



ELECTRONIC ISLAMIC MAGAZINE

A Book That  
Angered More  
Than **100.000**  
E-Muslims!

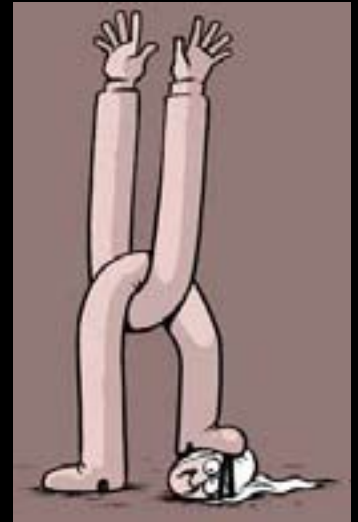
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**Dr. Alsuwaidan's  
Good Omen**

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**Dr. Elmessiri**  
Analyses the New  
Islamic Discourse

**Imad Hajjaj**  
A Campaigning  
Caricaturist



**Plus:** Macrophone,  
Life Makers, Med-Aware, Occidental View,  
In Depth, Graph-Art & Photo-Great

A Critical Reading in the  
**"Sami-Yusufianism"**

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# FEATURES OF THE NEW ISLAMIC DISCOURSE (Part 1 of 4)

**S**ome people tend to view Islam as if it were a monolithic or uni-dimensional entity. Islam is undoubtedly the faith of transcendental monotheism, the belief in Allah, (the one and only God), who transcends both man and nature. But monotheism does not lead to monism; on the contrary, it leads to plurality and diversity. For from a strictly Islamic point of view, except for God, everything else exists in variety. Therefore, there is not one single Islamic discourse, but rather a variety of discourses that manifest the various endeavours (ijtihad) of the Muslims, within a specific time and place, to understand the world around them and to interpret the Qur'an. One may classify the Islamic discourse prevalent at the present time in the following manner:

## **1. A Populist Salvationist "Messianic" Discourse:**

This is the discourse of the overwhelming majority of the Muslim masses that have instinctively realised that the processes of modernisation, secularisation and globalisation do the ummah (Muslim community) no good and bring no real reform. These masses have observed that these processes are in essence nothing but processes of westernisation, that rob the ummah of its religious and cultural heritage, giving it nothing in return, and that have only led to more colonial hegemony and to more class polarisation within society. Adhering and clinging to Islam, which they know real well, the masses encapsulated themselves within their Islamic heritage, cry for help, and hope for salvation from Allah. But they are



**By Dr. Abdelwahab Elmessiri\***

incapable of contributing any new ideas or organising any political movements. Such a discourse frequently expresses itself in the form of spontaneous and, at times, violent acts of protest against all forms of radical westernisation and colonial invasion. But more usually it expresses itself in the form of philanthropy, either at the individual level (giving money to the poor), or at the community level (building mosques, hospitals and schools or providing meals to the public especially in Ramadan, etc.). The populist discourse is mainly the discourse of the poor and the marginal, but it is also the discourse of those wealthy members of society who appreciate their religious and cultural heritage, and who recognise that its loss would mean a loss of everything.

## **2. The Political Discourse:**

This is the discourse of some middle

class professionals, academicians, students and traders, who perceive the need for an Islamic action that can protect this ummah. These people, having realised that political action is the means for achieving their objective, have set up or joined political organisations that do not resort to violence, and out of which youth and educational organisations may branch. Some of the bearers of this political discourse harboured, at one time, the illusion that taking over the central state would be the long sought panacea, and some of them did actually develop para-military organisations and tried to infiltrate the armed forces and to seize power by force. However, as of 1965, as will be shown later, there has been a general inclination toward working through the existing legitimate political channels. Most of the bearers of this political discourse, at the present time, tend to restrict their activity to the political and/or the educational sphere.

### 3. The Intellectual Discourse:

This is the discourse that deals primarily with the more theoretical and intellectual issues. This classification does not mean that the three discourses exist in total isolation, the one from the other. In fact, the populist and political discourses, more often than not, merge into one another, and the same can be said about the political and intellectual discourses. Notwithstanding the common ground shared by the three kinds of discourse, we deem it useful, from the analytical point of view, to assume their independence from one another. In addition to this synchronic system of classification, a chronological diachronic one might prove more relevant, from the standpoint of this paper:

#### A. The Old Islamic Discourse:

It emerged as a direct and immediate reaction to the colonial invasion of the Muslim world, and prevailed till the mid sixties.

#### B. The New Islamic

**Discourse:** After an initial period of indefiniteness and marginalisation, this discourse began to assume a more definite form in the mid-sixties, and started to move gradually toward the centre. Both discourses endeavoured to provide an Islamic answer to the questions raised by modernisation and colonisation. Nevertheless there are radical points of divergence between them that stem from two interrelated points:

1. Their respective attitudes vis-à-vis Western modernity.
  2. The varying levels of comprehensiveness of outlook that each discourse has developed.
- This paper primarily focuses on the old and the new intellectual Islamic discourses and to a much lesser degree on the political one. It tries to identify some of the salient characteristics of the new discourse. Any intellectual or political movement must pause from time to time to look critically at itself and to assess its performance so as to be able to abstract some of its own nascent

traits and crystallise them into a relatively coherent system, then map its own future course.

#### Position from Western Modernisation:

It is worth noting that the first generation of Muslim reformists came in contact with the modern Western cultural formation in a historical era that is considerably different, in many aspects, from the present one. It could be argued that the comprehensive secular paradigm, the fundamental paradigm underlying the modern Western cultural formation, has always occupied a central position in the conscience of modern Western man and has always moulded his view of the universe. It could also be said that the imperialist aspects of Western modernity manifested themselves only too clearly from the very beginning. All of these facts notwithstanding, modern Western civilisation viewed itself as a humanistic, man-centred civilisation, and maintained, for some time, at the level of vision if not also at the level of practice, a sense of balance and faith in absolute moral and human values. At the structural level, Western societies maintained, for a long period of time, a high level of social coherence and solidarity. Family values, far from being an empty social slogan remembered during election days, were a concrete social reality. But things changed. It might be useful, in this context, to conceive of secularism not as a fixed paradigm, but rather as a dynamic paradigmatic sequence that unfolds progressively in time and space. One can say that by the end of the nineteenth century, many of the links that make up this sequence had not yet materialised. Man's private life and many aspects of his public life were still beyond the reach of the processes of secularisation. In other words, Western man was a secularist only in some aspects of his public life, but in his private life as well as in

many aspects of his public life, he was committed to moral and human values, and, more often than not, to Christian religious values and code of ethics. When the first generation of Islamic reformists, the bearers of the old Islamic discourse, encountered this modern cultural formation, they did not interact with a comprehensive secular civilisation but rather with a partially secular one. Whereas partial secularism recognises the validity and importance of values on the moral level, and of the idea of totality on the epistemological level, comprehensive secularism denies them as well as the very idea of transcendence. Many of the negative aspects of Western modernity, which became later on more or less a recurrent pattern and central phenomena, were isolated events and marginal incidents that could be easily overlooked. Furthermore, the Western critique of modernity and of the Enlightenment had not yet been crystallised, in spite of the fact that the voices of protest were getting stronger. Western romantic literature, for instance, is in essence a protest against the negative aspects of Western modernity. The writings of some conservative Western thinkers, such as Edmund Burke, include references to many of the topics that were developed later by the Western critical discourse on modernity. Nevertheless, the shortcomings of modern Western civilisation, whether at the level of theory or at the level of practice, were not yet obvious to those who observed or studied this civilisation ■

