical cycle of outbursts and suppressions continues, deepening the Ummah's crisis and increasing the sufferings of generations of Muslims; sapping the Ummah's energies and concealing its excellent civilizational message meant for the service of humanity.

One of the direct examples that can give the reader a closer understanding of the confusion and distortion that have badly affected the Islamic presentational approach is what I witnessed in an international Islamic conference on Muslim unity. The general lecture was attended by a large crowd and the hall was full to the brim. The topic of the lecture that was about issues concerning the unity of the Ummah seemed to be beyond the knowledge and capabilities of the speaker. The audience found it difficult to get along with his shallow and boring speech. Then suddenly, he changed the topic – without any clear reason – to what he knew best: Talking about death, how the mankind shall meet this inevitable fate and what was awaiting the evil-doers.

I found, in front of myself, a living and startling example of misuse of a reminder speech being turned to intimidatory one. The speaker took the intelligence of those who were in attendance for granted in a failed attempt to take control the hall, influence the audience and cripple their ability to look critically at his speech and admonition and make rational judgment of the same.

Another example of the common and widespread method of making intellectual and religious intimidation and misusing of religious symbols was the one resorted to by one of the Friday preachers in his sermon. The topic was that of physical appearance: keeping beard. However, this speaker did not enough possess information with he could dish out to the audience concerning the wisdom behind keeping beard. Neither did he attempt to convince his listeners by explaining the manifestations of perfection unto which the human nature invites in consideration of the fact that the majority of his listeners were clean-shaved men who believed that the matter was that of outward appearance in addition to the fact that it is a matter whose obligation or otherwise is controversial among the scholars. Nonetheless, the speaker preferred to impose his point of view through terrorizing the listeners by changing this secondary issue that has to do with personal appearance to creedal and fundamental issue that could lead to disobedience and disbelief. He hypothesized that the shavers of their beard were necessarily deniers – not interpreters – of the Sunnah, and that a denier of a Prophet's command is a denier of the religion and the denier of the religion is a disbeliever.

Another example of unconscious intimidation is the sharp tone that we hear and feel in the reading and rereading of some imams of verses of threat as if that is a kind of method through which they could make their message understood. Such a reader would emphasize and reemphasize the threat and intimidation as if he has assumed the role of the Divine Being, addressing his creatures from among the congregation. Such imam or reader is oblivious of the fact that the Divine instruction is directed to every human being: the reader, the listener, the imam and the congregation; and that all the above must read it, reflect on it and listen to it with absolute concentration and rapt attention and that no one is excluded in this. Rather, the imam, the reader or whoever is in such position should realize that verses are addressed to them before anyone else. The correct methodology of Da'wah is for the speaker to firstly address himself by what he says before he addresses others. It is then that his speech can be

impactful through expressions of love, gentle encouragement, sharing the feeling and encouraging of good deed.

However, the problem here is the thinking that still allows – up till today – this kind of presentational approach and teaching, by using texts and employing them in a haphazard way without respecting the intellectual accuracy and comprehensive methodology in which sources of knowledge are integrated, and aspects of the topics being discussed are properly understood in the light of the situations of the society and practical life, and without being able to understand the society's dimensions, priorities and its points of changes.

This intimidatory thinking and methodology lacks sound and effective knowledge. It equally lacks message of love, gentleness, wisdom and sincere pleasant words that reconcile the hearts and stimulate understanding and intelligent mature minds and an able nation.

If the religious and creedal education and culture are characterized by such a presentation that is used to formulate the sentiment and build the Muslim mind, the impact of the religious education, as we witness today in the general situation of the Ummah and its performance, would inexorably be weak and negative. This can be derived and observed in the weak response of the children of this Ummah towards the instructions and sermons being given to them. It could also be felt in a child's sentiments towards these teachings and the methodologies of imparting them, and in his fear concerning them and his sentimental avoidance of them. This is because; such methodologies, in this formative stage, lack the vision of the role of successor on the earth that this Ummah is meant to play as they lack employment of impetuses of love, persuasion and respect needed in the process of producing and educating a Muslim child.

It suffices us here to mention that the Messenger of Allah, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was a successful father, grandfather and teacher. He never smacked a child because he was very gentle and compassionate with kids and young people. In his interactions and contacts with them, he fully realized the natures of their minds and recognized stages of their growth and the type of speeches suitable for their intelligence. That was why he never needed – in his well-informed educational methodology and in his sentimental contact with children – to cause a child to shed even a single drop of tear or to cause pain to any of them by slapping him on the back, throughout his life.

See how he addressed the kid 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him and his father). He did not address him in an intimidating, threatening or chiding manner. He rather addressed him in such a way that would make him place his absolute reliance on Allah and have total faith in Him. He addressed his sentiment through word of love, persuasion and courage. If a person relates with Allah through love and reliance, Allah will protect him; and if his actions, movements and in actions emanate from conviction and love, no one would be able to harm or benefit him except by the will of Allah. In this example, the Prophet, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) addressed the sentiment of Ibn 'Abbas, and this is different from the way he would address an adult. For an adult, his sense of reasoning should rather been addressed so that he could act according to reason and seek means that could help him do so. As a result of addressing his reason, he would need to take necessary precaution and then rely on Allah.



Another example of a “Prophetic Address” to the young people that illustrates his deep understanding of the gateways to their minds is what occurred between him and a young man who had just attained the age of puberty and lost his sleep as a result of the burning urge to satiate himself sexually while he was not capable of getting married. He came to the Prophet, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and requested that he be allowed to engage in illegal sexual intercourse. Those who were present there were annoyed that he could make such a request to the Prophet, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). But he calmed down their anger and commanded them to give the young man a space. He then asked him to come closer.

