The Qualities of the Green, Modern, Islamic and Qura nic Civilization: Theoretical Elements, Distinctive Features, Practical Advice and Current Examples: A Holistic Approach

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Abstract

This article tries to establish the crucial elements that are required in a humane civilization, while highlighting the fundamental definition and conditions for the Modern Qur’anic-Islamic civilization that is considered the prevailing and ultimately final one, which shall never be overshined. A great proportion of inspired messages from the Qur’an in this direction, are mentioned. Some recent incidents have been highlighted, due to the fact -that they represent perfect examples of the prevailing modern, Qur’anic-Islamic, pre

established civilization.

Introduction

In this article we have asked and tried to provide the answers to the following fundamental questions:

1. What is Civilization?
2. Are there different forms of civilizations?
3. What are the crucial, distinctive and fundamental elements of each and every civilization?
4. What are the distinctive features that distinguish between the Islamic civilization and other forms of civilizations?
5. How should members of the Muslim Nation contribute in order to achieve a Modern Islamic civilization?

We shall address the answer to the first three questions in the first section, while the fourth and fifth questions are addressed and answered in the second.

First section: The meaning of civilization:

Linguistically one can perceive it as ‘social status that is an outcome of various elements’. One reads in the Oxford dictionary a definition which defines it as: "the act or process of civilizing or being civilized." There’s no doubt that this cannot serve as a definition, as it is circular, and repetitious having used one of its derivatives, ‘civilized’! While the other definition that the Oxford Dictionary gives is: "an advanced

state of human society, in which a high level of culture, science, industry, and government has been reached."

The last definition is a clear and explicit form of grasping the core meaning of the term. As it requires culture and science, it also encapsulates industry and government. This is all based on its modern lexicographical indication. In the following paragraphs we shall try to grasp the technical terms of the conditions familiar to the experts of this field.

The technical Terms: Civilization

There’s no doubt that civilization is a concept that has been developed throughout history, therefore the elements of civilization, and how the civilizations have emerged, have been studied extensively. As such, one may claim that there’s no need to study them thoroughly again. However, it seems that this concept has developed voraciously in the modern time, due to modernism and post-modernism contributions, therefore one can firmly confirm that it does require special thought. One has to especially take into consideration that many Muslim thinkers around the Muslim World, have come with various new theories that are pretty much related to the strategic world. The researchers are under alert conditions, albeit civilization is heavily present.

One would usually never give the topic much thought, assuming that it’s a clear concept. That is, until one is tasked with finding some of the Qur’anic elements that are characteristics of a civilization that makes it different, but also when the requirement is to form a ‘modern Islamic civilization’, which makes it different from non-civilized society, as well as from an un-Islamic, out-dated and stagnant albeit industrial society.

This may seem like a daunting task, but it is apparent that there are a number of distinct elements which characterize every society to form a ‘civilization’. So what are these elements? This shall be answered in the next few paragraphs.

The Minimum Elements that form a Civilization:

One can mention about five minimum elements that should be in their present and up-to-date condition:

1) Large population centres, which are settled into cities, with a centralized government, where a person or group of people control and enforce laws in a developed society;

2) Writing, as a means for communication, because one requires methods of using symbols to keep records for the exchange of information;

3) Organized Religion, i.e. adopting a belief in some sort of higher being, where there are ceremonial buildings, or ritual centres;

4) Job Specialization and established social classes, thus everyone has a different job that helps others and their earnings are regulated through this variety of specialized jobs, and;

5) And finally art. Arts, architecture or even public performance of different forms of art, provide creative ways, through which the society expresses its values.

Each of these elements of civilization works synergistically, making civilized societies stand out in blatant contrast from those non-civilized societies, which either preceded or will succeed them. A brief overview and elaboration of some of these vital components will

demonstrate their importance. Let us start with the elaboration of each one of those components.

The Elements: Elaborated

First element: Speaking about the settlements -along with a special form of a government- is a requirement that can never be ignored. One is aware that first cities began as small villages of people who were once hunters and gatherers. Then mankind came to detect the agricultural revolution, which contributed to more control over the environment, or rather affecting it in a new way. Through the agricultural revolution one could grow food to store during the leaner months of winter. The first cities were known as ‘city-states’, because they had a city and farmland. They established their own government and legal system, in order to shape an everlasting settlement that endures the passage of difficult times.

Regardless of their law legislation, and without emphasizing on the importance of the quality of their legal system, the abovementioned condition is a necessary element through which the first step that paves the way to shape and form a civilized society. Without settling, no cities can be built, no law, meant chaotic circumstances, and when there is no governmental system, there would be no means of enforcing law and order.

Second element: Writing is a means of communication and exchange of information. In the twentieth century and in the twenty-first century, one does not only require a form of writing, but rather the means of the modern world communication tools that contribute to fast and effective communication and information exchange in the vast and distant locations,

where writing and language, are only formed in a global appeal, and inviting each and every human being can be presented with a means of communication.

It is, therefore, that UNESCO has declared that this century, a nation, which does not command the use of the PC is an illiterate nation!

Third element: Organized Religion: What is exactly meant by this term? It is not a society having necessarily formed different illogical rituals, with uncorroborated cults, or created -a mystical faith full of occultation and baseless mystical dogmas. According to some psycho analysts, such as Zweig (1932), who made it clear that cult founders often suffer from apparent physical illness, albeit finding a spiritual cure for their own ailment. And that the founders of those cults often misuse religion, solely because it has served certain goals for its followers.

The ideas are cited in the ‘Future of Religion’ (Rodney Stark & W. S. Bainbridge 1985). The authors state:

A number of authors have identified occult behaviour with specific psychiatric syndromes. Hysteria frequently has been blamed. Cult founders often do suffer from apparent physical illness, find a spiritual “cure” from their own ailment, then dramatize that cure as the -basis of the cult performance (Messing, 1958; Le’vi-Strauss, 1963; Lewis, 1971). A well known American example is Mary Baker Eddy, whose invention of Christian Science apparently was a successful personal response to a classic case of hysteria (Zweig, 1932).’[1]

On supporting the other claim, the authors state:

‘In order to grow, a cult movement must serve real religious functions for its committed followers, regardless of the founder’s private intentions, many older cults probably were frauds in origin but have been transformed into genuine religious organizations by followers who deeply believed the founder’s deceptions.