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# IMAD HAJJAJ

## A CAMPAIGNING CARICATURIST

Interviewed by  
**Hasan Hamarsha**

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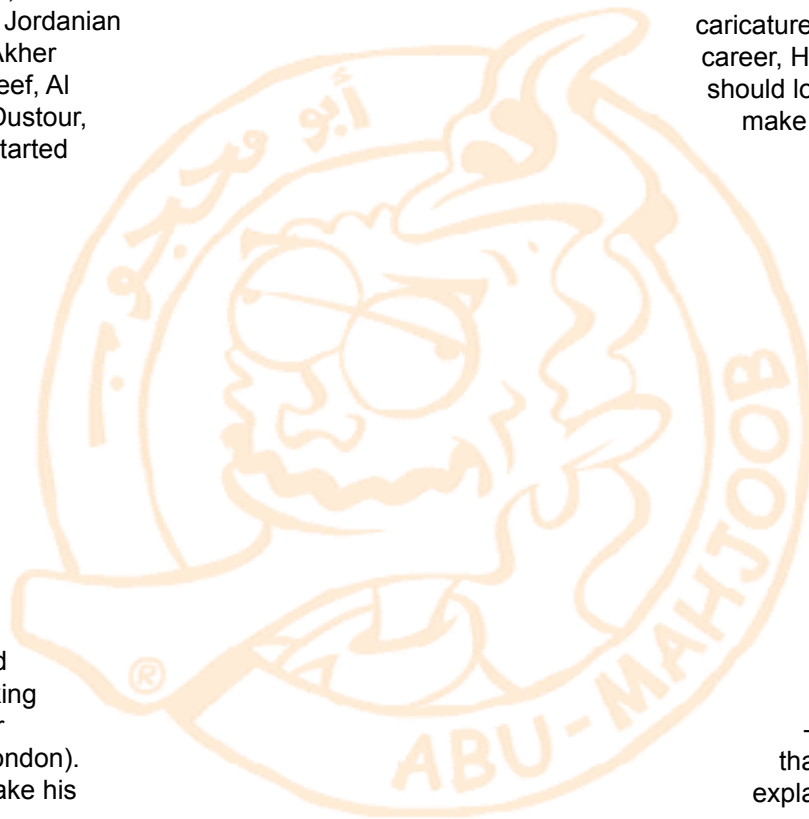
“This word in Arabic refers to something that is hidden and full of secrecy.” This is how Imad Hajjaj, the Palestinian Caricaturist defines his main caricature personality; Abu Mahjoob. Imad Hajjaj was born in Ramallah in 1967. He received Elementary Education at UNRWA schools at Al Wehdat Refugee Camp in Jordan. Imad received his First Award in 1974 in an elementary school competition. Hajjaj joined Al Yarmouk University to study Physics, and then he turned to study Journalism and Graphic Design. His first caricature was published in the university newspaper (Sahafat Al Yarmouk) in 1987. After graduation, he worked for several local Jordanian newspapers, including Akher Khabar, Al Ahali, Al Raseef, Al Bilad, Al Mustaqbal, Al Dustour, and Al Rai. In 1992 he started working for the London-based Al Quds Al Arabi newspaper, and then moved to work for Al Dustour. Since 1993 Hajjaj has been working at the leading Jordanian daily Al Rai, until he was dismissed after one of his controversial caricatures in the year 2000. Then he worked for Al Dustour daily newspaper from the year 2000 till the mid of 2004. Now he is working with Al Ghad newspaper and Al Quds Al Arabi (London). About his decision to make his talent and hobby in



caricature as his permanent career, Hajjaj states: “everyone should love his profession and make it his hobby.”

### What is your own definition for Caricature?

It is the art of representing reality in an ironic way; it includes the artist's vision for reality. Caricature is an art that combined both sarcasm and reality in an intensive and precise language that clarifies to the audience - in brief - complicated message that needs long articles to explain them.





Digital divide  
reflected  
in Hajjaj's  
caricatures

**Present for Mom:** The son asks his mother if she liked the satellite dish he bought until he is shocked that she turned it into a baking tool. His father thinks that the mobile phone is a bar of soap.



**Hajjaj**  
publishes his  
censored  
caricature  
online

[www.mahjoob.com](http://www.mahjoob.com)



### To whome do you draw your caricatures?

I'm not drawing for specific audiences. When I paint, I think in general and in full swing. However, after I give the final touches for the caricature, I judge it. I take into account my attitude and the editor-in-chief's attitude towards it. Sometimes, the paint is terminated or modified and sometimes it published as I painted it in the first time.

In my caricatures, I try to attract the largest number of audience, and for that reason I make the caricature with multi-readings. By that it attracts all kinds of readers; headline readers, and thoughtful readers who search for details and what is between the lines.

### Is the Caricaturist obligated to paint about the issues that are selected by the mass media?

No, it is not a necessity. The caricaturist is not a mirror that reflects what the mass media says. In my case specifically, the majority of my caricatures which I published in newspapers have no relations to any of the headlines. They focused on existing issues which are not posed for discussion. Sometimes I make a campaign about an issue by painting about it several times.

### Which topics attract you more to paint about, social or political ones? Which of them give the Caricaturist more opportunities to gain success?

In my opinion, the political caricature is more artistic than the social one, and it is closer to the mere definition of this art, as it is on the verge of being vacant of statements. Whenever the caricature is without comment, it will be more concentrated and will consequently

be better. So, the political caricature is in a contrast with the social caricature which includes meetings and conversations.

Also, the political caricature in many cases approaches you further to the masses, particularly if there is a serious political event and you paint about it. Timing here is a crucial element that you have to take into consideration.

Moreover, the political caricaturist is more qualified to gain success, as the political events have the priority among the Arab masses. Moreover, the Arab citizen is a political creature. Comparing with previous cases, the Palestinian caricaturist Naji Al-Ali's only motif was an absolute political one; the Palestinian issue. His caricatures were unique and magnificent and they obtained a positive feedback among the Arab masses.



**Which mass medium offers to you the chance to freely publish your caricatures?**

Till now, the ideal medium for me to publish my caricature freely is the Internet. I have worked for several newspapers, none of them, unfortunately, could publish all of my caricatures. For example, during the last Arab summit, one of my caricatures included portraits for some Arab leaders, Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper apologised of publishing it. The same caricature and after I published it on the Internet, it gained an excellent reaction from the audience.



Abu Mahjoob (right) and Abu Mohammad, Hajjaj's main characters



**Dear Santa Claus:** The first to the right sock reads "children of the world", the second "children of Iraq", and the third "children of Palestine."

**Which of your caricatures exposure mostly to criticism?**

Some of my caricatures had been banned from being published; I published them later in my own book. In addition, there is the caricature which as a result of it I have been fired from Al-Rai

Newspaper. The administration of Al-Rai considered that by this caricature I caused a threat for the newspaper's financial interests, as there was a commercial contract between the newspaper and Fast Link Company, the company which I criticised in my caricature.

In my opinion, the caricature is part of journalism, so you will hear criticisms about your work. This is the difficult equation which caricaturists face, how to achieve the highest level of freedom without losing your job or even life, as in the case of Naji Al-Ali.

**In many of your caricatures, you focus on the Palestinian issue, do you have a plan to publish or to make an exhibition in Palestine?**

There was a plan to arrange an exhibition for me in Ramallah at the end of the year 2000, but this plan was cancelled as a result of the outbreak of Al-Aqsa intifada. As I heard from people there, I think I have a high percentage of readers in Palestine, some of the local Palestinian newspapers publish my caricatures also ■



# A Clip That Clapped !

## A CRITICAL READING IN THE “SAMI-YUSUFIANISM”

By  
**Hayat Alyaqout**

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If you hear praising of Allah and prophet Mohammad (PBUH) on a TV channel that airs nothing but almost-nude video clips that are moreover inflicted with the single leitmotif of “I love her, she loves me, and her she-camel loves my he-camel!” as expressed by an old Arab poet, then this cannot be construed save under one of these three possibilities:

- 1- You are in a less than rational state of mind; you might be hallucinating, daydreaming, or -in the best-case scenario thinking wishfully;
  - 2- Another TV channel has taken over the broadcast;
  - 3- Or, Sami Yusuf was illuminating there.
- This is not the only thing that



attracts one's attention about Sami Yusuf' video clip “Almu'allim” or “the teacher.” The spelling of his last name as “Yusuf” is rather embarrassing for us native speakers of Arabic who - on a daily basis - mispronounce the name as “yousif” although the Qur'anic pronunciation is “Yusuf.” This embarrassment is even doubled in the case of some of the desperately-longing-to-be-cool members of my generation who insist – willingly and even purposively – on camouflaging most of the sounds that gives Arabic its own phonological identity, the reason behind the double embarrassment is that Yusuf – who is a British of Azeri descent – and who does not speak Arabic was pronouncing the Arabic sounds in an eloquent manner teaching Arabs and Muslims to be proud of the language of their holy book.