What concerns us here, educationally, is that he treated the young man gently. He did not address him in an intimidating or threatening way. Neither did he address him mentioning things that are forbidden or the punishment of Hell. This is because; the young man did not come to ask for Islamic ruling on illegal sexual intercourse because he already knew that as one of the things that are known in the religion by necessity, as they say. He came in search of a solution and a way out of a problem he was suffering from.

It is clear that his knowledge of the ruling concerning illegal sexual intercourse did not prevent him from seriously thinking day and night about remedy for the demand of the nature. He was apprehensive of ardors and inclinations of his soul and feared that such apprehension could be forgotten in moments the vision of his soul was clouded, its consciousness faded away and its resistance became weakened. Here, we could observe that the Messenger of Allah, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) – through his sagacious understanding of the natures of human souls – had seen the innermost of the young man’s mind and nature. So he made him his own guard and made his own consciousness his restraint and controller. He stirred up in the young man his own sense of honour and virtue. He asked him as to whether he would be pleased if the illegal sexual intercourse was perpetrated with his mother. The young man answered in nobly pride, “No!” He then asked him if he would be pleased if the illegal sexual intercourse was committed with his sister. Will a great sense of honour, he gave the same negative answer. The same question was repeated to him concerning his paternal or maternal aunt and he gave the same answer that rejected such a shameful act.

The Messenger of Allah, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) then called the attention of the young man to the reality that no noble person should fail to realize: That he should not allow to be done to others what he would not allow to be done to himself. So he made this clear – with all love and respect – as a way of helping him solve his psychological sufferings: All these women are mothers, sisters and aunts.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad recorded in his Musnad (21185) that a young man came to the Prophet, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: “Messenger of Allah! Allow me to engage in illegal sexual intercourse!” The people (present there) turned to him and chided him: “Stop that! Stop that!” But the Prophet, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) asked him to move closer to him, and the young man did. When he sat down, the Prophet asked him: “Do you want it be done with your mother?” He replied: “No, by Allah! May Allah make me your ransom! People would not love that to be done with their mothers!” The Prophet then asked him: “Do you want it be done with your daughter?” He said: “No, by Allah! May Allah make me your ransom! People would not love that to be done with their daughters!” The Prophet said: “Do you want it be done with your sister?” He replied: “No, by Allah! May Allah make me your ransom! People would not love that to be done with their sisters!” The Prophet then said: “Do you like it be done with your paternal aunt?” He said: ‘No, by Allah! May Allah make me your ransom! People would not love that to be done with their paternal aunts!’ The Prophet then asked him: “Do you like it be done with your maternal aunt?” He said: ‘No, by Allah! May Allah

He then supplicated for him; and that was a source of psychological strength and a fortress and a shield for the young man.

In the light of the above, it is clear that “Islamic presentational approach” and the Islamic thought have suffered – and are still suffering – from intellectual schizophrenia between guidance of the religion and natural and universal sciences. This has led to the intellectual weakness, presentational and cultural distortion, warped vision, disintegration of institutions and pulverization of the Muslim’s impetus and sentiment thereby turning him into a human being who has lost the civilizational and guidance momentum and turned the Islamic Ummah into a group of marginalized nations that are immersed in consumerism in a world of action, performance, creativity and leadership.

### **The Islamic Universal Vision is the Key to Solution:**

Indeed, this situation indicates that modern Islamic presentational approach has not really overcome its crisis of distorted vision and the creedal and civilizational foundation of that vision. This presentational approach should have, in the first place, drawn its vision from the primary source, the noble Qur’an, which transcends all times and places. It is the Qur’an that lays out the general civilizational vision for man since the beginning of his creation until the end of this worldly life. Normally, this does not run in contrary to the Prophetic presentational approach in the wisdom of its applications during his time and in the light of the circumstances of time and place of the people of that time and age.

The Islamic thought must also rise above the problems of the earlier Muslims whose time was dedicated to theologies and superstitions as a result of the influence of the extinct Greek civilization or the influence of the Israelite superstitions and tales or as a result of the influence of nations that embraced Islam and brought along with them many of their tribal bigotries and superstitions. This factor has left – until our present day – huge negative impacts in the Ummah’s thought and practices, as we can clearly see; and the impacts of that reflect on the Ummah’s general way of looking at things.

Muslim thinkers must take note of the nature of Islamic creedal, cultural and civilizational set-up, as they need to pay attention to the setups of other nations to avoid getting lost and wander about haphazardly as a result of blind imitation the price of which we have paid in the past as a result of the impacts of Greek civilization and which we are still paying today as a result of our being overwhelmed by the modern Western materialistic civilization which is an antithesis of Islam’s excellent spiritual and vicegerency civilization. As a result of our ideological and sentimental problem, we have remained stupid students and ideologically and civilizational dependent upon Western culture for more than two centuries now.

It is incumbent upon us to abandon – in our thinking and speeches – the mistakes of creating confusion in the “Islamic presentational approach”. We should be aware that such confused thinking and orations are, in many cases, tend to make us methodologically undisciplined, and it creates lack of understanding of the factors of time and place in development of nations and in building of societies and civilizations.

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make me your ransom! People would not love that to be done with their maternal aunts!” The Messenger of Allah, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) then put his hand on him and supplicated: “O Allah! Forgive his sins, cleanse his heart and protect his private parts.” After that, the young man never entertained the idea of perpetrating such a thing.





blessed him with senses of hearing, seeing and speaking; and assigned to every human being the responsibility of making the earth prosperous. He gave man will and power to choose, and make this will and power a trust<sup>1</sup> for building civilization and making use of the good things of the earth as a provision and adornment. The gift of beauty and creativity which He endowed man with are meant to be used to promote truth, justice, compassion, peace, superiority of Allah’s Law. That is the way of Allah and manifestation of the principle of “right is might”. On the contrary, man is obliged not follow the path of aggression, corruption and jungle justice where “might is right” for that is the way of Satan.