But fraud need not be involved in entrepreneurial cult innovation. Many ordinary businesspeople are convinced of the value of their products by the fact that customers want to buy them, and many cult entrepreneurs likewise accept their market as the ultimate standard of value.

Many cult founders do appear to be convinced that their compensator packages are valuable by testimonials from satisfied customers. This was probably the case with Franz Anton Mesmer, Who saw astonishing transformations in his clients, apparently the beneficial results of his techniques, and found in them ample evidence of the truth of his theories (Zweig, 1932; Dranton, 1970). Practitioners of all client cults frequently see similar evidence in favour of their own idea, no matter how illogical, because all such cults provide compensators of at least some strength (Frank, 1961).[2]

Based on the claims of the authors, one can easily conclude that any form of healthy organized religion and humane institutionalized faith, must be beyond the psychotic sphere, and rather serve human kind at the optimal level, rather than being due to mental ailment.

Fourth element: This is job specialization and establishing social classes. This would normally take place when everyone has a different job that helps others and their earnings are regulated through these varieties of specialized jobs. Nowadays, no modern society can be imagined without the presence of experts in each and every field.

The social classes are mainly formed and regulated through job specialization. One can

easily claim that one's job and profession determines the person's social class, which is based on her/his birth (family status) and cultural affiliation. One's wealth, job, and who one married, and where one could live, are all distinctive features that shape the social classes. Not all cultures value the same things and therefore not all class systems work in the same way.

If one analyses examples from the Feudal System found in Medieval Europe, s/he can easily conclude that:

•King –whose word was law

•Nobles –2% of the population, but holds the most wealth and land

•Merchants/Professionals (bankers, lawyers, doctors, factory owners)

•Peasants –servants or farm workers –could not read or write or make enough to pay taxes.

This division should contribute to the existence of the social facts, as to why one may have a different inclination compared to others.

The fifth and final element: Art, architecture and even the public performance of different forms of art, provide creative ways, through which the society expresses its values. It creates means through which one may combine elements making them amalgamated to serve several goals. A perfect example of this are social and group acts of worship, where the cultural factor, along with the artistic taste - in amalgamation- would serve the organized religion, creating an everlasting act of a civilized nation; or to shape a sophisticated cultural institution that would be remembered for centuries to come.

What is technically civilized and how should civilization be approached?

There are different approaches as to how one should analyse civilizations, as expectedly –for example- feminists have been critical of Western civilization. They may describe it as: "The history of gender struggle that has been presented and viewed (obscured and mystified) as a history of male deeds and thoughts, from which women have been absent as a result of the constraints of reproduction and motherhood." These are accounts which, "In fact trace the chronology of the historical development of patriarchy, a coincidence that appears to escape scholarly attention."[3]

However, in this article, the intention is to present the abovementioned matters from -generally- a holistic approach that elaborates on the theoretical foundations while highlighting some Qur'anic references as to how an ideal civilization designed, following Islamic and Qur'anic principles, should be. For a sophisticated Muslim researcher, the instructions by Imam Ali (as) to Malik al-'Ashtar could be impressively inspiring and should be described as the ideal foundation of 'an Islamic civilized religion', or rather the exemplary political philosophy and practical guidelines dictated by a perfect leader to pave the way for a 'modern Qur'anic-Islamic civilization'. He states in one of the excellent phrases:

'Malik! You must create kindness, compassion and love for your citizens, in your mind. Do not behave towards them as if you are a voracious ravenous beast and as if your success lies in devouring them.

Remember, Malik, that there are two kinds of people amongst your citizens: those who have the same religion as you; they are your brothers, and those who have religions other than yours, they are human beings like you. Men of either category suffer from the same weaknesses and disabilities that all people are inclined to; they commit sins, indulge in vices either intentionally, foolishly or unintentionally without realizing the enormity of their deeds. Let your mercy and compassion come to their rescue and help in the same way and to the same extent that you expect Allah to show mercy and forgiveness to you."[4]

Indeed, any civilized theoretician could never have spoken better than that. Based on this, we shall now delve into answering the previous questions that were posed at the beginning of this article. However there is more profound examination needed in order to discuss the point more in depth. Let us start with some analysis from a widely-cited Arab thinker from the previous century, namely Malik bin Nabi.

A Quote to support the Idea of Needed Thought and Thinkers

In an essay entitled ‘The Role of Thought in the Construction of Civilizations’ and dealing with the analysis of Malik ibn Nabi’s ideas, a researcher says:

“…After this swift presentation of the elements that compose a civilization, and after we have cited the role of man in this issue as is reflected by Malik ibn Nabi’s writings, this writer added an important point to the views of sociologists. He wrote about the ‘compound’ in whose frame the aforementioned elements (i.e. man + time + soil) work.

This compound is no more than thought, which is, in the view of Malik, the philosophy of life that derives its directives from religion. Hence, the elements that compose a civilization are incapable of creating a civilization unless this thought (i.e. compound) is available, because thought can melt all these elements so as to make them active, positive, and contributive in the construction of civilizations.

As a matter of fact, the writer is correct, to a great extent, in the historical investigation that fathomed the worlds of human civilizations throughout history and lived closely with the features of modern civilization in Europe. It thus circumambulates the history of Islam through which it prospects the features of the Muslim civilization and then travels to the civilizations of China, India, Persia, and Japan; and it never mistakes its criterion in the incentives of civilizations and the foretokens of their evaporation.

As for Malik ibn Nabi, religious thought enjoys a comprehensive, expansive image; it is thus ‘the goal’, ‘the reason for existence’, ‘the philosophy of life’ or even the elements of response and challenge argued by Arnold J. Toynbee, a British historian.

So, therefore, we are vis-à-vis a sort of ‘believing’, be it believing in Allah according to religious thought or believing in a manmade principle from which the philosophy of life is formed. He believes that religious thought was, in one way or another, the motive lying behind the launch of the majority of ancient and modern civilizations.