Fortunately enough, this embarrassment did not deter

the “cool party” of my generation from being fascinated with Yusuf's performance, and how can they not be fascinated? Yusuf seems to be more than just a normal singer or even a songster; he is the composer, the lyricist and the arranger of Almu'allim video clip which was directed by Hani Osama. Yusuf is preaching and practicing a solid and promising theory in the field of “Inshad” (singing that covers religious themes). Having blended simple – yet effective – words of Arabic with English ones, and having diversified the musical harmonies, not only did Yusuf attract non-Arab Muslims, but also those Arabs who were tethered in the lowest layer of musical creativity that cashes in on merchandising the human body.

**The video clip insinuates that there is no conflict between modernity and devotedness**







## Intellectualised Melodies

Almu'allim breached the stagnant stereotypes that have always encircles "inshad." Actually, this breach has two layers; one is related to the format, while the other is related to the content.

**1-** Some of you might be familiar with traditional nasheeds where the singer would stand wearing an embroidered cloak that is highly reminiscent of the Abbasid period. Moreover, a very naïve and artificial background would accompany the performance with birds flying or with the sun setting in the horizon. It is needless to mention the boring expression of the face of the singer. Fortunately, Almu'allim has set a new phase that is eradicating this dull face of inshad.

**2-** On a more sophisticated level, the video clip has vanquished a very subtle and dangerous stereotype;

the conflict between devoutness and modernity. In the clip, Yusuf performs the role of a young photographer; who has a modern hobby (or a job) that cherishes visual beauty, lives in a splendid house, dresses as any other young man in this age, and drives a Jeep. All of these are symbols of modernity at least in the very crude and materialistic level. In the same time, we see an opened Qur'an that is not covered by dust in the lab of the young man who does not forget to kiss his mother's hand before leaving the house. On his way to practice his hobby/job, he saves a blind person from stumbling, leads a multi-ethnic group of children in prayer, and even plays with them. All of these are practical manifestations of the great manner of prophet Mohammad (PBBUH) our mu'allim (teacher). The combination of these two layers of symbols (modernity, and the manners of the

## Inshad vs Religious Singing

Inshad is the singing that covers religious themes and should not be confused with "religious singing" which is a ritual in some religions.



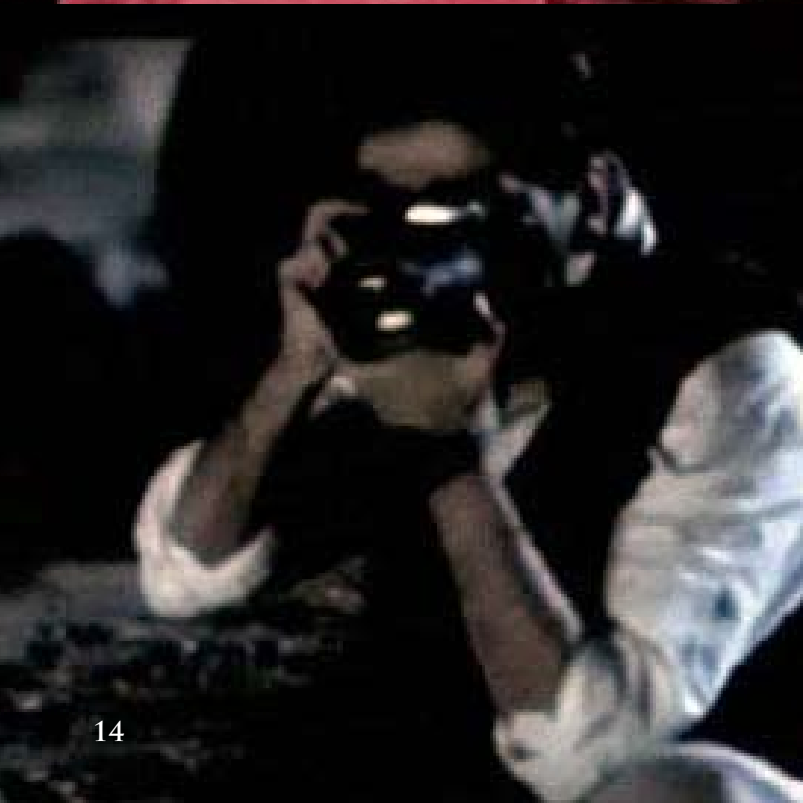
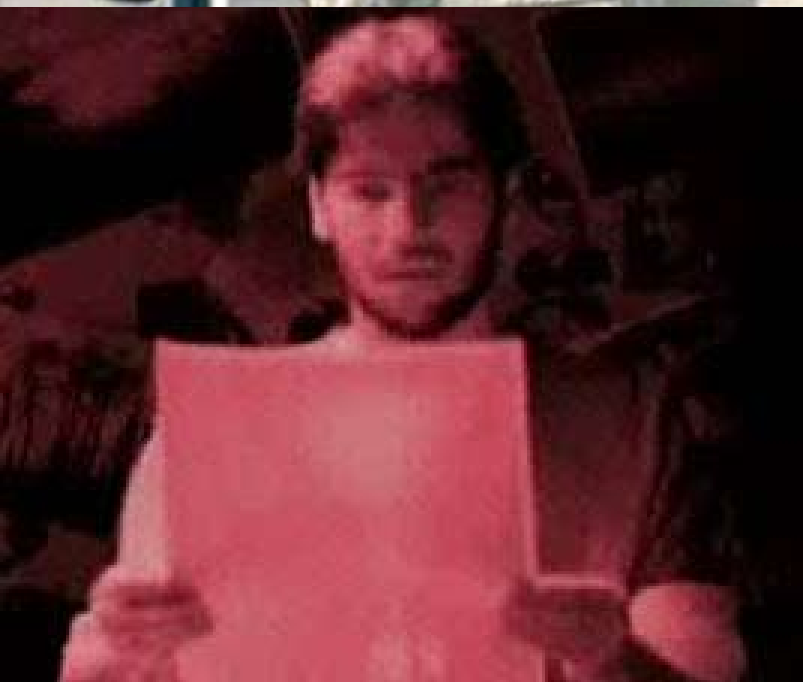


prophet) disillusion the viewer and conquers a stereotype that once was once an axiom. It's not a secret that many will watch the video clip for its inviting performance and for the charm of Yusuf's voice, yet the indirect message that the video clip craftily insinuates will hopefully find its way to the viewers minds, partially at least if not fully.

Indeed, we are not done with symbolism yet. A more profound indirect message comes towards the end of the clip. When the young man sets a fire to take pictures of it, a light shining behind a mountain dazzles him. He then climbs to the light to discover a lightened framework. This framework also appears as the cover of the album, which by the way has seven more nasheeds other than Almu'allim. This part has advanced symbolism, because the framework could be simply a neon advertisement or a part of a building, yet in the video clip it was philosophised as the light brought to humanity by prophet Mohammad (PBBUH). The stereotype I talked about earlier is vanquished once again

here; the framework represents a material object (a neon advertisement perhaps) which is a symbol of modernity, yet it also represents the light of devoutness, which inculcates the notion of seeing Islam's light in every aspect of our life even materialistic ones.

Another point to add here is that the framework's light was more attention-seizing than the fire's light, which also delivers an indirect message that man-made light (the fire the photographer lit) can never emulate the Allah-made light (the light of the framework that symbolised the light of Mohammad's message). Actually, this distinction is found linguistically in Arabic in the words "dhia" and "noor"; dhia is a self-stemming light, while "noor" is just a secondary light that takes its glamour from another source, as expressed in the chapter of "Yunus", verse number 5. The young man takes a photo of the splendourous light, and smiles serenely. He then develops it and posts it over all other photographs, the video clip then concludes. When you believe in the light, you will definitely see it, and you may even take a photo of it too!



## **Sami-Yusufianism? Pick It from the Dictionary!**

I can see "Sami Yusuf" as an entry in the encyclopedias and dictionaries that deal with musical arts. His name will not only be entered as singer or as a composer, but also as a creative artist who presented a new genre. The term "Sami-Yusifianism" will be coined to point to the new doctrine in art, and you will often hear such comments as "this nasheed belongs to the Sami-Yusufian school." And until then, prick your ears to what Sami says. Oh, and also raise your hand and say with me, "Sami, may Allah reward you!" Stand up and clap your hands for a video clip that clapped the scene ■

**To watch Almu'allim video clip  
and other nasheeds  
by Sami Yusuf go to:  
[www.samiyusuf.com](http://www.samiyusuf.com)**





# “Life Makers”

## WHY NOW?

By  
**Hicham Maged**

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“Life Makers” or “Sunaa’ Ul Hayah” in Arabic is a new term that has been introduced to our daily vocabulary. The term was first introduced to the public in February 2004 by the 38 year old da’iah\* Amr Khaled in a TV program broadcast on Iqraa TV channel under the same name.

