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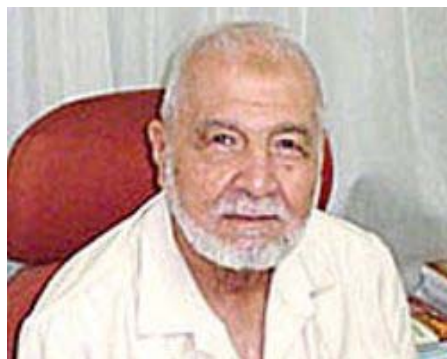
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The Principles of The Muslim Brotherhood

Ikhwanweb - Cairo, Egypt



Thursday, June 08, 2006

In 1996, the Harvard International Review magazine's editor-in-chief contacted the Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Chairman Mr. Mohammad Ma'mun El-Hudaibi (*picture*) and hoped that he may contribute through preparing a study on Islam and politics from the Muslim Brotherhood's point of view. This study, besides others prepared and submitted by other thinkers and politicians on the same topic, were to be published in Spring, 1997.

Afterwards, the editor-in-chief, in his fax dated 3rd March, 1997, noted that: "The study, prepared by M.M. El-Hudaibi was excellent: substantive, clear, and direct. I think it will help our readers better understand the position of the Muslim with regard to Islam and the situation in Egypt."

The editor-in-chief, moreover, asked for permission to summarize some parts of the study due to print requirements and the size of the magazine itself which Mr. El-Hudaibi agreed to, and the Spring Issue, 1997, was released bearing the title "Islam in Politics and Power" including the study prepared by Mr. El-Hudaibi

Ikhwanweb posted the first part of this study in an article titled "[our tistemony](#)", which addressed the Muslim Brotherhood's view on different volatile issues like political pluralism, terrorism and violence and the relations with none muslims. In the second part which we post here, Mr. El-Hudaibi describes the Muslim Brotherhood principles with a relevant historic background. He also rebuts some of the terms often used by western media to falsely mischaracterize the Muslim Brotherhood. The study concluded with the fifteen democratic principles of the Muslim Brotherhood which were declared to the public in 1996 to form a political platform with other political parties following the 1995 parliamentary elections.

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ever since the Egyptian people in is majority, along with other African and Asian peoples, embraced Islam in the

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deep-seated conviction that it is a true religion revealed to a true Prophet by the lord of Mankind, Islam has fully and totally arranged the life and all activities of those peoples. The two basic sources of Islam are the Glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah which is both a theoretical explanation and a practical application of the Glorious Qur'an.

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These two sources have become the sole reference point for everything relating to the ordering of the life of the Muslim family, individual, and community as well as the Muslim State all economic, social, political, cultural, educational, and also legislative and Judiciary activities. The Islamic creed and Shari`ah have ruled over the individual and society, the ruler and the ruled. They have had supreme authority and neither a ruler nor a ruled people could change anything they contained.

Since the Islamic Shari`ah revealed by Allah (Exalted be he), judges applied its teachings with no need for prior approval from the rulers. They fulfilled its injunctions without reference to those in power. A significant part of the Shari`ah tenets consists of rules and principles. Hence judges would exert their intellectual energy to deduce rulings for individual sub-cases with no need to have general laws promulgated by the rulers. Out of this Ijtihad (Personal Reasoning) and the views of scores of scholars who devoted their lives to the interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah and the provisions they contained, a massive wealth of jurisprudence developed which came to be known as Islamic Fiqh. Of necessity and in view of the differences of cultures and characters, various schools and trends emerged each with its method of interpreting the texts, of extracting rules and verdicts from them, and of applying them using analogy with existing texts in case there is no specific text for the topic in question. Most of these schools and trends adhered to the basic fundamentals and rules found in the Shari`ah texts (the Qur'an and Sunnah). In this way they managed to avoid extremism and irregularity. This was the case in particular with what came to be known as the doctrine of the Sunnis. In fact, the differences that developed among these schools and were confined to subsidiary, not basic, questions and only to some points of application. The adherents of those schools and doctrines lived amicably with each other particularly in ages of cultural flourishing. Islam embraced them all and one the basic principles, found in the texts and agreed upon by the proponents of these trends is that no Muslim can be declared apostate merely on account of his or her view or interpretation of the texts unless he or she denies and disbelieves in a categorically revealed and definitively clear text or if his or her interpretation is totally in violation of the rules of Arabic which is the language of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah order Muslims that there should be no compulsion in religion and that the non-Muslims with revealed books preceding Islam (particularly Jews and Christians) and who live as citizens in the Muslim State should enjoy safety and security. These texts ensure for non-Muslims the freedom of belief and the freedom of opinion. They reject that those people be forced to deal according to the rulings of the Islamic Shari`ah. They are to be left to deal in accordance with the tenets of the laws in which they believe. For example, they marry under these laws and this marriage is recognized by the Islamic state and the Muslim Community. The effects of such marriage become legal as to lineage and inheritance. They are not to be banned by the forbidden items of food and