This ‘believing’ of various appearances can alone explain for us the vitality of `Ammar ibn Yasir while he was carrying two rocks to share with the Holy Prophet (sawas) in the establishment of the Medina Mosque, the foremost feature of Islamic civilization. It is thus not untrue, or it may be the most acceptable opinion, to say that religious thought -in its capacity as possessing the all-inclusive outlook about man, universe, and life as well as pre-existence and post-existence concepts- has the capability, more than anything else, of making active men progress far beyond geography, species, and colour.

The aforementioned discussion has been cited through noticing the dangers encompassing modern human civilization and threatening abatement.

This matter draws our attention to the point that, however man may be able to set up a civilization in which he keeps himself a little bit distant from religious thought, he will not be able to maintain it for long.

In the same way as thought is important in cultural construction, its absence in the stages of cultural decline is of the same importance.

Malik says: It is imperative to stop at this fact; the reason for any misfortune that afflicts any society in the outset of a perilous history is not the scarcity of ‘things’; rather, it is the scarcity of ‘thoughts’.

This concept is applicable to our present Islamic world whose ‘things’, which are definitely imported, are many, but which lacks vital ‘thoughts’.

This, however, does not mean that such vital thoughts must be traditional or must be modern, since the most important point in this regard is that these thoughts be of ‘subsisting’ specifications.

In summary, Malik’s concentration on thoughts in the process of constructing a civilization is based on his understanding of the actuality and philosophy of civilization. Being different from ‘materialization’ that stands for the material achievements of a nation, civilization is ‘a sentimental structure involving high spiritual values, which motivate a community and all that is revolving around it, such as metaphysical, ethical, social, and aesthetical philosophies.’

For Malik ibn Nabi, these are ‘a set of material-spiritual qualifications that grant a certain society the opportunity to provide the necessary assistance for each individual belonging to it at each of its phases.’

Even such ‘materiality’ is no more than a reflection of the society’s values, views, or philosophy about the universe, and man; it is the meeting point between Malik ibn Nabi’s understanding of the rise of civilizations and the understanding of the researchers who came before him.

As has been noticed, Malik ibn Nabi has preceded all the others in concentration on the function of thoughts that he considered the compound, spirit, and incentive of civilizations because these thoughts, for Malik, hold sacred characteristics that are obtained from Divine aid.”[5]

Based on the abovementioned quotes, it is time to critically elaborate on the various conditions and the Qur’anic technical requirements from the dissimilar verses and their

different indications. As such, one believes that the answers to many questions posed at the beginning of this article have already been given. Therefore, it is now relevant to highlight the distinctive features of the Qur'anic-Islamic civilization, which will be discussed in the next few paragraphs, where one aims to provide answers to the last two questions. This is dealt with in the next paragraphs of the second section.

Second Section: The Guidelines for an Islamic Civilization

The fundamentals and distinctive general guidelines of the modern Islamic civilization are as follows;

1. To be humanely practiced: This is said in that sense that everything, which is contrary to the values of human morality, will lead to the total destruction of the Islamic civilization. 2. To be Divinely Inspired: As everything which contradicts the Divine rules is doomed to total failure, as the divine element for humane life, is the sole insurance to lead humanity to the elevated status of perfection, while ignoring the Divine intervention factor, shall lead humanity to fall into the jungle of beasts and animals. This is further elaborated by the end of this article, as one has explained the absolute need to follow a Divine leader, such as Al-Khidr (as), and, based on that, one can advance with distinguished claims amongst all the Muslims.

3. To be Islamic: Any aspect that has been rejected by Islamic norms, would most probably lead to the fatal extinction of the whole system.

4. To be Qur'anic: Therefore any aspects that are contrary to the Qur'an, will lead to the final extinction.

Taking into consideration the last condition one may uncover the Qur'anic guidelines in this direction. However, before doing that, it is incumbent to start with certain necessary distinctions.

Some Necessary Distinctions

Based on some of the following verses, many messages are to be perceived. We feel the need to distinguish between Islam and Muslims, or between Islam and [Iman] faith, i.e. the profound and emotional affiliation and practice of the Islamic faith. The reason is obvious, as the first two terms are clearly known, while the second set is also known amongst Shi'ah thinkers. Their distinction and knowledge is based on those previously mentioned Qur'anic verses. However, one feels the need to distinguish between the following terms:

-The terms: The Ideal Islamic civilization vs. the Muslim civilization; or Islam and profound faith

The two terms were often intermixed and wrongly used referring to each other's meaning. I believe that the same logic that was applied in the previous Qur'anic verse should be applied here. Muslims may have established a civilization that has reached East as far as China, while in the European direction, they may have been close to the West as far as Vienna and Andalucía. However, claiming that the moral principle that this civilization was based on is identical with Islamic values, ethical systems and social norms is a far-fetched claim that is constructed on a wild utopian expectation. The details of this distinction are inspired from the coming Qur'anic distinction that was declared by the following Qur'anic verse.

The relevant Qur'anic Verse

The Qur'an states: 'The Bedouins say, "We have believed." Say, "You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], 'We have submitted,' for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." Qur'an, c. 49: V. 14

This verse is saturated with Divine inspiration. One can summarize the short messages and instructions that ought to be derived from this verse, as follows:

1. According to “و قالت الاَعراب آمنّا”, one should not listen to any claim and pretence.

2. According to “قل لم تؤمنوا”, one should be alert from the claims that could be issued by pompous individuals.

3. According to “قولوا اَسلمنا”, everyone must try to handle his limits and one must not express himself/herself in excess of what s/he is.

4. According to “فی قلوبکم”, Islam might be related to the external, but faith is entirely related to the heart.

5. According to “و لمّا یدخُلِ الایمان فی قلوبکم”, speak with the claimants of perfection in a manner that they do not become disappointed of reaching to perfection.

6. According to “و ان تطیعوا اللهَ و رسوله...”, the way of reaching faith is practical obedience, not verbal claim.

7. According to “ان تطیعوا اللهَ و رسوله”, obeying the prophet is absolutely equal to obeying God, and this indicates the infallibility of the Prophet, therefore one must obey him without excuses.

8. According to “لا یلِتکم من اعمالکم شیئاً”, God is just and He does not decrease the reward of man’s deed even a little bit. (The true management is that it does not decrease the right of others even by a little bit).

9. According to “ان تطیعوا اللهَ و رسوله غفور رحیم”, obeying God and His messenger should

pave the way for receiving divine forgiveness and to be over showered with the Divine Mercy.

