The Nusantara Manifesto

Adopted and promulgated by
Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah
in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on
October 25, 2018

A call to people of goodwill of every faith and nation
to join in building a global consensus
to prevent the political weaponization of Islam,
whether by Muslims or non-Muslims,
and to curtail the spread of communal hatred
by fostering the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order,
founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity
of every human being.

#LetUsChooseCompassion

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Compassionate

"My love and compassion embrace all things."

~ *Qur'an*, 7:156

"*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* – Unity Amid Diversity."

~ Indonesia's national motto, inscribed upon its state symbol, *"Garuda Pancasila"*

"*Agama ageming aji* – (True) religion is a garment, worn by souls endowed with nobility."

~ Javanese proverb from *Serat Wédatama,* 1:1

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony part out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh."

~ *Ezekiel*, XXXVI. 26

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

~ *St. Matthew*, XXII. 37 – 40

"The Prophet Muhammad's message, peace and blessings be upon him, is generally in accord with everything conveyed by earlier prophets. All messengers sent by God to humanity—including Moses, Jesus, Abraham and Muhammad—brought a single message whose key principles were identical: *first*, selflessly worship the Lord thy God; *second*, a duty to adorn oneself with noble morals."

~ Sayyid Muhammad Tantawi, Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar

"A true muslim is one who does not injure any human being, either verbally or physically; a believer is one who makes others feel secure in their lives and property."

~ Hadith *Sunan an-Nasai*

"Always be honest and open; there's no need to be afraid."

~ H.E. Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid

The *Nusantara Manifesto* represents a significant milestone within a long-term, systematic campaign—guided by the spiritual leadership of the world's largest Muslim organization—designed to block the political weaponization of Islam, whether by Muslims or non-Muslims, and to curtail the spread of communal hatred by fostering the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order, founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being.

This *Manifesto* was officially adopted and promulgated by Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah at the Second Global Unity Forum, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on October 25 and 26, 2018.

WHEREAS

1. On May 9 and 10, 2016, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) held an International Summit of Moderate Islamic Leaders (ISOMIL) in Jakarta, Indonesia, attended by approximately 400 Muslim scholars from 30 nations. At the Summit's conclusion, the NU Central Board promulgated a 16-point declaration that identified the salient factors driving Islamist extremism and terror worldwide, **called upon "people of good will of every faith and nation to join in building a global consensus not to politicize Islam"** and explicitly affirmed that the NU will "strive to consolidate the global *ahlussunnah wal jamaah* (Sunni Muslim) community, in order to bring about a world in which Islam, and Muslims, are truly beneficent and contribute to the well-being of all humanity" (*ISOMIL Nahdlatul Ulama Declaration*, points 15 and 16);

2. On May 12, 2016, the First Global Unity Forum—jointly sponsored by Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah—issued a 3-page statement that includes "The GP Ansor Call… for an end to conflict in the name of religion, and for qualified *'ulamā'* (Muslim religious scholars) to carefully examine and address those elements of *fiqh* [classical Islamic law] that encourage segregation, discrimination and/or violence towards those perceived to be 'non-Muslim'";

3. On March 30, 2017, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah announced the launch of a concerted effort to promote Humanitarian Islam (*al-islām lil-insānīyah*), by developing and operationalizing a global strategy to recontextualize (i.e., reform) the teachings of orthodox, authoritative Islam and thereby reconcile certain problematic elements of classical Islamic law (*fiqh*, often conflated with *sharī'ah,* or "Divine Guidance") with the reality of contemporary civilization, whose context and conditions differ significantly from those in which classical Islamic law emerged;

4. On April 18, 2017, the XXIst National Conference of GP Ansor issued a formal decree (Number 04/KONBES-XXI/IV/2017) entitled: *Gerakan Pemuda Ansor's View Regarding the Republic of Indonesia's Strategic Interests and National Security Agenda within the Cauldron of Current Geopolitical Dynamics*. This decree states, in part: "[T]he crisis that engulfs the Islamic world is not limited to armed conflicts raging in various and sundry regions. Whether conscious or not, willing or not, the world's 1.6 billion Muslims find themselves in the midst of a profound *religious* crisis. How they respond will determine the future not only of Muslims worldwide, but also of human civilization itself."