drink that Muslims observe as long as these items are not forbidden to them. The Islamic texts allow Muslims to deal with those non-Muslims as long as the Muslims observe the Shari`ah in such dealings. The non-Muslims have also the right to own property, real estate, movables and all kinds of assets. They can engage in various professions like medicine, engineering, agriculture, trade, etc. they have the right to assume all offices of state that are not related to enforcing the rulings of the Islamic Shari`ah in which they do not believe. In fact they are left, they are left free to take their disputes and litigation to the competent and knowledgeable persons of their own law. A Muslim judge cannot examine or pass verdicts in these cases unless they themselves refer these cases to him. Hence, those believers in religions other than Islam lived in the Islamic Homeland safe and secure in their persons, honor, and property as well as everything they held dear. Except for individual cases, history does not prove any general persecution or comprehensive wronging committed against non-Muslims.

The comprehensive Islamic system remained the dominant one in the Islamic States. This does not mean that the application was perfectly sound or that no wrongs or sins were perpetrated by rulers. In fact, many of the texts have been abandoned or incorrectly interpreted. The first among these is Shura system and the selection of the head of state.

After the first three Rightly-Guided Caliphs disputes arose over the person of the head of state. Internal wars broke out. The leadership of the soon changed from a chosen Caliphate to a hereditary and tyrannical monarchy. We can even say that to the present time the basic principle in Islamic State system has disappeared, namely, applying of Shura for the selection, supervising of the ruler and the subsequent measures for observing his acts and holding him to account, as well as sharing in the decision-making with him. This happened although the relevant text remained in the Qur'an with no one being able to hide or tamper with it. But rulers tyranny was being curtailed by the aforementioned fact that judges derived their rulings from the Qur'an and Sunnah directly and from the views and Ijtihads of the scholars and the jurists, which formed legislative wealth of a religious character left no room for rulers to promulgate public laws except in very narrow and limited confines. Another the tyranny of the rulers and their indulgence in wrongdoing was the fact that the Islamic shari`ah, particularly in the case of the categorical and fundamental texts, ruled over them and they had no power to change their laws or rules, otherwise this would have been counted as deviation and an apostasy. This would have infuriated the people into sweeping revolts that could have led to the toppling of rulers.

The Foreign Christian Invasion of the Islamic Countries.

The first consequence of such invasion has been the exclusion of the Islamic Shari`ah from being the constitution and law that rules the state and the basic system of society. Egypt was occupied (by Britain) in September 1883, hardly a year after the invasion, the so-called "national courts" were established. Most of their judges were non-Egyptians. French laws were almost literally translated to become the dominant and effective laws in civil, commercial, and criminal cases. The Islamic religious courts had no jurisdiction left for them except in

areas of personal status affairs, marriage, divorce and the related issues of establishing lineage, dowries, and alimonies. The Islamic economic system which had prevailed was changed into the system of the usurious banks although the usurious interest rate is strictly forbidden under the Islamic Shari`ah.

In the educational system new schools were established that only taught physical and natural sciences in a crude way and only permitted the graduation of clerks of limited intelligence and culture. They only offered very marginal opportunities for educating the young in the creed and tenets of their religion.