This is the divine purpose for which man was created on the earth. As the Qur’an has accurately and correctly expressed, man started his human childhood without even knowing how to hide and bury the dead body of his brother! So humanity started as a child would start his life, in total ignorance. He then starts growing, learning and getting creative. That humanity underwent the same process until it blossomed and matured throughout ages and generations. The essence of change is settlement that occurred on the earth. Allah makes this clear in the glorious Qur’an:

﴿فَعَلَّمَ الْإِنسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَم﴾ ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْنَاهُ الْإِسْمَ الْكَبِيرَ﴾ ﴿لَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عِندَ رَبِّكَ ذُكُرًا مُّثِقًا﴾ ﴿لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَصْنَانًا تَارِقِينَ﴾ ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْنَاهُ الْإِسْمَ الْكَبِيرَ﴾ ﴿لَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عِندَ رَبِّكَ ذُكُرًا مُّثِقًا﴾ ﴿لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَصْنَانًا تَارِقِينَ﴾

**“He brought you forth from the earth and settled you therein.”** (Hud 11:61)

The changes and development continued until man was able to explore the atmosphere and the planets, fly along with birds in the space and swim with fishes in the depth of the seas; and only Allah knows what the new inventions the technology is going to bring out in the future.

The example of humanity in this is like that of an individual human being. His mission in life comes to an end as soon as he has exhausted all that has been destined for him. In the same vein, the existence of humanity comes to an end as soon as its

<sup>1</sup> Allah refers to this trust in this noble verse:

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ﴾ ﴿فَلْيُرْأَىٰ الْإِنسَانُ لِمَ كَفَرَ﴾ ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْنَاهُ الْإِسْمَ الْكَبِيرَ﴾ ﴿لَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عِندَ رَبِّكَ ذُكُرًا مُّثِقًا﴾ ﴿لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَصْنَانًا تَارِقِينَ﴾ ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْنَاهُ الْإِسْمَ الْكَبِيرَ﴾ ﴿لَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عِندَ رَبِّكَ ذُكُرًا مُّثِقًا﴾ ﴿لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَصْنَانًا تَارِقِينَ﴾

**“Truly, We did offer Al-Amânah (the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allâh has ordained) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it (i.e. afraid of Allâh's Torment). But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results).”** (Al-Ahzab 33:72)

And in the following related verses:

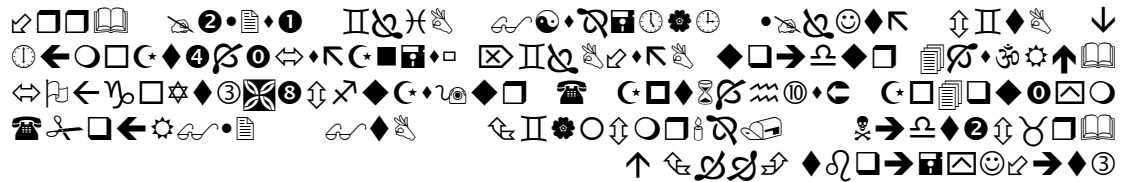
﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْنَاهُ الْإِسْمَ الْكَبِيرَ﴾ ﴿لَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عِندَ رَبِّكَ ذُكُرًا مُّثِقًا﴾ ﴿لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَصْنَانًا تَارِقِينَ﴾ ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْنَاهُ الْإِسْمَ الْكَبِيرَ﴾ ﴿لَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عِندَ رَبِّكَ ذُكُرًا مُّثِقًا﴾ ﴿لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَصْنَانًا تَارِقِينَ﴾

**“By Nafs (Adam or a person or a soul), and Him Who perfected him in proportion; Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him. Indeed he succeeds who purifies his own self (i.e. obeys and performs all that Allâh ordered, by following the true Faith of Islâmic Monotheism and by doing righteous good deeds). And indeed he fails who corrupts his own self (i.e. disobeys what Allâh has ordered by rejecting the true Faith of Islâmic Monotheism or by following polytheism or by doing every kind of evil wicked deeds).”** (Ash-Shams 91:7-10)

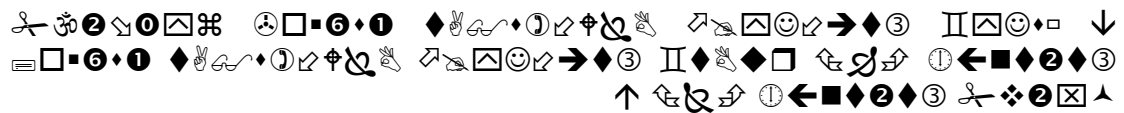
﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْنَاهُ الْإِسْمَ الْكَبِيرَ﴾ ﴿لَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عِندَ رَبِّكَ ذُكُرًا مُّثِقًا﴾ ﴿لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَصْنَانًا تَارِقِينَ﴾ ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْنَاهُ الْإِسْمَ الْكَبِيرَ﴾ ﴿لَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عِندَ رَبِّكَ ذُكُرًا مُّثِقًا﴾ ﴿لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَصْنَانًا تَارِقِينَ﴾

**“Have We not made for him a pair of eyes, And a tongue and a pair of lips? And shown him the two ways (good and evil)? But he has not attempted to pass on the path that is steep (i.e. the path which will lead to goodness and success).”** (Al-Balad 90:8-11)





***“Whoever works righteousness - whether male or female - while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islâmic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter).” (An-Nahl 16:97)***



***“So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it.” (Az-Zalzalah 99:7-8)***

The Messenger of Allah, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If the Hour is being established while one of you is holding a palm and he is able to plant it before the Hour is established, he should (hasten) to do so.”<sup>1</sup>

The human nature is prepared for life, work, creativity, construction, positive manipulation and enjoyment of good things of this world; without causing mischief, improper usage or wastage. This is what the Qur’an explained to man. It is the secrets of which Allah revealed to him in order to strengthen his resolve, and to encourage him to work and be creative, and to construct, manipulate and enjoy – but all that upon guidance and knowledge. This is in order to actualize the nature of man’s gracious spiritual being, to implement the Divine Will in making him a vicegerent on earth, to make him bear the trust, to examine congenial souls and put them in the proper position of honour in the world of spiritual.