The program works under the wide vision of Islam to life which states that man is Allah Almighty’s vicegerent on earth for a definite mission; to urbanise it in order to gain the reward from Allah Almighty and enter the heaven in the hereafter. Or as expressed in the Holy Qur’an:

“And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not.” (The Holy Qur’an, the chapter of Albaqarah: verse 30, Pickthall’s translation)

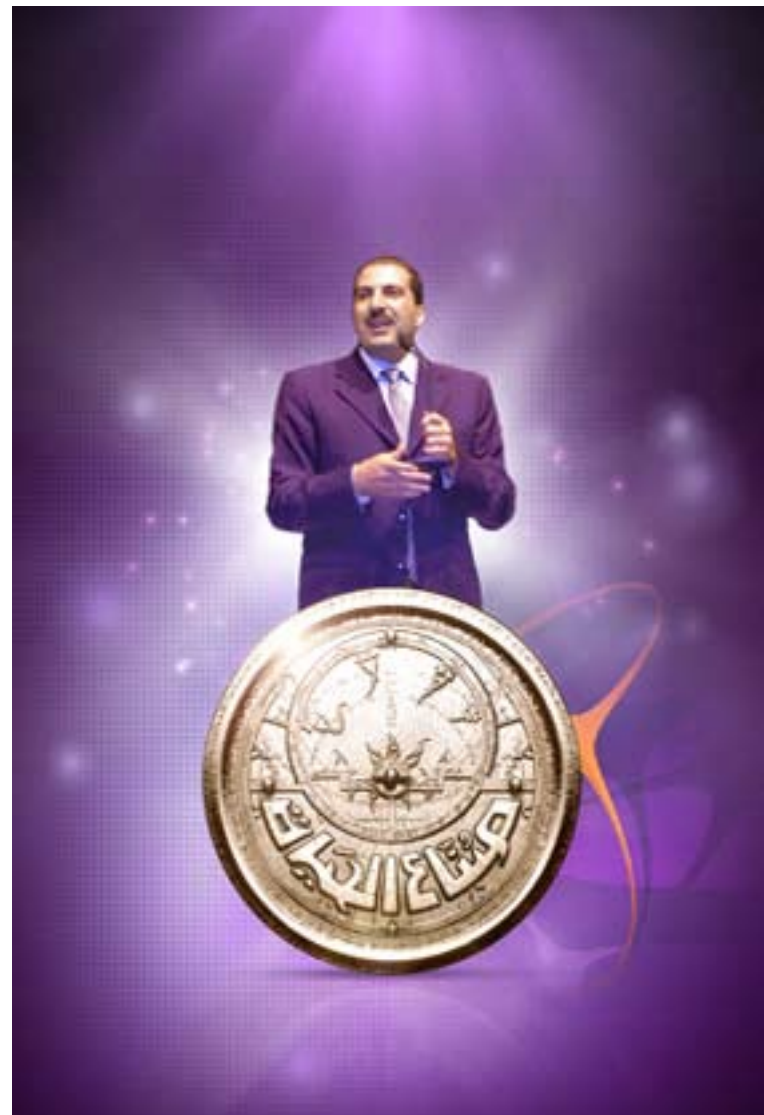
Under this framework, the program was introduced to the public in order to launch a revival plan for the Arab and Islamic nation to fulfill the goal of creation.

One might ask, how can this happen

while the bitter situation in which Arabs and Muslims live predominates? We are in a very critical situation where we had reached rock bottom taking nothing but the last ranks amongst other nations. The answer simply is that when a nation – any nation – starts the process of rediscovering its own potential powers, it can transfer those powers into kinetic energy which will eventually help in achieving a renaissance afterwards.

The potential powers of the Arab and Islamic nation are numerous both material and mental ones, but the main power resides in the minds of its youth who are the core of any nation as they shape its role. In other words:

- When you are aware about who you are, you can do everything because you have a clear vision;
- When you are unaware about who you are, you cannot do anything because you are in a fog or a coma.



In order to make this awareness process, a step-by-step recovery program should be established and launched in order to make youth rediscover themselves and their own abilities. And for that goal, the program – or we’d better call it the project – has been aired. It went through two main phases since February 2004.

### Phase I : Breaking the Shackles

The goal of the first phase of the program is to break the shackles that tie people to the ground and prevent them from rising up.

The shackled areas are:

\* Da’iah is a person who performs a role similar to that of a preacher or an evangelist in Christianity, yet is not a clergyman since there are none in Islam. According to the Qur’an, every Muslim is required to be a da’iah.

1. Positiveness;
2. Perfection;
3. Seriousness;
4. Fighting smoking;
5. Say No to qat and alcohol;
6. Say No to drugs;
7. Preserving our resources;
8. Set your goal in life;
9. The value of time;
10. Utilising our minds.

And by breaking the shackles, people will transfer from being negative watchers to positive actors by participating in some projects such as "Collecting Clothes", "Don't Harm Us with Your Smoke" and "Guardians of the Future."

The final product was having people - youth in particular - come out from the dark room of despair by freeing themselves from the 10 shackles. Now they have self-confidence in their own abilities, and it seems that a new vision had been implanted there; everything is possible by will and work.

## Phase II: Taking Off

In the second phase of the program, the goal is to invest the abilities the viewers discovered into energy which makes them able to participate in decision-making processes, a thing that rarely happens in the Arab world. We can even safely say that it takes place for the first time in the last 200 years.

Also for the first time in the Arab world, this participation took place via asking the viewers to dream loudly. One of the forums in the website is titled "dream about your country's status after 20 years." And thus people - again for the first time in the modern Arab history - are called to participate via the Internet ([www.amrkhaled.net](http://www.amrkhaled.net)) to post their dreams in 23 fields which can shape the the future of the aspired renaissance. People had posted over 775,000 suggestions and ideas so far. Those dreams have been then organised to be voted on also by people via the forum of the above mentioned site so that each sugges-

tions will take a rank on the priority list for the projects, this is called long term projects for the renaissance. While - in parallel - other short-term projects are being embarked everywhere by life makers teams who had been established by the Muslim youth in almost every country worldwide; Arab countries, Europe, Canada and the USA.

## Phase III (Coming during February)

In the third phase of the program the priority list of dreams - which had been voted on by the viewers - will be given to the scientists and scholars to set action plans in order to start those projects throughout the next 20 years.

For that matter, the fields were categorised into 10 main themes:

1. Industry;
2. Agriculture;
3. Environment and health;
4. Women rights;
5. Social peace;
6. Technology
7. Education;
8. Unity of our countries;
9. Art and culture
10. Scientific research.

People are called to participate into those huge projects with total co-operation between international organisations and local governments

in order to achieve the aspired renaissance after 20 years in sha' Allah "God willing."

If you are in front of your computer, go ahead and log on to [www.amrkhaled.net](http://www.amrkhaled.net) to find a complete virtual world where people share their own ideas and dreams. They, moreover, discuss how it began to change their lives. This is the reason that [www.amrkhaled.net](http://www.amrkhaled.net) is now listed in the top 500 global website according to Alexa.com, an authoritative websites ranking company. The website receives thousands of hits every day worldwide, either from visitors or from the participants in different projects there.

It is now clear why this is not a typical program, but rather a renaissance project that had unleashed the abilities of the Muslim youth worldwide with its famous slogan: "together, we shall make life" ■

### For more information on "Life Makers":

[www.amrkhaled.net](http://www.amrkhaled.net)  
<http://forum.amrkhaled.net>

### Read in the coming issues

About successful "Life Makers" projects and exclusive interviews!



# Beit Exa

## A NEW VICTIM OF THE SEGREGATION WALL



By  
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Translated by:  
**Hasan Hamarsha**

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On the summits of three high mountains, seer can clearly distinguish between a small number of simple houses with narrow roads, belong to the Palestinians, and huge luxurious ones surrounding by public parks and large roads, belong to the Israeli settlers.

This is the Palestinian village, Beit Exa, which is located in the western north of Jerusalem. The population of this village is around 1500 which is a very small number comparing with the population of the nearby Israeli settlements which reach to 100000 settlers.

The people of Beit Exa were shocked a few days ago with the Israeli Bulldozers demolishing their farms and separating them from the Palestinian villages around Beit Exa.