Thus first distinction is finished with this first Qur'anic verse. The second distinction follows in the next paragraphs.

-The terms: Urbanism vs. Civilization;

While human beings historically used to live in caves and, like wandering Bedouins, once they had settled, formed cities and larger neighbourhoods, the term 'urbanism' gradually formed amongst socio-anthropologists. On this level, they did not necessarily rely on a specific monotheistic Worldview, nor were their social structures based on special ethical and social systems.

On the other hand, the term 'civilization' solely refers to the system and those compounds of different cities –which in turn represent urbanism- and communities that are united under a civil ruler and organized through certain regulations, forming a standardized 'greater social unit', namely [ummah in Qur'anic terminology] a 'greater society'. This comprised the necessary element for establishing a somehow highly structured urban society, or rather multi-ethnic society that easily encapsulates cosmopolitan principles to be adopted by other people. Therefore, we don't have any civilization throughout mankind's history, unless it was based on previous urbanism.

The Qur'anic-Islamic Notion about the required Elements:

One feels the need to be inspired from the Qur'anic verses as to how a Qur'anic-Islamic civilization is to be designed and formed. As one has researched the Qur'anic verses, one cannot claim that the technical term: 'civilization' [حضارة], nor its derivatives, was used. However, the implicit reference to it, is indirectly implied through other terms, and words such as: 1) 'Hayat Tayybah' good life, or 2) 'Kalimatu Tayybah' good creation.

With regards to the first Reference

We read that the Qur'an has made it explicitly clear that only while following the right path and the Qur'anic teachings, would one be able to achieve happiness and eternal satisfaction both on earth and in the life-hereafter. The Qur'an states in Surah 16, verse 97, which speaks about the right path life-style 'Hayat Tayybah' the following:

'Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.'

The previous Qur'anic verses which start from verse 90 are all referring to the discussion of 'Ummah', which in Qur'anic terminology refers to 'the civilized nation', as much as we read in the Qur'an about the 'Moderate Ummah', which is the perfect identification of the 'Rightfully civilized nation'. We read in the previous verse 95, the verse, which states: 'Do not sell Allah's covenant for a paltry gain…etc.'. The occasion of revelation –as mentioned in various books of Qur'anic exegesis- was after a man came in to the presence of the Prophet (sawas) and said: "O Allah's Apostle (sawas)! I have a neighbour, [namely Umra' Qays], and he has seized a part of my lands." The Prophet of Allah (sawas) called for Umra' Qays, but he denied everything. The Prophet (sawas) asked Umra' Qays to swear by Almighty Allah (swt). He was about to swear, when the Prophet (sawas) stopped him and said that he should take some time to think twice before swearing upon the Almighty name of Allah (swt)." The two men left and it was then that the above mentioned holy verse revealed the warning of consequences of false swearing. When the Prophet (sawas) recited these two verses for them, Umra' Qays said: "The man is right. I will give back his land to him, and will even give him more than what really belongs to him." As soon as the man completed his statement, the third holy verse became revealed saying: "Whoever acts righteously, whether male or female, should he be faithful, we shall revive him with a good life.

The Holy Verse includes the saying: "We will surely pay those who are patient their reward by

the best of what they used to do." The word [احسن] 'Ahsan' best, used in this holy verse, shows that not all good deeds are equal in their virtue, as some acts are very limited and the participants short-sighted, while others deeds and actors are global and civilized. As such, some of them are good, while others are better. But Allah the Almighty (swt) will give the best reward for all of them, and this is Allah's (swt) generosity while giving rewards to the faithful in this life. The reason is obvious as the reward is equal, and would be an overwhelming and all-inclusive reward, which would apply to this life and to the hereafter. As such, it is indeed an all-inclusive reward and the best. One may summarize the messages to be derived from this verse as follows:

1. The criteria of reward is not age, race, sexuality, and social and political position and …. «مَن عَمِلَ» [does Whoever]

2. Man and woman can equally acquire spiritual achievement. «انثی او ذکر من» [whether male or female]

3. Faith is the requisite of acceptance of righteous deed. «مؤمن هو و» [while he is a believer.]

4. Even one righteous deed will not be without reward. «صالحاً عمل من» [Whoever does righteousness.]

5. Wherever there is an ignorant thought that women must be humiliated, the position and name 'woman' must be mentioned clearly. «انثی او ٍذکر من» [whether male or female]

6. Righteous deed by itself is not enough; the human being himself must be good. «عمل من صالحاً... و هو مؤمن» [Whoever does righteousness … while he is a believer.]

7. Human being without righteous deed and faith seems to be dead. «طیبةً حیوة ه ّفلنحیینه» [We will surely cause him to live a good life.]

These messages are implicitly indicating that all human beings can achieve perfection and a -civilized life, as long as they are believers and enjoy righteous living based on god -wariness. Therefore, some may insist that this verse is a clear reference to the Qur'anic Islamic civilization. Let us now deal with the second term: 'Kalimatun Taybah'

The Second Verse

"Do you not consider how God makes a parable? A good word may be compared to a good tree whose root is firm and whose branches soar up into the sky. It yields its food each season with its Lord's permission. God composes parables for mankind so that they may be reminded."([6])

While reading through this verse, one is able to discern that one of the ways of the Qur'an to make things easy to understand is to bring examples and parables that can be related to the human senses. In this way, the Holy Book attempts to explain the example of the Islamic civilization, therefore it makes the important rational issues clear and understandable, by visualizing a sufficient example. In this Holy Verse, the monotheistic beliefs and heavenly words have been mentioned as a fruitful tree, while the outcome of them is the sweet fruit of humane civilization. This is why, in this Holy Verse, truth and falsehood, faith and infidelity and purity and impurity have all been mentioned in the form of a single picture. It says: "Have you not regarded how Allah has drawn a parable? A good word is like a good tree: its roots are steady and its branches are in the sky."