As for the souls that are mischievous and evil in reality and in goal, they are also put where they belong. Precious things are put in places of honour and reverence while the place for filthy things is the waste bin. This is to avoid the pure souls being soiled.

Therefore, the Islamic universal and civilizational vision and creed, as taught by the Qur’an, is neither a nuisance nor a burden. Rather, it is for the purpose of achieving natural goals and self-actualization of man and the essence of his existence. It is meant to guide his inclinations in his endeavours, creativity, exploitation of what he is endowed with and his settlement on the earth. All this will be on the way of truth, and upon the guidance of Islamic law of righteousness, justice, kindness and perfection – in response to the inclinations of light and spirituality, inherent in his nature. Allah says:



***“So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you avoid justice.” (An-Nisaa 4:135)***

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<sup>1</sup> Recorded by Ahmad





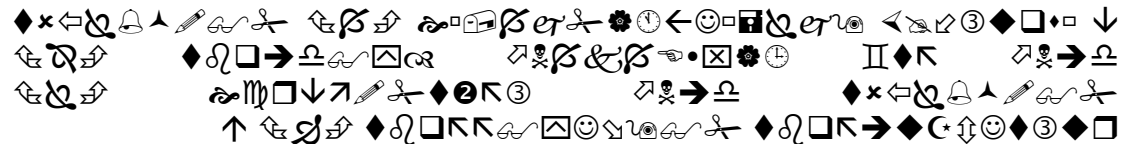


a device. For, there is no sense in reading the handbook as long as the device remains unassembled, operated and made use of. It is in the light of this that the Messenger of Allah, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Many a fasting person will have no reward for his fasting except hunger; and many a performer of supererogatory prayers in the night will have no reward for that except his vigil.”<sup>1</sup>

Allah says:



***“Verily, prevents from sins and wicked deeds.”*** (Al-‘Ankabut 29:45)



***“So woe unto those performers of Salât (prayers) (hypocrites), Those who delay their Salât (prayer from their stated fixed times). Those who do good deeds only to be seen (of men), and prevent Al-Mâ’ûn (small kindnesses like salt, sugar, water).”***  
 (Al-Ma‘un 107:4-7)



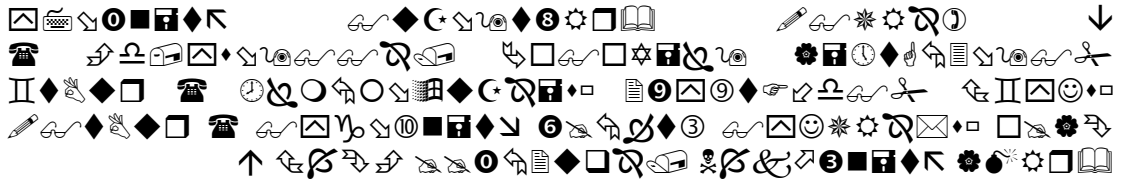
***“We have not sent down the Qur’ân unto you (O Muhammad (peace be upon him)) to cause you distress, But only as a Reminder to those who fear (Allâh).”*** (Ta Ha 20:2-3)

sense, implies vision, conviction, clarity of the goal and adhering to the same goal. However, faith, or vision, in itself, is not enough as long as it does not lead to action.

Equally, performance, vision and will to act, are not enough as long as they are not in accordance with the methodology of the reasonable Sunnah that guides to action and helps it produce the desired fruit – in line with the Divine Laws in creating the universe. In order words, it should be a righteous deed objectively. For example, a person should dig a well in order to get water as long as he knows nothing about water passages under the surface of the earth. Therefore, mere intention of getting water and digging well for that purpose will be of no use and will not bring out the desired result as long as identification of the suitable spot has not been made through adequate knowledge. This is Allah’s way concerning His creation, and no alteration will you find in the Allah’s way! That is about succession on the earth, power and leadership – in the general sense. The domination, succession and leadership will be given to whoever fulfils those conditions. This is what we witness today of the domination of the material powers and the strength they enjoy on the earth.

As for the world of light and spirituality, the deed and its being righteous and upon the Sunnah depend on intentions and soundness of faith – and not upon mere faith and its impact on man’s psyche. So, the issue of spiritual world has to do with ‘sincerity and trust’ and ‘soundness of choice’. If a good deed is spurred by belief in Allah, love for His sake, obedience to Him and will to benefit His creation, the believer will have reward and earn the fruit of his deeds purely on the Day of Resurrection; but if it not spurred by the above factors, then their fruit will be like that of the disbeliever, the denier of the Divine Message, the arrogant and the erroneous – only worldly reward and nothing in the Hereafter. That is why when a believer exercised independent judgment and arrived at the correct decision he will have two rewards: reward of good fruit in the world and reward of his good intention, in the Hereafter; but he exercised independent judgment and arrived at a wrong decision, he would only have the reward of his good intention in the Hereafter, and he would not have the reward of a good fruit in this world.