In the social system alcohol, prostitution, gambling and other activities forbidden under the Religion of Allah were permitted.

After Foreign Military Occupation

The countries and peoples occupied by the armies, creed, and social, economic, and ethical systems of the west struggled to attain their independence and be liberated from the sway of the west. After long years they managed to regain some of their freedom and independence. However, they came out of the age of imperialism with a weak social structure and a ruined economic system in which poverty, ignorance, disease, and backwardness prevailed. Consequently, the system of government became corrupt and weak. Tyrants seemed to be supported by forces of imperialism which withdrew their armies but retained their influence in various means.

Since the overwhelming majority of these peoples believed in Islam as a full system of life, forces soon appeared among them that strove to awaken the spirit of faith and remove ideas and opinions which emerged during the ages of decadence and imperialism wearing the garment of Islam though they do not belong to it. Movements of Islamic revival became active to spread the correct Islamic ideas and to demand the application of the rulings of the Islamic Shari`ah particularly the basic principles which ensure Shura, freedom, justice, and fairness as well as achievement of social and economic balance. There can be no doubt that among the most prominent and strongest of these movements is the Muslim Brotherhood which started in Egypt near the end of era of military colonialism in 1928 and has continued with its activities and struggle up to the present.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

The call of the Muslim Brotherhood was based on two key pillars:

- 1-The introduction of the Islamic Shari`ah as the basis controlling the affairs of state and society.
- 2-Work to achieve unification among the Islamic countries and states, mainly among the Arab states, and liberating them from foreign imperialism.

FIRST: As for the first pillar, about 97% of the Egyptian people are Muslims, the majority of the Egyptian people are Muslims, the majority of whom perform the rites of worship enjoined by Islam. They abide by the Islamic ethics and apply to themselves to most of the rules whose enforcement does not require any government

intervention or license. But legislation, the judiciary and economic and social dealings are founded on non-Islamic bases, thus creating a state of alienation between the people's creed, on the one side, and their forms of activity which are governed by rules that contradicted their creed, on the other. The lack of any connection between the policies of the authorities in power and the legislations, on the one hand, and the Islamic Shari`ah on the other, led to the emergence of many social, economic, and political practices that are invalid under the Islamic shari`ah. It was incumbent on the Muslim Brotherhood in such a situation to adopt a system for sound Islamic education and the spreading of Islamic principles and ethics as well as the education of the Muslim individual, family, and society into commitment to Islamic ethics and principles. For a state with its government that is committed to Islam cannot be established without a popular base that believes in the Islamic system and is aware of its main ideas.

SECOND: for the liberation of Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has contributed in an effective strong manner to the struggle against the British imperialist armies occupying Egypt and to the achievement of their evacuation from many Arab and Islamic countries.

Since the ruling powers are mostly totalitarian, tyrannical, and selfish, they do not rely on a popular will that elected them into the seats of government. Hence, they have no popular support despite the intensive and misleading propaganda that is being handsomely financed by them. Because these governments mostly rely on foreign influence and always fear it and in view of their special formation and military nature, there have been repeated clashes between the Muslim Brotherhood and those governments that strongly reject the existence of any entity enjoying powerful popular support. In these clashes the founder of the Movement, Hassan Al-Banna was assassinated in February 1949. in the era of Gamal Abdel-Nasser thousands of the Movement leaders and members were arrested, jailed, and tortured in October 1954 with six of its top leaders executed by Nasser and many others killed in prisons and concentration camps. After a period of relative calm the authorities in Egypt, and shortly before the parliamentary elections of 1995, arrested, 62 persons of the most prominent group leaders and brought them before military courts on the pretext of their carrying out political activity and taking preparations for participation in the elections.

Despite all these obstacles and events the biggest political and doctrinal gathering in Egypt with tangible activity and effectiveness is the Muslim Brotherhood.

TERMS ALLEGED BY WESTERN MEDIA

CONCERNING some terms that western media have been propagating particularly among the public in Europe and America these usually boil down to two:

- 1-Islamic fundamentalism.
- 2-Political Islam.