In the next verse the Qur'an explains the opposite example in the same way that it elaborates that the purified tree gives its fruit every season by the blessings of its Lord. As a result of this, other realities, good human nature and perfect actions come into existence. In addition, the appearance and presence of such a faithful person also attracts others and inspires others. Basically every true and favourite saying is like the parable of the good tree. In this manner, the qualities of "the bad word" are easily understood which is used as an antonym to "the pure word." The sentence "power is for the truth and weakness

is for falsehood" has been derived from these kinds of Holy Verses, i.e. the truth has a long way to go, but falsehood is soon to depart. With these parables, Allah the Almighty wants the people to take lessons from them and understand the truth. When a “bad word” is spoken, the polytheistic beliefs that the more its believer acts according to and determines his way according to, the more will there be a gap between him and his Lord and the quicker he will experience his decline. Therefore, the Holy Verse says: "And the parable of a bad word is that of a bad tree: uprooted from the ground, it has not stability and every wind takes it away." The people with weak belief and faith, when reading a piece of deviated newspaper or when listening to any anti-religious commercial, is attracted to it, for their belief is base-less and weak. This continuation of the previous verse establishes the main and fundamental distinction between the Islamic civilization and the non-Islamic civilization.

As such one may summarize the short messages and the Divine instructions from this verse and from the next two verses as follows:

1. One must meticulously study the Holy Qur’an’s examples. «رَ تَ مَ لَ ا» [Have you not considered?]

2. The right idea is a pure word whose principle is stable in the heart of believers. «اصلها ثابت» [fixed firmly is root whose]

It is Allah’s favour to make the faithful keep this idea. «بالقول آمنوا ذينّ الـ هَ ّ الـلـ تّ يثبـ الـثّ ابت» [Allah keeps those who believe, with the firm word.[7]]

3. The true word is stable, sustainable and well. «طيبة كلمة ... ثابت اصلها» [a good word… whose root is firmly fixed]

And from verse 25, one may understand:

1. The tree of faith is always fruitful and has no autumn and winter. «حين كل اكلها» [It produces its fruit all the time.

2. Simile and metaphor are ways that the Holy Qur'an warns people. «يتذكرون لعلهم» [perhaps they will be reminded.]

And from verse 26, one may understand the following:

1. Of the way of education and upbringing is the way of comparing. «خبيثة كلمة ...بة ّطيـ كلمة» [a good word…a bad word]

2. Polytheism and whatever is other than from Allah is not stable and sustainable. «من لها ما قرار» [stability any having not]

3. False ideas and beliefs are like weeds that have no root in the depth of the earth, for they have no correct base. «الارض فوق من اجتثت» [uprooted from the surface of the earth.]

A technical Analysis:

With regards to this verse (no. 24), one reads: the following explanation that is mentioned by a contemporary Iraqi politician. He wrote about the composites of the Qur'anic-Islamic civilization as being inspired from the relevant Qur'anic verse as follows:

'The composites of civilization as can be concluded from the Holy Qur'an are to be found in many Qur'anic verses, but the following Qur'anic verse (no. 24), mentioned in Chapter: Ibrahim (no. 14) might comprehensively hold eight composites of civilization.

The Eight Composites of Civilization in the Light of the Qur'anic Verse:

These elements are as follows:

1. Word (Principle of monotheism): This word is not a mere expression of an utterance or statement; rather, it entails many concepts and notions. Although many explanations have been given to the expression word, its all-comprehensive meaning can be put in the word of monotheism; that is, the belief that there is only one God. This term inclusively refers to the religion of natural disposition that God placed in man and on which He created him and which provides man with an internal content and a spiritual understanding of life, by which the true believer is distinguished from others, distanced from their beliefs and religions.

2. Good: This is an indicative of purity and clearness. Originally, the description good is said to describe whatever is found delightful by the senses and enjoyed by souls.

3. Whose root is firm (genuineness): The root of everything is its base whose all other parts are high due to its height.

4. Whose branch is in the sky (civilizational aspect): The branch of a tree is its twig. Thus the branch of that tree being in the sky is understood from two aspects. The first aspect is tallness; therefore, this word is used to express something’s height. The second aspect is width. Likewise, the word is used to express the expansion of something.

5. It yields its fruit: This is an expression of productivity.

6. Each season: This is an expression of continuous giving, since the word season indicates the time of maturity and cropping.

7. With its Lord’s permission: This is an indication that this tree belongs to the Lord in identity. The Arabic word [rabbi] Lord is originally derived from education and raising, which is used to express the process of rearing something through the different stages of its existence until it attains perfection. Yet, this word (Lord) refers to God exclusively,

because He provides the beings with what is useful for them.

8. For people: This means that the scope and goal of this word is purely humane.’[8]

He is right in mentioning all of those composites; however one must emphasize that these are the elements required solely for establishing an Islamic-Qur’anic civilization, not for any non-specific civilization. As such, these composites could be summarized as follows:

1. It is based on a Worldview that must be described as excellent and good. This to be grasped from points 1+2.

2. It possesses characters that apply to two dimensions: Material and Spiritual, as only then would it be able to fulfil the everlasting need of all human beings. This to be grasped from elements 3+4.

3. Its main and crucial distinctive feature is that: it belongs solely to the Almighty Lord (swt), who would constantly and continuously bless it with His Mercy to provide pragmatic solutions and human-friendly useful products that shall serve each and every human being. This to be grasped from elements 5+6+7+8.

However, one may also question as to how far these verses are sufficient to serve our cause and provide the answer in this complicated and contaminated world of post-modernism. I don’t think that they are enough; rather one is in need of more profound processing of the requirements. Let us examine one of the Eastern thinkers’ ideas about the Civilized Islam, namely the former Malaysian prime Minister within the next paragraphs.

A Modern Approach

Based on the abovementioned ideas, contemporary thinkers of far-east Asia were correct in highlighting the version of ‘Civilized Islam’ [Islam Hadhari] as was introduced by the

previous Prime Minister of Malaysia, i.e. Abdullah Badawi. In an academic approach that attempted to produce those ideas for the academic milieu, we read in a book entitled, ‘Islam Hadhari’, whose foreword was written by Muhammad Ajmal, that Dr. Badawi summarized ten elements as fundamentally needed for a civilized Islam as follows:

- Profound faith and God-wariness;
- A trustworthy and just government;
- The Defence-ability, that enables deterrence;
- Protecting minorities and defending women’s rights;
- Independent society’s members;
- The Priority of knowledge;
- An overwhelming and well-balanced economic development;
- Protecting the environment;
- To establish a standard life-style and well-fare state.’[9]

There is no doubt that such a program for any nation would lead to success and ultimate prosperity. However, there’re certain points of concern that ought to be taken into consideration. As for example, how would be a modern and Islamic civilization prevailing in contrast to the other forms of challenging civilizations? They will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

How does the Qur’an inspire towards establishing a Modern and Islamic civilization?