<sup>1</sup> Recorded by Ibn Majah



***“Verily, We have sent down to you (O Muhammad (peace be upon him)) the Book (this Qur’ân) for mankind in truth. So whosoever accepts the guidance, it is only for his own self, and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray only for his (own) loss. And you (O Muhammad (peace be upon him)) are not a Wakîl (trustee or disposer of affairs, or guardian) over them.” (Az-Zumar 39:41)***



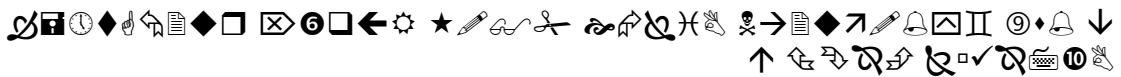
***“This is the Book (the Qur’ân), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are pious and righteous.” (Al-Baqarah 2:2)***

He also says, addressing His servants and explaining some of the responsibilities of His Messenger to them:

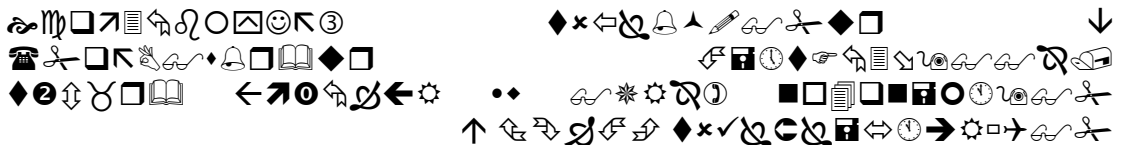


***“...Purifying you, and teaching you the Book (the Qur’ân) and the Hikmah (i.e. Sunnah, Islâmîc laws and Fiqh – jurisprudence).” (Al-Baqarah 2:151)***

He also says:



***“Indeed, there has come to you from Allâh a light (Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)) and a plain Book (this Qur’ân).” (Al-Ma’idah 5:15)***



***“And as to those who hold fast to the Book (i.e. act on its teachings) and perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), certainly We shall never waste the reward of those who do righteous deeds.” (Al-A‘raf 7:170)***

According to the explicit general sense of the above verses, belief and good intention alone are not enough to achieve strength and leadership in this world as long they are not supported objectively with good deed. It is also a condition that the deed must be righteous in that it is according to the Divine Laws in terms of letting the universe take its course and making good use of the resources. Hence, the person who exercised independent judgment and arrived at a wrong decision would get one reward – a reward for his good intention and faith, and this would be in the Hereafter. As for the person who exercised independent judgment and arrived objectively, and according to the Divine Law, at correct decision, he would have two rewards: One in this world for making proper use of the resources and arriving at a fruitful decision and the other in the Hereafter for his good intention and faith; for this gracious feat is a demonstration of the ‘trust of vicegerency’.

The Muslims' current situation of being disunited, backward and marginalized could only be as a result of their distorted presentational approach and vision, their warped methodology and culture, decline of their sentiment, disintegration of their institutions, their loss of sense of responsibility and general rupture of their contemporary identity. All this has led them – as we can see – to their inability to live an exemplary life and their weakened civilizational impetus with which Allah endowed man and the purpose of which He created them.

It goes without saying that the distortion, muddling and Superficialization are the natural consequence of the Muslims' present state of weakness, disunity, humiliation and irrelevance.

Among the manifestations of ideological, intellectual and educational disease – that confuses the wise ones concerning the mentality of a Muslim and that must be treated and healed by the Islamic presentational approach – is that contradiction that shows the extent of deepness to which the Muslim psychological and sentimental distortion has reached as a result of confused presentational approach, exaggerations in intimidation and misuse of religious sanctity.

We certainly know that an individual Muslim – throughout ages of backwardness and decline till today – does fear Allah; all he knows about Him is no more than an eye that watches his actions and inactions, as well as his mistakes done publicly and privately. A person whose feeling is always overwhelmed by fear does not know love. Such a person always isolates himself and performs with minimum dedication. That is why we find that a contemporary Muslim seems not to know the meaning of loving Allah and the essence of being devoted to Him. And Allah says:



***“But those who believe love Allâh more (than anything else).”*** (Al-Baqarah 2:165)

The Prophet, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “None of you believes until Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than anything else.”<sup>1</sup>

Or shall we say that ‘the believers’, as far as the Qur’anic concept of the word, are not existent in this age of ours?!

Definitely, this is not the correct understanding of this problem. All that this meaning indicates is that the Muslim suffers from an ideological problem the depth of which he must endeavor to understand and solve so that he could achieve self-actualization as he would love and desire. The fact of the matter is that members of this Ummah are believers and that there is an Ummah that strongly yearns to love Allah. This is because; the Muslim – in reality and without his knowing – loves Allah because he naturally loves righteousness, truth, justice, mercy and peace. And these qualities are Allah’s attributes in a Muslim’s consciousness.

On the other hand, the Muslim hates evil, falsehood, injustice, cruelty and aggression; and these are traits of Satan. But as a result of orations mixed with intimidation and threats, this Ummah has been without a guide to the correct vision and action, and without sailing compass and roadmap. It no longer recognizes itself or finds its way. This is because the presentational approach being used does not longer differentiate between a believer, on one hand, and a denier and obstinate rejecter of the truth on the

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<sup>1</sup> Recorded by Ahmad

other, thereby categorizing the Muslims among ‘most people who do not understand’, who are not righteous and who are sinful and causing mischief!!!