An unclear future is waiting for the residences of Beit Exa. The majority of the people there wish to be located in the Palestinian side of the segregation wall, to preserve the remaining land of their village. The

Israeli army had confiscated 363000 square meters from the village lands to build the wall on it.

Mohammed Al-Dahla, the lawyer of the damaged people in Beit Exa, mentions that the Israeli army claimed that Beit Exa will stay out of the wall, and its people will be treated by a special martial law, the law of segregation areas. They will be allowed to travel to the other Palestinian villages through an Israeli checkpoint, but they will not be allowed to enter to the city of Jerusalem.

Recent gossips spread between the public that the Israeli government will join Beit Exa to Jerusalem province and exchange their Palestinian ID cards with Israel ones ■



*\* Billal Ghait is a Palestinian journalist. He has a BA in journalism and political science, and is doing his master's in international studies at Birzeit University.*

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# DR. ALSUWAIDAN'S GOOD OMEN!



By  
**Osama Alshaheen\***  
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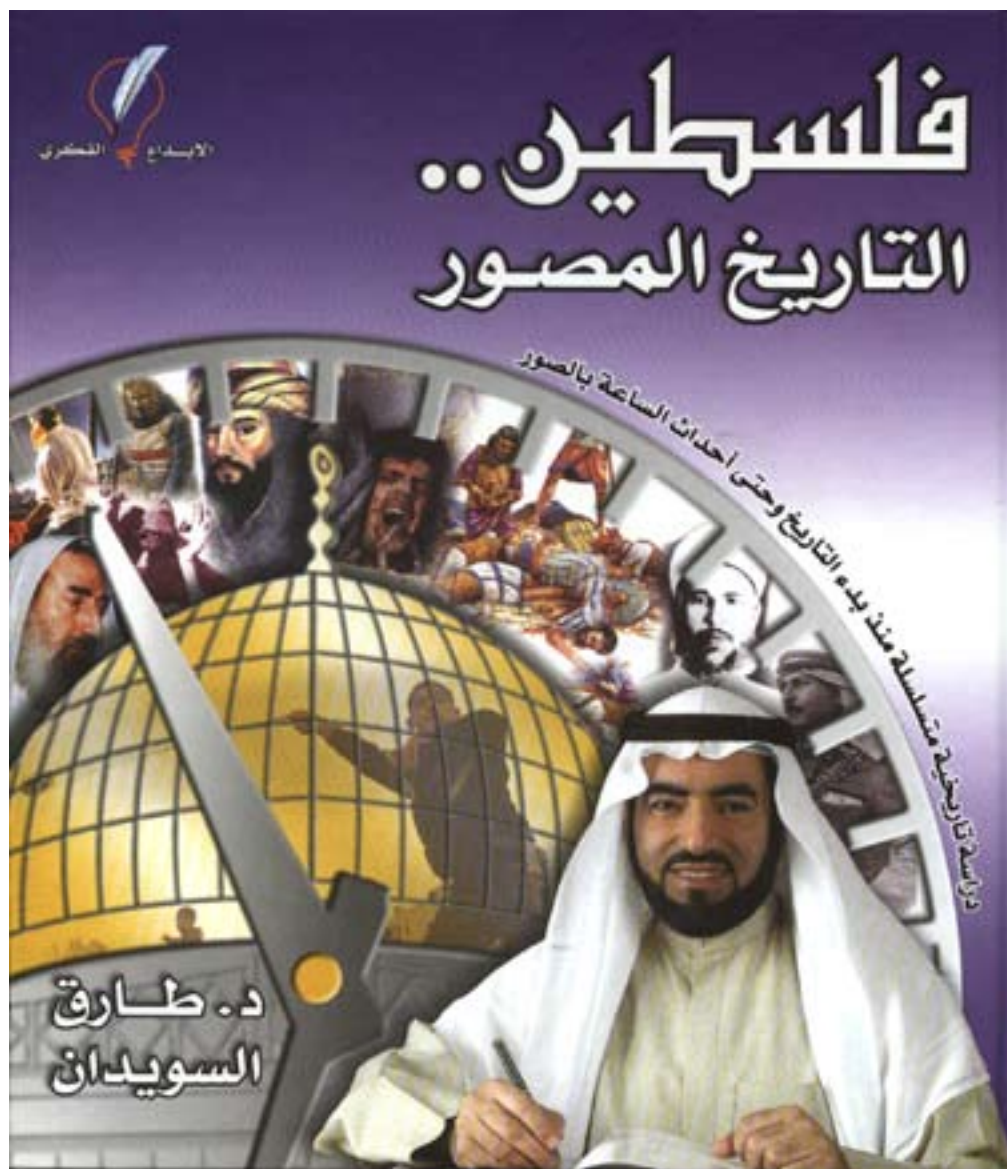
Translated by:  
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Nothing pleased me lately as much as the last book of Dr. Tariq Alsuwaidan "Palestine: The Illustrated History" that was accomplished in March 2004 A.D, Moharram 1425 A.H. The reasons behind my happiness are many, amongst which are:

**1-** The distinguished content of the book which deals with the history of the Palestinian cause in five lengthy sections:

- Palestine before Islam;
- Palestine in the Islamic era;
- The ottoman period and the English reign;
- Palestine under the Jewish occupation;
- The intifada (uprising) and peace.

Each section is divided into detailed chapters that are rich in historical, biographical and statistical information.



**2-** The great artistic layout and the fine printing;

The same level of attention paid to the content was also paid to the format. The book has 430 pages of big size glossy paper, incorporating 500 photographs and illustrations out of 10.000 pictures that were initially collected to present this valuable book in an inviting shape.

**3-** The attractive style of writing.

I – and everybody I talked to about the book - agreed that the author – may Allah reward him – has a great ability to attract the reader's attention and concentration. When you read the first pages of the book, you will find yourself progressing further. This is expected in stories or in some types of literary writings, but the writer – with Allah's aid – could also extend this to historical writ-



*The Children of Israel collecting the manna (above) and the quails.*  
© Palestine: The Illustrated History, Page 33.

ing via several techniques such as dividing the text into small paragraphs that are aided with pictures, biographical names, and dates.

What pleased me the most amongst those rare advantages in Arabic and Islamic books, is the good omen Dr. Alsuwaidan brought to us in the fifth chapter "A futuristic look of Palestine." The author – aided by his scholarship – points out that liberating Alaqsa Mosque and Palestine from the occupying Zionists is possible and even probable if such prerequisites as sound planning, unification of efforts, and obtaining power and strength are met.

The omens of victory that the prophet (PBUH) brought to us such as the great battle between the Muslims and the Jews, and the stones and trees telling the Muslims that the Jews are hiding behind them are not expected to take place soon though. The holy Quran tells us about two phases of corruption the children of Israel inflict the earth with "And we decreed for the Children of Israel in the scripture: you verily will work corruption in the earth twice and you will become great tyrants" Al-Isra', 4) Most scholars think that their first phase of corruption already took place until Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon deported them. Other

scholars however think that the first phase of corruption was ended when the caliph Omar Ibn Alkhattab – May Allah be pleased with him – entered Jerusalem. Dr. Alsuwaidan however presents a new point of view as he thinks that since Allah said "So when the time of the first of the two [phases] comes, we roused against you slaves of Ours ..." and Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer, it's then unlikely that it was him, nor was it Omar Ibn Alkhattab since he liberated Alaqsa Mosque from the Christians not from the Jews. The author thus concludes that the first phase of corruption is taking place right now and stopping the injustice is possible if believers exert their best efforts. The omens mentioned by the prophets are to take place in the second era of corruption which did not take place yet accord-



ing to Dr. Alsuwaidan.

In conclusion, I found valuable information on Sultan Abd-UI-Hameed, Balfour's promise, the black September, Camp David and many others. I'm sure that the readers will find avail, joy, and read more good omens narrated to us by Dr. Alsuwaidan and the production team of the book may Allah bless their efforts. Allah is the greatest, to whom all praise is due ■

*\* Osama Alshaheen is a Kuwaiti writer and the deputy editor-in-chief of Aletehad Magazine. He was the president of the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) in 1999-2000. He's a member in the executive office of the the Public Congress Opposing Normalisation with Zionist Entity in the Gulf .*

This article was originally published in Arabic on Nashiri:  
<http://www.nashiri.net/news.php?action=view&id=1279>

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**Book webiste:** [www.qudsbook.com](http://www.qudsbook.com)  
**Author website:** [www.suwaidan.com](http://www.suwaidan.com)

# I DON'T GENERALISE YET I HAVE MY PERCEPTIONS

By  
**Dennis Sullivan\***

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Our gracious host invited me to write something from a western perspective. I am far better at discourse than at grandstanding. I decided to write something that might get the ball rolling for a discussion. Here are a few thoughts that might get us started. I am going to be honest and say that I am somewhat sceptical about my reception and involvement here. I am a fairly conservative American. I voted for George Bush, although I do not agree with some of his course, I do agree with his overall goals and objectives.