Islamic civilization, in the age of post-modernism, cannot be established without being trained to sincerely adhere to the teachings of Khidr (as) and being a profound follower of his school. This is transparently claimed, albeit in the form of postulates! As such, there are two postulated claims: First: There are more components that are required for a modern Islamic civilization; Second: These components are to be concluded from Surah al-Kahf. We will try to uncover the concluded components aiming at subsequently proving those postulates in the next few paragraphs.

A Contribution from the verses of Surah Al-Kahf to a Modern and Islamic Civilization

I have a serious doubt that the abovementioned elements are enough in this complicated modern World. One is in need of more in-depth knowledge, profound guidance and Divine intervention in order to succeed in establishing a prevailing and challenging modern Islamic civilization.

For the first postulate, possibly it is as simple as to draw attention to the fundamental point, namely: If the modern and Islamic civilization requires solely the same elements that other modern humane civilizations require, why should it, itself, be the 'unique prevailing modern civilization?' One may refer to the huge crises of global warming and industrial pollution, which is all based on having espoused unfriendly anti-milieu policies. Has the modern Islamic civilization posed the answer to those challenging environment threats? The answer is categorically affirmative. As such there must, also, be a requirement of other qualities and dimensions.

For the second postulate, I believe that these elements are mentioned or could be inspired from the story from the verses related to the meeting of Moses (as) with Al-Khidr (as). The meeting was arranged through a Divine interference in order to prove to Moses (as) that he was not the most knowledgeable human being on Earth. So he joined Al-Khidr (as) and asked to

be trained. However Al-Khidr (as) was hesitant to accept this request, but made no mistake, as he got his point across: One is not patient enough to realize and adhere to the Divine -plan. However, even a prophet, who is equipped with Divine knowledge, is not principally adequately equipped to match that level of knowledge. When the story proceeds, it seems that it is related to events that were about to take place in the future. The role of Al-Khidr (as) was to intervene sporadically in what might look like a very harsh and transgressive way, albeit for the public interests as well as to score the individual spiritual prosperity. All three incidents of the story, of Moses and Al-Khidr (as) in 'al-Kahf', i.e. making a hole in the boat, killing the child and building a wall to preserve the treasure of two orphans, who were not yet mature enough to look after it themselves, were all strictly focused on virtual acts in order to secure safer conditions for those involved.

As such, there are many reasons; for the claim that these verses serve our demands for more profound conditions to a sustainable and modern Islamic civilization, which are as follows:

1) This story reflects that knowledge, regardless of how Divine the source is, may possibly pose a great challenge to the wayfarer. Knowledge, in itself, is not adequate without the direct Divine intervention.

2) It has been narrated in a Hadith from the Prophet (sawas) that this chapter -with all its stories- should assist each and every human being in the chaotic circumstances of the end of time [akhir az-zaman]. This is because it teaches each and every knowledgeable person to remain humble. Of course, this narration is referring to the apocalyptic societies; however I believe that it is indeed referring to the societies of post-modernism.

3) Taking a closer look at each and every incident to which Moses (as) had a negative reaction, reveals a fundamental aspect, namely that they are all strictly focused on confusingly motivated virtual acts and current steps in order to secure safer future conditions for those involved. Those steps may sound very surprising, especially if they are necessary to produce a brighter flourishing future. It has been narrated from the Prophet

(sawas) that he said: ‘May Allah (swt) be pleased with my brother Moses (as). He was shy and said that [what he was not supposed to], but if he had stayed with his companion [al-Khider] he would have seen the greatest wonders.

4) Meeting the challenges of global warming and pollution, due to the faulty policies that have been implemented with regards to the milieu, one can instantly refer to Al-Khider (as) with regards to being ‘green’. It is narrated from Imam Ali Al-Ridha (as) that Al-Khider (as) has drunk from the fountain of life….etc.[10]

-In a narration from Imam Al-Sadiq (as), we read the following: ‘Almighty Allah sent ‘Al Khidr (as) as a prophet to his people, calling them to His Oneness and to acknowledge all the prophets (as), messengers and their scriptures. His miracle was that any time he sat on -dry wood or barren land, greenery would sprout from it, and this is why he was called Al Khidr (as).’

These qualities represent the direct solution to the current challenges of pollution and global warming. A modern new policy ought to be implemented that is totally environmental friendly in order to solve the problems.

5) Due to the abovementioned reasons, a rejection from a typical human individual was to be naturally expected, as working without payment, or forcing others to feel profound sorrow, due to having a defected item- is not acceptable! Neither can causing parents to endure penetrating emotional pain, due to the loss of a beloved one, ever be tolerable.

Any typical individual -while reading the narrative analysis of the Qur’anic account of the story of killing the boy -ever help but ask, at least, the following question:

Q.: There seems to be a contradiction as, if Al-Khidr (as) was preordained to commit these acts and this destiny was inevitable, then he would have been unable to kill him. However, as Al-Khidr (as) did, in fact, kill him, and thereby change the boy’s destiny, why didn’t he

alter his destiny in some other less destructively violent way?

To answer this, one must stress the fact is that there was no preordained, or predetermined destiny that was designed for the boy, in particular, nor for anybody, in general. Everyone is a free individual. However, it seems that –in accordance with Divine knowledge- it was revealed to Al-Khidr (as) that the boy was going to make absolutely wrong and totally -damaging choices in the future. As the boy was going to commit such flagrant violation, Al Khidr (as) was ordered to terminate his young life, because it was the only possible alternative to put an end to this disparaging scenario.

In addition, one has to emphasize that the main and crucial message behind this story is to be summarized in one point, namely: 'Almighty Allah's (swt) Divine rules and codes cannot be grasped by the human being's inadequate intellect and ordinary narrow mind-set.' The intellect of mankind is limited and cannot necessarily understand, let alone absorb some of the Divine rules or codes of intervention. Therefore, one ought to accept His Will and Actions, without debriefing and setting question marks.