The media forms the culture and perception of the public in the western states and the forces that direct the western media usually choose catchy and effective terms and phrases that are related to some historical experiences

or facts in the west with aim of communicating information to the minds of recipients quite easily but also without any discrimination between what is true and what is merely imaginary or customary. The west there have been groups called "fundamentalists" and these have been characterized by narrow-mindedness and artificial interpretation of some of their holy books. These interpretations petrified the dynamism of life and isolated society from thought and culture and even from the natural sciences in some cases. Now when the forces of western propaganda and media call some movement of Islamic revival : "fundamentalists" aim at having their public creating a link, on the level of sentiment and thought, between fundamentalism in the west and those Islamic groups. The outcome is that the image of the latter is distorted, their call made repulsive, hatred is disseminated against them, and a frenzy of declaring war on them is awakened.

The fact of the matter is that there is no similarity or link between western fundamentalism and the Islamic liberation and revival movements. The majority of Islamic movements at the present age accept and deal with all exigencies of the age and the natural sciences such as technological inventions etc. They reject none of these except what goes against the teachings of Islamic Shari`ah and creed. Other uses are acceptable to these movements.

In the definition of Islamic jurisprudence the word Usuli which is now used in Arabic to render the term "fundamentalist" refers to persons who specialize in the disciplines of the fundamental aspects sources of jurisprudence. This is discipline that explains and studies the rules by which shari`ah rulings or views or views can be deduced from the various ways of reconciling different rulings and arranging them in an order priority.

The western media also talk to much about the term "Political Islam" or the groups of political Islam. It is clear that is meant is that the recipients – particularly in the west or ignorant and poorly-informed ones in the Islamic countries – would get a belief that Islam consists merely of creed, rites, rites, and ethics and that there are some people who wish to falsely attribute themselves to religious tenets and arouse the religious sentiments of the masses to gain backing for their political views or confer sanctity on themselves and their views. In fact, the aim behind this misrepresentation is to bring back to mind the history of religious or church governments in the western countries. This is major fallacy and a serious manipulation of the tenets of Islam and of the truth about the ends of many Islamic groups and movements with the Muslim brotherhood at their head.

However, Muslim scholars and jurists agreed that no one can have any sanctity or infallibility after the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the other Prophets. Indeed, the first ruler to come after the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) addressed the people when he came to power saying. I have become your ruler though I am not the best among you. Obey me as long as I obey Allah's Injunctions regarding you. Obey me as long as I obey Allah's Injunctions regarding you. If I disobey, correct me. "the second Caliph, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, also said the same. Thus every person can be right or wrong, can be obedient or disobedient to Allah. According to religious to religious texts there is no one who is above the law or who is infallible.

Likewise, Muslim scholars and jurists all over the ages and all Islamic countries unanimously agreed that the rulers are not more than human beings who can be obedient or disobedient to Allah, right or wrong, and that none of them is infallible. Therefore, while the government in Islam is required to abide by the principles of the Islamic Shari`ah, it is still a civil government that is subject to accountability. The fixed and unchangeable tenets of the Islamic Shari`ah are very few and they are very basic principles designed to achieve justice, fairness, and social and economic equality as well as to protect human rights and dignity, to preserve honor, soul, property, and sanity against wrongful attack, and to protect the teachings of religion and the system of state. There can always be an access to Ijtihad to deduce views that are appropriate to global, economic, and social changes, Islam gives also a free rein for invention, creativity, and development in the natural sciences and other areas of human experience and innovation. It places no obstacles against progress in accordance with scientific inventions. Islam knows no infallible religious government that speaks in the Name of Allah that claims that its decisions are part of religion. This not mean that Islam has nothing to do with politics. Quite the contrary, the teachings of the Islamic Shari`ah have introduced and regulated the principles of justice, equality, and human rights. The Shari`ah includes texts to systems which nowadays are considered to be an integral part of politics. We, the Muslim Brotherhood, demand that these particular Shari`ah injunctions should be adhered to and acted upon. They cannot be disregarded, neglected, or their application and enforcement ignored. We are not the only ones who say this but the scholars of Al-Azhar University (the most important institution specializing in the study of Islamic teachings) and the scholars and jurists of all Islamic universities and institutes of learning all over the world are unanimous in upholding this view though some of them may be remiss in exerting tangible efforts to bring this about or to support the Muslim Brotherhood in its efforts in this regard.