I know there is nothing simple about what is going on in the Middle East. You cannot boil it all down to oil, religion, bigotry, economics, a lack of understanding, or even simple hatred. All of these have their roles in the situation but it goes beyond the easy explanation. Perhaps that is why the solution seems so elusive.

There are some questions that I have for those who are Muslim, I am not, and admittedly, I do not have much experience in discussing issues with Muslims. You see we have many perceptions that may be

accurate or they may be founded in myth. I do know that there are many factions of the Muslim faith and that it is almost as dangerous to generalise about all Muslims, as it would be to generalise about all Christians or all Americans.

**One** of our perceptions is that women are denied some basic human rights in many of the Muslim countries. Those who support Osama Bin Laden are great proponents of maintaining the heavy restrictions upon women dictated by Muslim tradition.

**Another** of our perceptions are along this same line of reasoning, where those who are non-believers are not treated very well; homosexuals are violently persecuted and, Jews are on guard for good reason. There is virtually no tolerance for anything even close to diversity in countries that are ruled by governments that controlled by Muslim clerics.

**We also** perceive that these countries resist modernity and freedom. We believe that the freedoms in our country are considered a threat to those who hate us the most in the Middle East. We know that freedom is part of the modern world, and the desire to live free is a powerful force that must be combated by those who fear it as a

threat.

**We further** believe that the youth in many of these countries are brought up to hate Americans. As long as this continues, there will be a perpetual antagonism between America and Muslims in the Middle East.

**We do** understand that the vast majority of Muslims are not supporters of Bin Laden and what he represents, and that there are some moderates within that religion. However, we never hear from them. Their voice is mute. It must be demonstrated to us that there is a voice out there that wants to be heard; a voice of moderation and consideration; a voice that welcomes discussion and an exchange of ideas. Perhaps this forum will be one of them. I have my doubts. I know that an honest exchange of ideas can quickly turn into belligerent arguments ■

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*\* Dennis Sullivan is a Graduate of Boston College with a degree in Political Science. He has a concentration in Soviet and Russian studies, studied in Russia, published several articles on the nature of the American people and their local politics, The Chinese perspective of the Cuban missile crisis, and Libertarianism within the Republican party. He currently lives in Bedford Massachusetts, and has lived in Massachusetts his whole life.*



# Clergy

## IN ISLAM

It is too easy to dismiss clergy in Islam, but this is not good enough. In Islam, there is no intermediary person between man/woman and God. I think, however, that the more important question to ask is: Why there is no clergy in Islam? The reasons for this are stated below.

The role of the clergy, as it is commonly understood, is to intercede between God and the faithful. This means that the worship of the individual needs the stamp of approval of the clergyman before God accepts it. The other side of it is that only the clergyman can interpret God's commands.

An excellent example of the first issue is how rich and noblemen where excommunicated from the Catholic Church for not obliging the Pope's requests, including material possessions. An excellent example of the second is the interpretation of the Jewish rabbis on the issue of theft, for example. Although the Ten Commandments forbid theft outright, the rabbis interpreted this as only applicable to Jews and not to gentiles.

An interesting showdown between clergy and the faithful was depicted, in a work of fiction, in the novel-

turned-to-movie "The Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco. The reader would probably remember the debate that took place in the abbey about the poverty of Christ. The story tells that the representatives of the papal throne argued against this concept, and were willing to burn people at the stake for their belief in the poverty of Christ. The corrupt clergymen would rather burn people alive than admit that Christ led a life of austerity, because if they do they will be asked a very fundamental question: why are you not behaving like Christ when you are supposed to be holy men? Granted, not all that was narrated in Eco's masterpiece was correct, but I gather that a lot was.

Such a showdown is alien to Islam, because the concept of Islamic worship is unique. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to his companions (I will paraphrase because knowledge of Arabic idioms is necessary if I just transliterate): "The act of copulation with one's wife is worship." The companions were astonished by this and said: "How come? We are fulfilling our desires. How could this be worship". He replied by saying: "If one copulates with a



By  
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woman who is not his wife, would this person be sinning?". They all agreed. He said then: "Thus with one's wife, it is worship".

In Islam, every little act of life, if carried out in good faith and with good intentions, is considered worship. Praying, fasting, giving away charities are worship, but sleeping with the wife, buying food for the house, cooking a meal, driving the children to school, playing with one's children are also worship. Clergymen are useless in such a system.

After making sure that there is no confusion about what is considered

worship for a Muslim, the next phase is to clarify the issue of religious authority.

During the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he was the absolute religious authority, for if one believed that he is was prophet, one must have accepted all of his religious teachings because he was commanded by God. Accepting did not mean blind faith without understanding. Many a times the companions questioned, debated, and flat out refused some of the commands given to them by the Prophet (peace be upon him), but finally accepted when they comprehended the true nature of the commands and their rationale.

However, after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), religious authority reverted back to the Qur'an and to his -the Prophet-teachings, which carried the general guidelines. God orders the believers in the Qur'an to: "Ask the scholars if you do not know". And once the point in question is clarified, the final authority is oneself alone. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says (I am paraphrasing): "Make the decision for yourself even if the scholars tell you this or that". This means that one will be responsible for one's actions before God and cannot blame someone else for what he/she does, as long as he/she commands sufficient knowledge and common sense. To render this fair though, God tells us in the Qur'an that He pardons forgetfulness, mistakes and what is beyond our faculties and capabilities.

The bottom line on this second issue is this: No one will answer on your behalf before God, so you better make sure what the scholars tell you is the truth, to the best of your knowledge and ability. Again, the clergy system is useless here.

Lastly, there is no one infallible in Islam. This is a very focal point, since if no one is infallible then



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anyone is liable to making mistakes. And since this is the case, then no one has absolute monopoly on the truth. Such system, once again, has no place for clergy ■

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*\* Ibrahim Babelli is a research scientist working for Schlumberger Dhahran Carbonate Research Center. He did his undergraduate work in Saudi Arabia and his graduate work in the USA. His interests include nanotechnology, old Arabic manuscripts, boiling heat transfer, reading, building flow simulators, and writing. He published several books, papers and reports. He worked as a director and executive director in several campus publications in Prude University. Babelli speaks Arabic, English and French.*

# A BOOK THAT ANGERED MORE THAN 100.000 E-Muslims!

By  
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A new "Satanic Verses", a book of doom, this should be the name of Craig Winn's new book "Prophet of Doom". Prophet of Doom contains 922 pages and is published by Faithwork in April, 2004. The book is available on Amazon.com. It is also available in a free online copy both in PDF and HTML formats plus a French translation in its website. Craig also has another book called "Tea with Terrorists : Who They Are Why They Kill."

What could be noticed about this writer is that he is intolerant and partial, this is manifested in his statement, "My views on Islam are immaterial. So discussing them would be a waste of our time. That is why Prophet of Doom focuses strictly on Muhammad's recitals as they were recorded in the Qur'an and Muhammad's words and deeds as they were recorded in the Hadith collections of the earliest Islamic scholars: Ishaq, Tabari, Bukhari, and Muslim."

In addition to that, "Prophet of Doom" is an unreliable book full with incitement against Islam and Muslims. "Could a prophet and a religion be responsible for today's terrorist attacks? I invested 10,000 hours in pursuit of that answer." He spent around 13 months to find the answer, he wrote one page per hour in his book! He spent all of that time to produce something so disgraceful, offensive, superficial and silly. Maybe it is the easiest way to be famous; he is trying to represent the Rushdi's affair again. Unlike "The Satanic Verses", Winn's book attacks the Prophet directly, to conclude that he was a terrorist: "Muhammad, its lone prophet, conceived his religion solely to satiate his lust for power, sex, and money. He was a terrorist."