In many occasions of the Shari'ah's rules and regulations, one may encounter many practical laws that are not easily understood. One ought to accept them, and try one's best to uncover their underlying philosophies. But if man fails to perceive their philosophy, he must follow and adhere to those rules and regulations without questioning the underlying Divine wisdom. The time may come when some of these reasons may well be revealed to him; however one must accept them without denial or disbelieving rejection. So let us examine the messages that can be derived from those verses:

The Short Messages of the Qur'anic verse:

Reading through the verse 66 of the Chapter al-Kahf, one may discern the following short messages and the Divine instructions:

1. According to "بعكّاتـ هل" for receiving science, man should be polite and humble in front of his teacher.

2. According "بعكّاتـ هل" to being humble in front of the scholars and masters is concluded from the institution of the prophets (as).

3. According to "بعكّاتـ هل", those who are in love with science must learn to continuously move and attempt to discover new matters.

4. According to " "بعكّاتـ هل traveling with a scholar and enduring hardships for acquiring knowledge and reaching maturity and perfection is valuable.

5. According to "منّعلُـتـ أن على" the one who seeks science, he should have purpose and he should not seek personality.

6. According to" " منّعلُـتـ أن although sometimes divine works advance with a miracle, the main rule is measuring the natural direction. Moses should serve Al-Khidr as an apprentice in order that he can learn wisdom.

7. According to "منّعلُـتـ أن على" the arch prophets also didn't refuse acquiring science.

8. According to " " Al-Khidr (as) was a prophet and he had divine knowledge by God.

9. According to " متّـِلـُء " measuring the way of perfection and reaching the special divine sciences needs a teacher and guide.

10. According to " ...ما ّمم منّ علُ ت " the science of the prophets is limited and it is increasable. (Even the most learned people of the time have scientific limitation).

11. According to "...ما ّمم منّ علُ ت " levels of the prophets in enjoying science and perfection is different.

12. According to " منّ لَعُ ت " enjoying from all of the degrees of science and perfection is not from the conditions of prophet-hood.

13. According to "شدا ُر متّ ِلُ ع ا ّمم منّ علُ ت" being aware of divine sciences is a guarantee of the maturity and perfection of man.

14. According to "شدا ُر " science is not the only aim, but it should be the source of maturity, it should lead mankind to good deeds and bring humility for him, not pride and dispute[11].

Based on those guidelines, it seems to be far-fetched, or far from being easy to establish a modern Islamic civilization, as long as one is not equipped with those Divine gifts, nor is willing to assiduously adhere to those norms. Although Moses (as) was, also, honoured to be directly spoken to by Almighty God, the other party, however, was given more helpful information that - later on- was perceived to be extremely blessed, advantageous and useful. It is this kind of knowledge, one should greatly embrace and which is needed in order to lead a successful and prevailing modern Islamic civilization. One ought to strictly adhere to this kind of knowledge in order to achieve the peak of success and to establish the modern and Islamic civilization.

Towards the End: How to keep the practice humane?

We have previously stipulated the main conditions for an Islamic and Qur'anic civilization. We have also explained that it ought to be humane. Let us now re-examine some of the civilized aspects that are globally required. Some civilized requirements are as follows:

- On the social collective side: When one insists that any form of a prevailed civilization and 'human-friendly civilization can only be accepted, if it fulfils the following conditions:

· All of the programs -regardless of which field and for what purposes they are designed- should take all of mankind's natural needs into consideration. One should also remember that there is a life hereafter where each individual will stand responsible for whatever has been committed.[12]

· All of the programs -regardless of which field and for which purposes they are designed - should accommodate the material as well as the spiritual and Divine values of all mankind's various beliefs.

· All of the programs -regardless of which field and for which purposes they are designed - should remain firm with zero-tolerance towards any form of injustice, pointless discrimination, futile invasion or oppression.'[13]

These words and examples are encouraging, if we were to re-examine mankind, his thoughts and its achievements for the last centuries. However, there are a number of incidents that lead us to reflect about the actual conditions of the various civilizations. Those shall be presented towards the end of this article.

Points for Reflection

Muslims are facing many challenges that ought to be faced while various solutions must be provided in order to win. According to many thinkers the main reason for the current crisis in the Islamic world, especially in Arab countries, lies in being deviated from the right path and being inclined to the extreme side of excess, due to having left moderation behind.

The main deviation designed by foreign strategic and hegemonic thinkers having formed and provided political and ideological support to the takfiri groups, was aimed at mutilating the vision of Islam and ruining the image of the great Prophet (sawas) globally. Knowing Islam's high moral values and the elevated position of the Prophet (sawas), as the prophet of mercy, as well as the greatest reformer of human civilization, one must use all opportunities in order to express this true position and his elevated status.

The contemporary world faces many misleading incidents that even when they take place, Western mass media try to emphasize exploiting them in order to deeply mislead the majority of European youths.

Some of the recent incidents that took place in Europe have echoed some of American strategists' brainchild of the Clash of Civilizations. We are not about discussing the news and how it was genuinely reproduced to the public, nor shall we evaluate the theory of the Clash of civilizations, rather one can highlight some of the crucial facts that have been overlooked, and remind each and every one to reflect and reach the right target. These are as follows:

· Only those whom they meant to introduce were presented. However, few individuals have read the name of the late Spanish soldier -a member of the UNIFIL peacekeeping forces- who was killed during an Israeli attack on the location of the peacekeeping forces in Southern Lebanon on 28.1.2015. His name was not widely disclosed to the public, despite the

fact that those incidents have taken place almost on close dates.[14]

· A few weeks before this, European youths were shocked, due to a terrorist attack on French soil, by some professional killers. They had been trained as professional killers in order to promote American style democracy in Syria. Upon their return to France, nobody was able to predict their actions, based on minds fully loaded with anti-social xenophobic hatred combined with bitter feelings, due to the near collapse of the self-proclaimed caliphate. All the European nations were under shock, but so were the Muslims who couldn't understand why anyone would use the slogan: 'Allahu Akbar' [God is great] merely to subsequently kill civilians.

· Since then many youths have carried the political cry: 'Je suis Charlie', as a direct impulsive reactionary response to those terrorist acts. One has no doubt that terrorist attacks are disgusting. No one desires to be killed in the name of God, nor after hearing the slogan of 'Allahu Akbar'.