5. On May 22, 2017, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah hosted an international gathering of nearly 300 Muslim scholars at PP (*Madrasah*) Bahrul 'Ulum in Jombang, East Java, in order to "Develop a Strategy to Manifest Islam as a Genuine Blessing for Global Civilization." At the conclusion of this event GP Ansor issued the *Gerakan Pemuda Ansor Declaration on Humanitarian Islam*: an 8,000 word document that examined the nature and purpose of religious norms (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*); analyzed the manner in which state and non-state actors "cynically manipulate religious sentiment in their struggle to maintain or acquire political, economic and military power… by drawing upon key elements of classical Islamic law (*fiqh*), to which they ascribe divine authority, in order to mobilize support for their worldly goals"; **called for "the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order, founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being"**; and laid out a detailed road map to address "obsolete tenets of classical Islamic law, which are premised upon perpetual conflict with those who do not embrace or submit to Islam";

6. On September 16, 2018, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor launched *Kirab Satu Negeri*—a nation-wide campaign to address three major threats facing Indonesia, by reaffirming the role of Islam as a source of unity and strength within diversity, rather than polarization and division. The campaign was, in part, a response to the contentious 2017 Jakarta election, which resulted in the defeat of the incumbent Chinese Christian governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama ("Ahok") and his subsequent conviction on blasphemy charges.

The threats in question all stem from the weaponization of religion and its abuse for political purposes. These include: *first*, extremist groups that reject the existence of Indonesia as a multi-religious and pluralistic nation state; *second*, extremist claims to have a monopoly on the correct interpretation and practice of Islam, which they seek to impose on others; and *third*, the silent majority's failure to speak up and address these threats.

The *Kirab Satu Negeri* ("One Nation Parade") set off from five points along the fringes of Indonesia's vast archipelago on September 16, and proceeded along various routes on Indonesia's major islands, uniting millions of people of different faiths and ethnicities in a reaffirmation of the traditional Indonesian view of religion as a source of harmony and not division;

7. On October 25 and 26, 2018, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah hosted an international summit of religious, cultural and political leaders: the Second Global Unity Forum. Held in conjunction with *Kirab Satu Negeri*, participants discussed the need to re-enliven the pluralistic and tolerant values that lie at the heart of Indonesia's national consensus; to revitalize the understanding and practice of religion as *raḥmah* (universal love and compassion); and launch a global effort to curtail the spread of communal hatred, supremacy and violence, which constitute a profound threat to international peace and security, and to the domestic tranquility of nearly every nation on earth.

Part I
The Context

8. The *Nusantara Manifesto* hereby incorporates a number of observations regarding the nature and purpose of religious norms, which were expressed in points 1 – 8 of the May 2017 *Gerakan Pemuda Ansor Declaration on Humanitarian Islam*:

    1. In the theory of classical Islamic law (*usul fiqh*), religious norms (*akham*; singular, *hukm*) constitute a response to reality. The purpose of religious norms (*maqasid al-shari'ah*) is to ensure the spiritual and material well-being of humanity.

    2. The authoritative Sunni jurists, Imam al-Ghazali and Imam al-Shatibi, identified five primary components of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, viz., the preservation of faith, life, progeny, reason and property.

    3. Religious norms may be universal and unchanging—e.g., the imperative that one strive to attain moral and spiritual perfection—or they may be "contingent," if they address a specific issue that arises within the ever-changing circumstances of time and place.

    4. As reality changes, contingent—as opposed to universal—religious norms should also change to reflect the constantly shifting circumstances of life on earth. This was

in fact the case during the early centuries of Islam, as various schools of Islamic law (*madzhab*) emerged and evolved. For the past five centuries, however, the practice of *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning, employed to create new religious norms) has generally lapsed throughout the Sunni Muslim world.

5. When contemporary Muslims seek religious guidance, the most widely-accepted and authoritative reference source—indeed, the standard of Islamic orthodoxy—is the corpus of classical Islamic thought (*turāth*)—and especially *fiqh* (jurisprudence)—that reached its peak of development in the Middle Ages and was then frozen in place, largely unchanged to the present day.