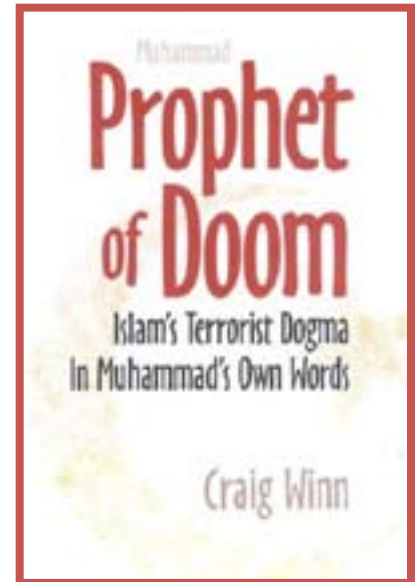
Prophet of Doom contains racial generalisations and incitement against Muslims too; "The citizens of this nation

are Muslims. They're doing what they were ordered to do. They left their homes to fight infidels; they stole our planes, ravaged our economy, and slaughtered innocents in the name of Allah. They even confessed to the crime. Yet not a single national spokesperson or politician has had the courage to hold Islam accountable."

Winn proclaims that his book has three messages for the three divine religions. For Muslims his message is "I love you in spite of your beliefs and deeds. I would like nothing more than to free you from Islam." For Christians he says "you—we—are responsible for the awful mess the world is in. We have turned a personal relationship with our Creator into an emasculated religion, confused and aimless. In the name of that religion, we have perpetrated inhumanities." His last message was for Jews: "I love you in spite of yourselves. Fourteen centuries ago your forefathers sold Bible stories to Muhammad and then mocked him when he goofed them up. By doing so you manufactured your own enemy" He reproved the Jews as they sold the bible, why didn't they sell the Torah? The author never answered.

Craig Winn also reached to the level of denying his book! "The critics of this work will claim that Prophet of Doom is offensive, racist, hate mongering, intolerant, and unnecessarily violent. I agree, but I didn't write those parts. They came directly from Islam's scriptures. If you don't like what Muhammad and Allah said, don't blame me. I'm just the messenger"

Winn says that all the Islamic scriptures start out foolish, turn hateful, then punitive and violent. Further, he mocks at Qur'an; "The Qur'an may be the worst book ever written. It is jumbled together haphazardly. It's almost as if verses were tossed into the air, blown by the wind, and then pieced together as they were plucked from the sand. The 1st surah, or chapter, was never revealed, and it's written in the wrong voice. The 2nd surah was the ninety-first received chronologi-



cally, yet it is the first revelation in the Qur'an. The 5th surah was the last in order of alleged revelation. Muhammad claims that his initial inspiration can be found in the 96th surah, which means Allah's initial salvo is tucked in the back of the book."

Another clear example of Winn's heterodoxies is that he says that prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, foretold that the Day of Doom will be in 1110 A.D. "it nonetheless came true. Muslims and infidels alike have been doomed by Islam."

In fact, Craig Winn has a serious difficulty of interpretation and understanding the meaning of Qur'an, and the Islamic doctrine. He takes sentences out of their original contexts and judges them, which led a group of Muslims to start an online petition. There are more than 100,000 signatures so far, and the number is growing everyday ■

#### Online petition website:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/iecr786/petition.html>

#### Book website

<http://www.prophetofdoom.net/>

#### Complete HTML copy of the book:

<http://www.prophetofdoom.net/toc.html>

#### Complete PDF copy of the book:

[http://www.prophetofdoom.net/pod\\_toc.html](http://www.prophetofdoom.net/pod_toc.html)



# HIJAB and LIBERTY

By  
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At the beginning of the fifth year of the 21st century we – Muslims & non-Muslims – are still arguing about the veil (or hijab in Arabic). Some people see it as a chain around women's necks preventing them from achieving their role in the society.

I however think that the issue of women's rights is an international one regardless of the religion that prevails in the society. The problems that face women in general are directly related to three main points:

1. The education women receive;
2. The level of understanding the society has to the role of women;
3. The level of awareness that women have about their role in the society.

When those three points are fulfilled, only then women can get their rights in a perfect way in any society regardless of religion. Islam, for example, gives women the maximum freedom, because it considers them an integral part in the society. The woman is the mother, the sister, the wife, the daughter, the co-worker. She works in hand with man to improve the society. Islam puts some limitations however; she must cover most of her body and her hair with a veil, it's a rule and a law which we can't deny according to this verse from the Holy Qur'an that says:

"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them (when they go abroad). That will be better, that so they may be recognised and not annoyed. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful." (The Holy Qur'an, the chapter of Alahzab: verse 59 )

This rule was established to help in reaching the state of modesty and decency.

It's noteworthy that this state modesty is for both males and females according to the following verses:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them. Lo! Allah is Aware of what they do."

(The Holy Qur'an , the chapter of An-nour: verse 30, Pickthall's translation )

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers or husbands fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or sisters sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know naught of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah together, O believers, in order that ye may succeed."

(The Holy Qur'an , the chapter of An-nour: verse 31, Pickthall's translation )

This modesty is important to make the society work in balance as this provides security for both men and women. When women wear moderate and suitable clothes, men can deal with them as their counterparts.

In addition to the veil or the headscarf, the clothes woman wear must fulfill the following conditions:

1. They should not describe the details of the body;
2. They should not show any part of the body except the face and the hands.

There's nothing called a "typical Islamic catalogue" for clothes that all women must follow; it is rather an open issues according to the traditions of each society and time. The idea that hijab means that women are oppressed and have no rights is 101% wrong, because women have rights and they are even commanded to contribute with men in

developing the society to the better. If Islam thinks that women have no value or that they are something to be kept away from the public life because they are a source of shame, Islam would have put a rule to forbid women from doing anything or leaving home. On the contrary, Islam gives the Muslim woman the freedom to do anything as long as she's wearing clothes that match the two conditions of the hijab.

In the light of what I explained earlier, I really wonder why do some people have the idea that Muslim women who wear the hijab are conservative, while those who chose to dress differently and not very demurely are liberals? To me, the idea of conservatism vs. liberalism in Islam is much related to the mentality of the woman and not what she wears, which means:

- I call a woman conservative when her mind is blocked from understating and acting in the right way in life, whether she's veiled or not;

- I call woman a liberal when her mind is opened for understanding and acting in the right way in life, whether she's veiled or not.

Please note that I'm not attacking the Muslim woman who did not wear the hijab, but rather I'm telling the truth and whole the truth and nothing but the truth.

Allah almighty is the only one who has the right to judge according to the work and will ■



# THE PALESTINIAN HEADACHE



By

**Kahlid Hifzi**

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Khalid Hifzi has a B.A in journalism from Yarmouk University, Jordan. He achieved the first rank in the caricature competition organised in by Alrai daily newspaper (Jordan) which later published a collection of his caricatures. Kalid also had a caricature exhibition in Yarmouk University in 2002.

# THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

By  
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All human settlements and civilisation used their natural environment as a source of procuring remedies. The written records of medicine date back to 3500 years.

## How did early man know medicine?

We can only guess that some 300,000 years of interaction and observation of environment gradually led to a wide use of plants, minerals, and animal products to produce certain effects.

Even animals choose the right combination and quantities of food they need to stay healthy, know poisonous plants to avoid, and may even know what to consume when ill.

## First doctor and first pharmacist

Long before our ancestors could write, certain individuals in some groups would have become the most knowledgeable about healing and remedies and used to be consulted when any one in the group felt ill, and this was the first doctor and the first pharmacist.

## Ancient civilisation and medicine

Ancient Egyptians:

Surviving Egyptian papyri from around 1600 BC list a wealth of plants, animals, and mineral remedies still used today.

Examples of those listed include plants such as coriander, fennel, gentian, henbane, pomegranate, senna, and thyme, minerals such as aluminum hydroxide, copper, iron, lime, and mercury. They also use animal products such as honey, ox liver, wax, and animal fats.

Next time – in sha' Allah - we will know more about medicine of ancient Chinese and medicine in India ■



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## GREEN PHARMACY

Welcome to the green pharmacy. In this section I will present two medical plants (herb, root, leaves, fruits, or seeds) that you can find around you, and you will know an easy way to use them at home as a home remedy.

### 1. Chamomile (*chamomelum nobilis*)

A relaxing herb, it is particularly useful for anxiety and tension. It relieves tension headaches, and nausea, colic and flatulence due to stress. It is safe for young children calming irritability, promoting sleep, and easing teething pains.