· When the previously mentioned incident took place in Lebanon, did every single individual amongst the majority of those youths ask him/herself the following question: 'Would I -as a European youth- accept to be killed by an Israeli air strike or by mortar shells, while for the entire life I have tried to be an ambassador of peace?' If they had asked this question, I have no doubt that the answer would have been: Of course not!

· The fact is that incidents like these must lead each and every Western individual to stop for few minutes to reflect and think twice: Which side -at least – would one prefer to be on, if one were to die or be assassinated in this chaotic world of insanity and flagrant violation of the minimum levels of human rights?

· Referring back to the Israeli attack on Lebanon, one can still claim that -at least- the name of the Lebanese young man, who was assassinated by the Israeli air strike, amongst other military members as well as the Iranian revolutionary guard member, Gen.

Allahdadi on 18.1.2015, was disclosed as: Jihad Mughniyah.[15]

· The question is what was in the minds of those Israeli perpetrators who fired the bomb-shells, or those who dropped the bombs over the victims? For me, it has removed all doubts that those agents -whether a pilot involved in the airstrike or those who fired mortar shells directed at the southern Lebanese villages- were shouting deep within their hearts: ‘Long Live Israel!

· As such they are also crimes committed while whispering the name of a so-called holy nation, or for the sake of Almighty God! The only differences are that those terrorists revealed their motives, while these Israeli perpetrators were hypocrites, as they preferred to conceal the motives behind their acrimonious attacks. Israel has never acknowledged responsibility, in fact has rather denied anything but a miniscule knowledge about the Iranian general amongst the convoy. Jihad Mughniyah, on the other hand, was not important for them to be counted, as he was a son of a terrorist -and those terrorists, in Israeli ‘justified’ so-called logic- ought to be killed with their sons as well family members, as they accomplished in the murder of Sayyed Abbas al-Musawi in the early nineties. He was assassinated with his wife and son.[16]

· Here lies the whole fundamental question: If these were not civilized acts, why weren’t they condemned by other civilized nations? If these were civilized acts, then why does one deny the theory of ‘Clash of Civilizations’?[17]

· That is the crucial cause as to why one felt the need to espouse another moderate theory, which adopts a moderate pathway between contradiction and complementarity.[18] Whatever the answer to the previous questions would be, one should certainly declare the following cry here:

French: ‘Je ne suis pas Charlie, mais Francisco Javier Soria Tolido, ou Jihad ‘Emad Mughniyah’.

English: ‘I’m not Charlie, rather either Francisco Javier Soria Tolido, or Jihad ‘Emad Mughniyah’.

Conclusion

· In this article we have tried to answer four questions that are essential in order to be able to grasp the technical meaning of civilization and what were and are the crucial elements of any form of civilization.

· One has grasped the fundamental and crucial elements that are needed in the modern Qur’anic-Islamic civilization, after a clear distinction was presented between the Islamic and the Muslim civilizations.

· Towards the end, examples of good and encouraging cases were produced; however some worrying cases have been highlighted to pin-point the already existing clash and complementarity of the various forms of existing civilizations.

[1] Future of Religion, Rodney Stark & William Sims Bainbridge, p. 174-175

[2] Future of Religion, Rodney Stark & William Sims Bainbridge, p. 180-181

[3] (Ruther Bleirer 1984, 198, 199) as cited in ‘A Feminist Dictionary’ by Chris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler, Pandora Press, London, 1985

[4] See ‘A Perfect Governor’, by late Grand Ayatollah S. Muhammad Fazil Lankarani, transl. and edited with annotation by Ali H. Al-Hakim, p. 14, published by IJCA, London, 2012

[5] Most of those quoted ideas were mentioned in Arabic references, but one can see chapter

7 entitled: Islam wa Tamadun: Dar Andisheh Hasan Hanafi wa Malik bin Nabi', in the book: 'Kawesh Hay Nazari dar ilahyat wa Tamadun, by Habibullah Baba'ie, pp. 274-288, published by Peshuheshga Farhang wa 'ulum Islami, Qum, Spring 3014

[6] Holy Qur'an, Chapter Ibrahim 14, verse 24.

[7] Surah Ibrahim, 47

[8] See 'tahaluf al-Hadharat, by Dr. Ibrahim al-'ashiqar al-ja'afari, pp. 15-25, published by Mua'assat al-Kitab, Baghdad, 2015

[9] Most of those quoted ideas were mentioned in the book: Islam Hadhari, but one can see 'paywast 1 entitled: Tarjumeh wa Talkhis: Islam Tamaduni: Pouli Miyan Sunnat wa Tajadud', in the book: 'Kawesh Hay Nazari dar ilahyat wa Tamadun, by Habibullah Baba'ie, pp. 398-391, published by Peshuheshga Farhang wa 'ulum Islami, Qum, Spring 3014

[10] See the Scale of Wisdom, by M. Rayshahri, H. no.: 5981, Section: 1701, p. 1044, Published by ICAS press, London, 2009

[11] Following saying the prayer, the prophet (sawas) used to say: "I take refuge in God from the science (knowledge) which is not useful", Behar, v 86, p18.

[12] Kitab Naqd, Dr. Ramin Khanbegi, p. 3Year 5, Nr. 4, Year 7, Nr. 1, Tehran/I.R.Iran, 2003

[13] See 'Current Issues: A Shi'ah Reflection, by Ali H. Al-Hakim, pp. 85-86, published by I.A.F., London-Oslo, 2015

-[14] See: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/29/spain-calls-un-inquiry-death-spanish peacekeeper-lebanon

Accessed on 14.4.2015

-[15] See: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/19/top-iranian-general-hezbollah fighters-killed-israel-attack-syria

Accessed on 18.4.2015

[16] See: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/399459/Abbas-al-Musawi

Accessed on 18.4.2015

[17] For further details, see the Clash of Civilizations, by Samuel P. Huntington

http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/Huntington_Clash.pdf

Accessed on 18.4.2015

[18] See for further details, ‘Current Issues: A Shi’ah Reflection, by Ali H. Al-Hakim, pp. 133-134, published by I.A.F., London-Oslo, 2015