In the Shari`ah there are categorical texts making it necessary to apply the Islamic Shari`ah and act in accordance with it and indicating that Muslim rulers should abide by it, Such Qur'anic texts are categorical and unequivocal and here are some of them:

"O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah His Apostle, if ye do believe in Allah and the Last Day: that is best, and most suitable for final determination".

(An-Nisa: 59)

"But no, by thy lord, they can have not (real) Faith, until they make thee judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against thy decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction."

(An-Nisa: 65)

"The answer of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Apostle, in order that he may judge between them, is no Other than this: they say, we hear and we obey': It is such as these that will attain felicity"

(An -Nur: 51)

"Then we put thee on the (right) way of Religion: so follow thou that (Way), and follow not the desires of those who know not."

(Al- Jathiya: 18)

"To thee we sent the Scripture in truth confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed...."

(Al-Ma'idah: 51)

15 Principles for Agreement

the following 15 principles can be considered a compendium for the democratic principles which we call for. We have declared these principles in public and invited all the political parties and powers in Egypt to support them as a "National Charter". Also, it was included in my political program for the general elections which took place in Nov., 1995.

First: To confirm unequivocally that people are the source of all power so that it is not permissible for anyone individual, party, group, or institution to claim the right to authority, or to continue in power except with the consent of the people.

Second: Total commitment to, and the respect of, the principle of power exchange through free and fair general elections.

Third: To confirm the freedom of personal conviction (religious conviction).

Fourth: To confirm the freedom of establishing religious rites for all the known heavenly religions.

Fifth: To confirm the freedom of opinion and the right to publicize it, and to call, peacefully, to it, within the limitations of the moral values of society that are detailed in the first section of the constitution. An important consideration in ensuring the above is the freedom of owning and using the different mass media outlets (television, radio, video tapes and equipment, fax machines, newspapers, magazines, books and newsletters).

Sixth: To confirm the right of forming political parties and that no administrative body should have right of restricting or stopping the application of this right. An independent judicial authority should be the only source in confirming what falls outside the ideals and standards of society, or that which can be thought of as a rejection of peaceful political participation.

Seventh: To confirm the right to public gatherings, the invitation to them, and participation in them, all within the limitations of public of public safety, so long as the usage of violence or arms or the threat of doing so is not included.

Eighth: to confirm the right of peaceful demonstrations.

Ninth: To confirm the importance of representing the people through a parliamentary council elected through a free and fair elections, and for a limited period, after which elections are held again.

Tenth: The right of every citizen (man or woman) to take part in parliamentary elections.

Eleventh: The right of every citizen to become a member of parliament through elections.

Twelfth: Ensuring the independence of the judicial system at all levels while taking all the necessary steps and laying down all the conditions to ensure that it is safe from any source fear or manipulation, and that no one is to be tried except by a qualified judge. That all exceptional courts are cancelled, and jurisdiction of the military courts are restricted to cases involving military crimes and violations only.

Thirteenth: separation between the prosecution and investigation authorities, and that the public defense authority should be independent from the minister of justice. Furthermore, whoever it (public defense authority) condemns to imprisonment should the right of appeal to a judicial authority against that decision.

Fourteenth: The army must stay clear of politics, concentrating only on protecting the country's external security, and that it should not be used, neither directly nor indirectly, by the governing authority in enforcing its wishes and control, or in prohibiting the people's rights.

Fifteenth: The police and all other security services must protect the security of the nation and as a whole, and that its utilization in maintaining the government or as a means of crushing opposition opinion should be prohibited. A system overlooks its work and leadership, and ensures the above, should be imposed; more specifically, it (security forces) must not be allowed to intervene in political activities and general elections.

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