It is anti-inflammatory and antiseptic and is thus helpful for washing wounds, but especially useful in the treatment of itching and weeping eczema. As a douche, it helps relieve vaginal thrush.

How to use:

An infusion or tincture of flower heads is used internally, but only infusion is used externally. we can prepare infusion of chamomile by using 2 tea spoonful of chamomile flower heads then pour over a cup of boiling water , cover the cup by lid . Add sugar and leave to stand five minutes.

### 2. Garlic (*allium sativum*)

An excellent antimicrobial remedy for internal use, garlic kills organisms responsible for food poisoning and it may kill many common



intestinal worms too. In addition, the volatile oils it contains pass from blood to lungs where they help disinfect respiratory tract in bacterial throat and lung infection.

Garlic is also an expectorant helping to clear the chest in colds and bronchitis.

Applied to boils, varicose ulcers, and skin infections, crushed garlic encourages healing and speeds the demise of any infection. Garlic juice from fresh cloves helps to remove viral warts.

#### How to use:

Garlic is best fresh for both internal and external use. The characteristic breath odour comes from the active ingredients and is necessary for best results. Commercial preparation is less active .

For internal use, cloves could be eaten whole, crashed in honey, used in salad dressings, or made into sandwich with parsley ■

## HOME REMEDIES

### • Cough syrup

1/2 table spoon of lobelia  
4 oz (100ml) of clear honey  
1/2 table spoon of cloves  
1/2 pt (300ml) of boiling water

Put lobelia, honey and cloves in a bowl and pour over the boiling water. Stir and leave the liquid to stand. Take dessertspoonful every two hours until coughing stops.

### • Spiced peppermint drink for sickness and nausea

1 oz (25gm) of peppermint  
A pinch of cloves  
A pinch of cinnamon  
1pt (600ml) of boiling water  
Sugar to taste

Place the peppermint, cloves and cinnamon in a bowl and pour over the boiling water. Add sugar and leave to stand until cool. Drink one cup (200ml) every hour until nausea subsides ■



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# BALANCE AND IMBALANCE

## In the Equation on “Differentiation – Continuity” Between Civilisations (Part 1 of 4)

“Following Scientific revolutions, and through an unexpected transfer, scientists are now facing a different science”. This is the conclusion reached by Thomas S. Khun in his theory on the structure of scientific revolution... in the case of technological revolutions however, the whole world is exposed to a gradual change, and the rate of change depends on the nature of the technologies of impact and their interaction with the elements of the social environment.”

### Introduction: The Scientific and Technological Revolution

It goes without saying that the world, we live in today, is undergoing a momentous revolution that will result in the fastest change ever witnessed in the history of human society, at the political, economic, educational, and cultural, depending on history's facts. Levels our continuation is that we need to take a close look at the differences stands adopted towards this revolution.

The differences since there is general agreement on the fact, that the current revolution is essentially different from the previous ones, seem to have become an active element in defining the future of the world, its states and its individuals... However, at the same time, there are different theories of “informatics” as the most important aspect of this revolution, and on its expected results in the near and far future.

### Two Of These Theories Have Retained Our Attention:

**One** that is optimistic, and even awed by the civilisation generated by the technology of information, which can also be called the “civi-

lisation of electronics”, and which strives to be adopted in the place of the philosophical and scientific pillars underlying different (industrial western contemporary) societies. Among the most important symbols of this “theory”, the American future scientist, Alvin Toffler, has examined, especially in his last book, “Saving the new civilisation”, the portents of the “Third Wave”, which marks the third complete split in the history of humanity after the agricultural and the industrial revolutions. One example of such signs, or “symbols”, is underlined the declaration made by John Bree Barlow, one of the most outstanding future scientists, on the liberation of cybernetics. This declaration, is addressed to all the governments of the world, and points out that the terms “property”, “identity”, and “expression”, no longer fit into this new horizon because they are merely materialistic terms, that stand in contradiction with the spirituality of the new cyberspace of informatics **The other** theory is somewhat



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pessimistic, or rather cautious, a forewarning that although the technology of information is our only means to dominate complicated phenomena and to solve problems, it contains a new dimension that further complicates our lives, and generates new and unexpected problems. The philosopher J. F. Loytard, in his book “the post – modern condition”, has pointed out that: knowledge is an informatics' commodity that cannot be dispensed with by the forces of production, and that has become, and will remain, one of the most important fields – if not the most important fields in the world – of competition over the preservation of power, and that all the states of the world might have to go to war in order to control information, as they went to war in the past to control the colonies, and to use their raw materials and their labour forces, for their own benefit information; he affirmed, was a new breakthrough for the strategic plying of trade on the one hand, and for political and military planning on the

other.

Loytard's warning is based on a philosophical understanding of the technology of information and its future implication... There are some, however, who reaffirm this warning, or rather this forecast, on the basis of a "political – strategic outlook", Joseph Newbay, a high official in the Pentagon, Published an important article in "Foreign Affairs", in which he expresses his belief that the United States will be able to reinforce its hegemony in the world, through its capacity to control informatics systems, and the technology of communication, or that "geo-strategy" is subordinated to the capacity to use soft power, or communication technology, and informatics.

Along the same line, should we adopt the point of view of some optimists, who believe that "technology is like water and air", which cannot be monopolised, and which is the result of centuries of human activity, so that everyone is entitled to benefit from it.. Or, should we worry with the pessimists, who believe that the age of information might be a new phase of the global clash?

To answer this question, in the most "realistic" manner we must first of all highlight the main characteristics of the current revolution, as compared with the preceding one (the industrial revolution).

### **We believe that these characteristics are three:**

**Firstly**, this revolution is leading towards "Globalisation", which is the attempt to unify the world in one configuration, while abolishing traditional geographic divisions, and political, and boundaries that are considered a guarantee of security, a condition for and an outstanding element in the way of living and working, that prevailed until the industrial revolution (in the world of national sovereignty). It goes without saying that this "ten-

gency" of the revolution is clearly expressed by the gradual change in the criteria and patterns of life and production, together with the rise of a sovereign or leading "civilisation", which leads the current revolution.

**Secondly**, the increasing and outstanding importance of the current revolution is perceivable through communication, knowledge, and science. This means that "culture", in the broad sense of the word, is developing into the center of gravity of this revolution with, as a result, the transformation of culture into the basis of economic, political, and spiritual investment, in accordance with technology and as exemplified by the growing concentration on vocational training and qualification, scientific research, technical systems, and integrated patterns of communication system and information transfer, etc.

**Thirdly**, the growing globalisation of the human world is related to differences in kind. We mean by these differences, that all humanity is exposed to the same cultural, material and economic impacts, so that any changes taking place anywhere have a relative impact on all, while the distribution of the means to achieve growth deteriorates everyday, so that a kind of monopoly of the elements of "progress" was achieved by some (the smallest number), alongside with an aggravation of human marginalisation for the greatest part of contemporary humanity.

These three characteristics do not merely confirm the need to ask what the most adequate action is to undertake in the face of the current revolution, with its challenge to many peoples and societies all over the world, and do not merely clarify the general features of its (the revolution's) claims at all level; but, in addition, they show that all those who adopted hasty specific, or semi specific, stands, in the face of this extremely complicated phenomenon, probably relied, to a great

extent, on very simple assumptions, or concentrated on the technical aspect of this multidimensional phenomenon, regardless of its native environment, so as to – intentionally or unintentionally – avoid getting into complicated social considerations. Therefore, the fact that this phenomenon, despite its technological drive, is "first and foremost political, economic and cultural", because it is connected to the interaction of these three dimensions, and hence to "culture", has lost much of its importance on the scale of priorities. This takes us, directly, to the claims of this phenomenon from the social point of view, especially in relation to a recent saying about scientific production, which states that: "technology did away with geography, and will increasingly do so in the twenty first century, because it has also eliminated distances".. On the basis of this affirmation, especially concerning the "disappearance of distances", an endless discourse about the "new world" and the "global village" began ■

### **Read in the next issues:**

- A Universal Civilisation or Civilisation Specificities?
- The Civilisation "Differences – Continuity" Equation.
- Civilisation and Technology, and the Struggle of Informatics.

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## THE READY BEE

"THE PARABLE OF THE BELIEVER IS THAT OF THE BEE, IT EATS NOTHING BUT THAT IS GOOD, AND PRODUCES NOTHING BUT THAT IS GOOD."  
(PROPHET MOHAMMAD PBUH)

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