6. A wide discrepancy now exists between the structure of Islamic orthodoxy and the context of Muslims' actual (lived) reality, due to immense changes that have occurred since the teachings of orthodox Islam grew ossified towards the end of the medieval era.

7. This disjunct between key tenets of Islamic orthodoxy and the reality of contemporary civilization can, and often does, lead Muslims into physical, moral and spiritual danger, if they insist upon observing certain elements of *fiqh*, regardless of their present context. Among the complex issues that lie at the heart of this discrepancy are:

    - Normative practices governing relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, including the rights, responsibilities and role of non-Muslims who live in Muslim-majority societies, and vice versa;

    - Relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim world, including the proper aims and conduct of warfare;

    - The existence of modern nation states and their validity—or lack thereof—as political systems that govern the lives of Muslims; and

    - State constitutions and statutory laws/legal systems that emerged from modern political processes, and their relationship to *shari'ah*.

8. Social and political instability, civil war and terrorism all arise from the attempt, by ultraconservative Muslims, to implement certain elements of *fiqh* within a context that is no longer compatible with said classical norms.

Part II
The Nusantara Manifesto: Launching the Recontextualization (i.e., Reform) of Obsolete and Problematic Tenets Within Islamic Orthodoxy

9. In the words of Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf, General Secretary of the Nahdlatul Ulama Supreme Council: "The *Nusantara Manifesto* represents a concrete step whereby Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah are officially, and institutionally, initiating a process to bring problematic elements of Islamic orthodoxy into alignment with the 'civilizational realities' of the 21st century."

10. Parts III – X of the *Nusantara Manifesto* (points 14 – 98) describe the historical, geopolitical and religious context of Gerakan Pemuda Ansor's and Bayt ar-Rahmah's October 25, 2018 Joint Resolution and Decree, authorizing the recontextualization (i.e., reform) of certain obsolete tenets of Islamic orthodoxy at this critical juncture in world history. These sections also illustrate the fundamental Islamic values, principles and worldview that underlie and animate this endeavor: viz., *raḥmah* (universal love and compassion) and other manifestations of noble character (*al-akhlāq al-karīmah*).

11. Specifically, Parts III – X discuss:

    III. How Indonesia's experience illustrates the global threat posed by Islamist politics, and why the Nahdlatul Ulama's response to this threat may contribute to international peace and security (points 14 – 40);

    IV. The Humanitarian Islam movement, which seeks to eliminate the widespread practice of using religion to incite hatred and violence towards others (points 41 – 48);

    V. An Islamic perspective on the nature of tyranny and its antidote, noble character (points 49 – 64);

    VI. The profound dichotomy between ideals and practice that lies at the heart not only of religious and secular belief systems, but of human nature itself (points 65 – 76);

    VII. The civilizational threat posed by the nexus of dogma, economic and political power, and technology (i.e., the threat of tyranny) (points 77 – 86);

    VIII. The ancient "civilizational wisdom" of *Nusantara* (the Malay Archipelago), which fostered social harmony and peaceful co-existence among and between those of widely varying ethnicities, cultures and faiths (points 87 – 91);

    IX. Compassion as a universal value, common to all religions and peoples (points 92 – 94);

X. How Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah are moving systematically, and institutionally, to address obsolete and problematic (i.e., historically-contingent, or *mutaghayyirāt*) elements within Islamic orthodoxy that lend themselves to tyranny, while positioning these efforts within a much broader initiative to reject any and all forms of tyranny, and foster the emergence of a global civilization endowed with nobility of character (points 95 – 98).

12. Part XI of the *Manifesto* (points 99 – 173) employs the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh*—the methodology of independent legal reasoning used to create Islamic law, or *fiqh*—to examine why it is theologically valid and necessary for contemporary Muslim scholars to recontextualize obsolete and problematic tenets within Islamic orthodoxy, which are used to justify religious hatred, supremacy and violence. Section §11.2 explains why changed circumstances necessitate new *ijtihād* to ensure the well-being of humanity (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). Section §11.3 incorporates H.E. Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid's historic essay, "God Needs No Defense," while section §11.5 establishes a framework for the emergence of what the *Nusantara Manifesto* calls *fiqh al-ḥaḍārah al-'ālamīyah al-mutaṣahirah* (Islamic jurisprudence for a global civilization, whose constituent elements retain their distinctive characteristics).