Many of these orations aimed at the Muslims and believers, and even at minors, indicate ignorance and confusion in presentational approach as they point to negative use of the religion and sanctity. The intimidations of such discourses have led to creating a slave mentality in the minds of the Muslims – a mentality characterized by individualism, negativism and fear. This had made the Ummah’s leadership subservient, corrupted and marginalized, and the Ummah itself – lagging behind among the comity of nations, in terms of performance, strength and honor.

We need to know with certainty that a Muslim individual, in his essence, is a gracious human being and a congenial power, if activated and properly addressed. He loves righteousness, truth, justice, compassion peace, which are attributes of Allah. Therefore, in the real sense of the word, he loves Allah while he is oblivious of that.

An individual Muslim hates evil, injustice, cruelty and aggression; he hates Satan and his ways – in a real sense of the word, without him knowing that.

Allah, High and Exalted, knows what is inherent in human nature of the struggle between light of the spirit and darkness of the soil. He forgives and shows mercy to whoever loved Him and strives to please Him. He erases the mistakes of such a person, forgives his misdeeds and rewards his good deeds in manifold. He is always happy with his return to Him in repentance like a person who was in the desert and lost his camel with his provision on it and then found it. The Prophet, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “By Him in Whose Hand is Muhammad’s soul! If you did not commit mistakes, Allah would bring a people who would commit mistakes and then ask Allah for forgiveness and He would forgive them.”<sup>1</sup>

If a Muslim had been aware of the reality of his affair, his feelings and essence of his life, if he had been taken along by the presentational approach in a gentle manner, and with love, enlightening and facilitation, he would have made efforts, reformed, perfected his deeds and played his role in bringing prosperity to the earth, and he would have attained self-actualization. He would have done all that as they are inherent in his nature; seeking the pleasure of the One he loves and fearing His wrath – a positive fear that brings him closer to Allah and not keep him away from Him. This is because the fear is not that of terror that leads man to despair and keeps him away from his Lord<sup>2</sup> and from his religion and that kills in man all encouragements for good deeds, perfection and a love for bringing prosperity to the earth, thereby turning him into a selfish individual whose goals in this life are self-centered. A person with such a negative fear takes and gives driven by his depressing and egoistic mind – and not by positive intention to bring prosperity to the earth, though it is this positive intention that could make him discover himself and actualize his goal in a practical way. But he is, in reality, a marginalized dead being in the robe of the living!

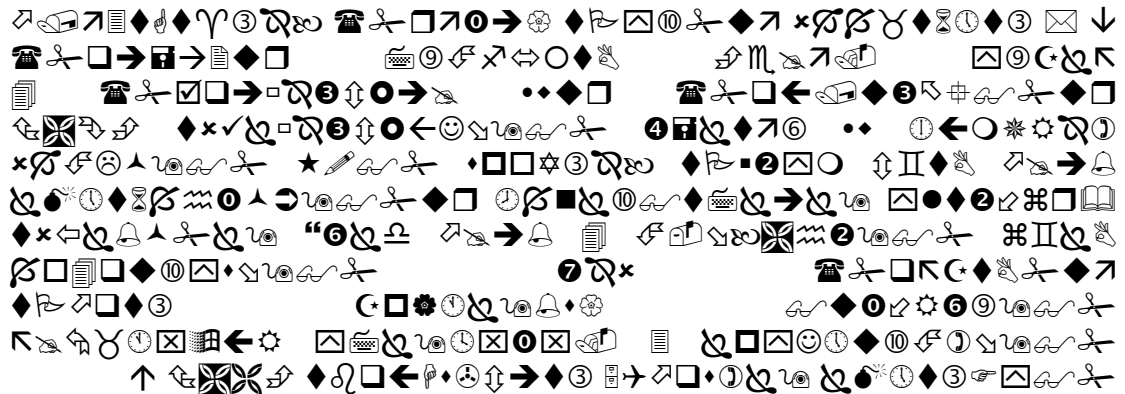
It is disheartening that, in the course of confused oration being presented to a Muslim – and by extension, his dazed consciousness – the Name of Allah is associated with

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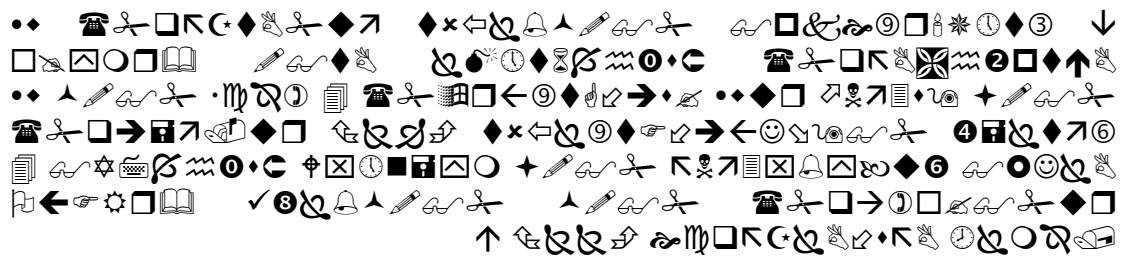
<sup>1</sup> Recorded by Ahmad

<sup>2</sup> I invite my dear reader to read an article of mine published by Islamization of Knowledge issued by International Institute of Islamic Thought no 14, 1422 (2001). The article was about Islamic Penal Law that frightens many people – including some Muslims. When I pondered over this law in positive discourse manner, it became clear that it has dimensions that had been thought of before; thereby revealing it in positive and assuring manner that neither cause fear nor instills fright.

depravity, and happiness and delight are aligned with Satan as if a Muslim is necessarily in the group of Satan whenever he tries to actualize self and discover his own nature, and should necessarily kill his own self and subdue his nature if he wants to be in the group of the Most Merciful Lord. Whereas, Allah says in His glorious Book, while addressing His believing servants and the entire mankind:



*“O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes), while praying and going round (the Tawâf of) the Ka'bah, and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allâh) likes not Al-Musrifûn (those who waste by extravagance). Say (O Muhammad (peace be upon him)) "Who has forbidden the adoration with clothes given by Allâh, which He has produced for His slaves, and At-Taiyyibât (all kinds of Halâl (lawful) things) of food?" Say: "They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) exclusively for them (believers) on the Day of Resurrection (the disbelievers will not share them)." Thus We explain the Ayât (Islâmic laws) in detail for people who have knowledge.”* (Al-A‘raf 7:31-32)



*“O you who believe! Make not unlawful the Taiyibât (all that is good as regards foods, things, deeds, beliefs, persons) which Allâh has made lawful to you, and transgress not. Verily, Allâh does not like the transgressors. And eat of the things which Allâh has provided for you, lawful and good, and fear Allâh in Whom you believe.”* (Al-Ma’idah 5:87-88)



*“He brought you forth from the earth and settled you therein.”* (Hud 11:61)

The Prophet, (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “And there is charity in one of you engaging in lawful sexual intercourse...”

## **Responsibility of Muslim Thinkers and Educationists**

The Muslim scholars, thinkers, educationists and the elite are called upon to take a serious and comprehensive stand by looking at the Ummah's general contemporary culture, thought, writings and messages in order to identify and diagnose where the defects are. They should endeavor to reshape the thought, the methodology, the culture and the presentational approach in a manner that would make the Ummah regain its ideological, cultural and educational wellbeing and enable it built effective institutions that would be strong enough to eradicate the negativism and corruption, and enable it acquire Da'wah and religious education and media strength and win independence for its institutions from the grips of the political authorities. This will liberate the Ummah from the disease of falsification of its will and marginalization of its religion, principles and goals, and put an end to manipulation of the religion in order to serve the interest of those who are in position of authority and their cohorts and in order to consolidate tyranny, autocracy and corruption in the Ummah's public life and in its different institutions.

If we realized the Ummah's contemporary situation, the situation of its universal vision, the situation of its culture, educational methodologies and the way it forms its children's sentiments, and we realized the confusions and distortions that have been the bane of these messages – a situation that has led the Ummah to superficialities, and intimidation and employment of religion for personal interests of the ruling elite in the Muslim societies, starting with the child who is nurtured on methodology of memorization, coercive material and moral violence, employment of religious symbols to suppress spirit of criticism, examination and ability to make distinctions and the consequences of all that on a Muslim mind and sentiment – if we realized all the above, we would realize the crucial role the thinkers, educationists and the enlightened scholars need to play and how crucial it is for them to take up the responsibility of effecting the reform of ideological, intellectual, educational and cultural oration.

This endeavor of theirs should start with paying attention to educational presentational approach for fathers and all the institutions that are based on Da'wah affairs, the religious education and teaching process, and media institutions of all which needs to be free from the influence of the political elite. The leadership of these institutions must be selected and they must be fully qualified intellectually, experience-wise and morally. This selection must be through ballot from the Ummah's general public – to ensure its freedom and fairness and to ensure that their loyalty is to the religion and the Ummah alone, and not to the interests of the ruling elite, the influential individuals and the people with personal interests.

It is equally important to reshape our higher education system and the way we create intellectual and scientific cadres so that unity of Islamic education in the syllabi of our higher education can be achieved and the goal of forming a Muslim's mindset and creating the drive for Islamic vision in his psyche can be attained. It is through this that a man can be enabled to play the role of the vicegerent, bringing prosperity to the earth and building the Ummah's civilization with conviction, desire and perfection which Allah destined him to play when He breathed soul into him, appointed him as the successor on the earth, endowed him with intelligence, assigned him the responsibility of managing the earth and create in him the love to choose truth, justice and peace, in defiance of inclinations of the soil and jungle.

It is important here to note the experience of International Islamic University of Malaysia. This university started its experiment of “Islamization of Knowledge” that affirmed “Unity of Knowledge”. It paid attention to emotional education through “Family and Parental Institution”, and to “Creative Thinking” through “Literature of Islamic Education” and “Methodology of Islamic Teaching”. This experiment deserves to be studied and reflected upon by the reform movements.

The Muslim thinker, the Muslim teacher and the Muslim scholar are the capable hands to manage the operation key of the Ummah’s ideological and emotional reform movement – especially in the area of educational aspects relating to parents and family and aspects relating to teacher and school. This is because the family and the parents are the foundation for the change and reform of any individual who can, in turn, change and reform the society and the Ummah and their institutions – in line with Allah’s statement:



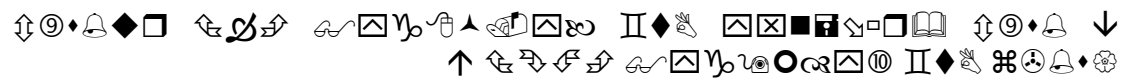
***“Verily! Allâh will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves.”*** (Ar-Ra’d 13:11)

In the light of this, it is incumbent upon the Muslim – in his effort to reform – to remember that success and good performance are measured by concrete results and not by mere slogans. Anything short of that yields nothing but what we witness today: Idle talk, failure, rumpus, and repeated prattle. Muslims should remember that they are a nation of the Message of Light and noble spirituality that must be adequately armed with strength and authority in order to promote justice and create a reality in which “right is might” and in confrontation with the decadence of the ‘soil and its injustice’<sup>1</sup> that promotes the notion of ‘might is right’. Allah speaks the truth in His following statement:



***“Whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it.”*** (Az-Zalzalah 99:7-8)

Allah has also taught the human soul means that could lead him to impiety and means that could lead him to righteousness. He gave it necessary abilities and made it understand that it would be held accountable. He says:



***“Indeed he succeeds who purifies his own self (i.e. obeys and performs all that Allâh ordered, by following the true Faith of Islâmic Monotheism and by doing righteous good deeds). And indeed he fails who corrupts his own self (i.e. disobeys what Allâh***

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<sup>1</sup> The angels said, when Allah informed them that He wanted to create man and make him the successor on the earth: “Will You place upon it one who causes corruption upon it and sheds blood?” That was the situation of man before the soul was breathed in him; and he would be like that in the life of this world if he is, in this world, devoid of spirituality and is deprived of spiritual values that Allah endowed the humans with and which He clearly explains in the Qur’an.



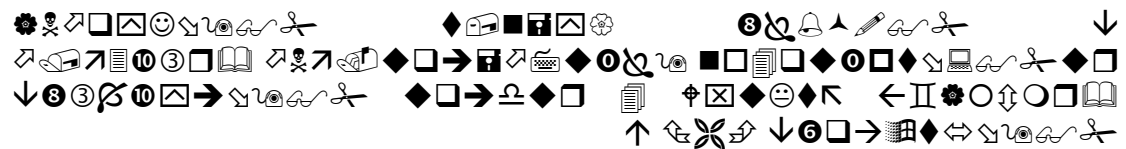
has ordered by rejecting the true Faith of Islâmic Monotheism or by following polytheism or by doing every kind of evil wicked deeds).” (Ash-Shams 91:9-10)

He also says:



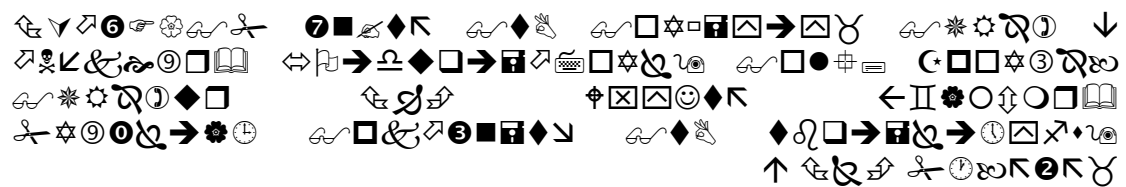
*“Surely, Allâh wastes not the reward of the righteous.” (At-Tawbah 9:120)*

And He is the One:



*“Who has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.” (Al-Mulk 67:2)*

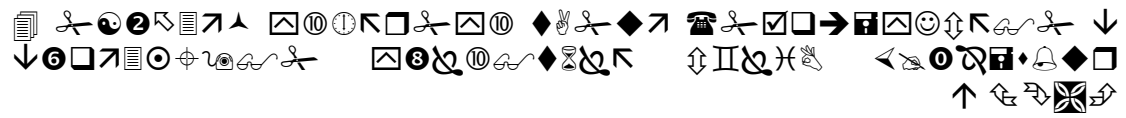
He also says:



*“Verily! We have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them (mankind) as to which of them are best in deeds. (i.e. those who do good deeds in the most perfect manner, that means to do them (deeds) totally for Allâh's sake and in accordance to the legal ways of the Prophet (peace be upon him)) And verily! We shall make all that is on it (the earth) a bare dry soil (without any vegetation or trees.).” (Al-Kahf 18:7-8)*



*“And say (O Muhammad (peace be upon him)) "Do deeds! Allâh will see your deeds, and (so will) His Messenger and the believers. And you will be brought back to the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. Then He will inform you of what you used to do.” (At-Tawbah 9:105)*



*“Work you, O family of Dâwûd (David), with thanks!” But few of My slaves are grateful.” (Saba’ 34:13)*



***“Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female.”*** (Al ‘Imran 3:195)



***“Allâh has promised those among you who believe, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the earth, as He granted it to those before them.”*** (An-Nur 24:5)

It is pertinent to mention at the conclusion of this research that – without bringing back the Qur’an’s universal, civilizational vision, and without regaining unity of Islamic knowledge and sound mental educational methodologies –details, concepts and values of Islamic presentational approach would be like pieces of tools, which, in spite of their value in themselves, would remain useless as long as they are not properly arranged and assembled together in an orderly manner. The same applies to the Islamic Presentational Approach. Without the Qur’anic universal and civilizational vision, neither will the Muslim nor the Ummah would have any vision or impetus with which an entity could be built and through which the Muslim’s personality could be actualized.

On a final note, the Ummah has suffered – as is still suffering – from the muddle of Presentational Approach. However, it is frightening – as a result of circumstances of the clashes, schemes and crises that rock the boat of the Ummah in contemporary times – that some people with personal interests use the criticizing reform approach for goals other than the ones intended by the thinkers and reformers. The goals are intended to promote the Ummah’s reform, providing guidance for it and developing and replenishing its energies for the service of humanity. They are intended to correct the path of human civilization in the service of righteousness, justice, brotherhood and peace. This is an allusion for those who understand.

Likewise, it is important that the Ummah and its thinkers and reformers not leave any stone unturned in their action and reform. No one should sit idle or hesitate to act for fear of hue and cry. The reform efforts must come out of personal vision and conviction, carried out in a practical, effective and manner, with knowledge, well laid-out plan and a clear goal. The efforts should not be forced and neither should they be defensive or mere voices of entreat and justification in which the action is just a reaction and explosion that come after an incident or event. For, such reactions die down soon leaving behind no positive result – that neither drives away any enemy nor generates any strength. Therefore, the fruitful and well-planned action and reform–whatever the circumstances may be – should continue through perseverance and excellent design. There is no way out for this Ummah without courageous and serious reform.

Upon Allah is the direction of the right way. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.