13. The *Manifesto* concludes with the text of the *Nusantara Statement*, which participants of the Second Global Unity Forum signed on October 25, 2018.

Part III
The Enduring Threat of Islamist Politics in Post-Soeharto Indonesia and its Global Ramifications: Promoting International Peace and Security Through Humanitarian Islam

14. A rising tide of Islamism in its myriad forms—which run the gamut from *preman berjubah* (thugs draped in Arab garb) to social media activists, proselytism movements, educational networks, political parties and even terrorist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State—has been among the most noteworthy phenomena to emerge in Indonesia over the past 20 years.

15. Individually and collectively, these developments threaten the unity of Indonesia and its people, often in ways more subtle and profound than the bloody conflicts waged in the name of Islam in regions as diverse as Ambon, Poso and Aceh.

16. And yet, this threat is far from new. Both before and after Indonesia achieved independence, its founding fathers had to grapple with the tension that exists between Islamic orthodoxy and the ideals of the modern nation state. In June 1945, the members of the Preparatory Committee for Independence (PPKI) reached a temporary consensus with the Jakarta Charter, which subsequently formed the basis for the preamble to the Constitution of Indonesia. It originally included an obligation for Muslims to abide by Islamic law (*sharī'ah*).

17. In the course of further negotiation, secular Muslim nationalists, including Soekarno and Muhammad Hatta, persuaded their fellow committee members to delete seven words—"with Muslims required to observe Islamic law"—from the first principle of Pancasila, the foundational political philosophy of the newly-independent Indonesia. Hatta argued convincingly that Hindu- and Christian-dominated regions of the East Indies would refuse to join the Republic of Indonesia if its Constitution were to contain the seeds of an Islamic state.

18. Yet, although the committee members unanimously adopted the 1945 Constitution (UUD-45), the tension reflected in their debate over the Jakarta Charter has never been resolved and continues to roil Indonesian society to the present day.

19. The election of a Constitutional Assembly, in 1955, witnessed the reemergence of this fierce debate regarding what form of government Indonesia should adopt: Islamic theocracy or a secular nation state. After years of political maneuvering and conflict, in July of 1959 President Soekarno wielded an iron fist to end the debate, by dissolving the Constitutional Assembly and re-imposing the 1945 Constitution via presidential decree.

20. In addition to paralyzing legislative conflict, the 1950s were also a time of armed rebellions waged in the name of Islam. From 1949 – 1962 the Darul Islam/ Tentara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State/Indonesian Islamic Army) movement flourished in West Java, South Sulawesi, South Kalimantan and Aceh. DI/TII recognized only *sharī'ah* as a valid source of law, while terrorizing and beheading its opponents. In Sumatra and Sulawesi, the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) raised the banner of Islam, due to the fact that the Islamist party Masyumi—stung by its political defeat at the hands of Soekarno, Kyai Wahab Hasbullah (Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama) and other Indonesian nationalists—was deeply involved in the CIA-backed PRRI/Permesta rebellion (1958 – 1961).

21. These historical experiences demonstrate that Islamism—especially as a political movement based on religious identity—is indeed a latent, enduring threat to the existence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) as a multi-religious and pluralistic (Pancasila) nation state.

22. Under the Soeharto regime, this threat was repressed continuously and with considerable difficulty, but never completely neutralized. The rising tide of Islamism in post-Soeharto Indonesia may thus be said to constitute a "rebound" of the perennial Islamist aspiration and its accompanying pressure to transform Indonesia from a Pancasila nation state to an Islamic state.

23. Social groupings based on religious identity are a natural phenomenon. The problem with certain tenets of Islamic orthodoxy lies in the fact that these invariably incarnate as a form of political identity, with a marked tendency to embrace absolutism and a hidden or explicit agenda of dominating the existing political order, whatever that may happen to be. Whether this struggle to acquire political supremacy is waged blatantly or covertly is simply a matter of strategy and tactics.

24. Detailed analysis—including careful study of the historical dimensions of this phenomenon—may be necessary to gain comprehensive understanding of this issue. Yet one thing cannot be denied: the aspiration for Islam to attain political domination is indeed an intrinsic part of orthodox Islamic teachings, if we employ the term "Islamic orthodoxy" to describe "an array of theological doctrines accepted by the majority of Muslims as the most authoritative religious reference standard."

25. And how could this not be the case? Islamic orthodoxy includes a remarkably extensive discourse about public law, both civil and criminal, which is generally described as "God's law" (*sharī'ah*)—or at least as "the interpretation of God's law" (*fiqh*)—which must be implemented in daily life. Obviously, this cannot be achieved without political domination by those who wish to implement *sharī'ah* (in reality, *fiqh*), which describes the Islamist agenda precisely.

26. Soeharto viewed Islamist political pressure as a threat to his own power. Hence, he adopted a strategy of political and military repression, combined with symbolic concessions carefully negotiated in order to pacify the Islamist groups. The products of these negotiations are clearly visible in post-Soeharto Indonesia: the embedding of religious education within the school curriculum; the establishment of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI); the creation of an Islamic judicial system that exercises jurisdiction over marriage, divorce, remarriage and inheritance solely for Muslims; "political donations" offered to compliant Islamic institutions and organizations; the establishment of "*sharī'ah*-compliant" banks; and the creation and government support of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), to name a few.

27. And yet, like Muhammad Ali of Egypt, Ataturk and the Pahlavis of Iran, the Soeharto regime failed to address the problematic tenets within Islamic orthodoxy that underlie and animate the perennial Islamist threat, which can only be done through a process of recontextualizing, or reforming, Islamic orthodoxy itself.

28. Throughout its history, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has been fortunate to possess leaders who strongly favored the Indonesian nation state over theocracy and genuinely yearned for the well-being and political success of NKRI. Among the most prominent of these NU leaders were Abdul Wahab Hasbullah and Abdurrahman "Gus Dur" Wahid. Both employed their religious authority as chairmen of the world's largest Islamic organization to mobilize their followers and maneuver strategically in ways that proved crucial to the survival of NKRI, Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution in truly desperate times.

29. During the 1950s and '60s, Kyai Wahab blocked Masyumi from restoring the Jakarta Charter and transforming Indonesia into an Islamic state; supported Soekarno and the Indonesian military in repressing the Darul Islam and PRRI/Permesta rebellions; and allied with Soeharto to prevent a communist seizure of power, such as that which had already occurred to such devastating effect in Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, China, North Korea and Tibet.

30. During the 1980s and 1990s, Gus Dur mobilized the NU to help ensure Indonesia's successful transition from authoritarianism to democracy, and thus saved his nation from the fate that engulfed Syria, Yemen and Libya, and destroyed the fragile shoots of democracy in Egypt and Russia.

31. Kyai Wahab and Gus Dur encouraged other NU elites to develop a religious discourse that offered a concrete alternative to the obsolete, problematic tenets of Islamic orthodoxy. This alternative Islamic discourse has strengthened the legitimacy of NKRI, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*—Indonesia's national motto of "Unity Amid Diversity"—and mobilized the great mass of NU followers at the grassroots level to support this alternative discourse. But the "task" Kyai Wahab, Gus Dur and their followers have undertaken is far from complete. As Gus Dur himself remarked, "[We] must maintain a continuous dialogue between Islam and the Constitution."

32. There is no license for political and military repression in Indonesia's post-Soeharto reform era. The unchecked exercise of power is no longer feasible, for dynamic forces have emerged within civil society that constantly monitor government actions. As a result, the government cannot act arbitrarily to restrain Islamists' political lust—even to defend NKRI, Pancasila and the Constitution.

33. As a natural consequence of these democratic and human rights developments, the "dialectical tension" between Islam and NKRI is now largely governed—and political outcomes determined—by the complex interplay of competing forces within society at large.

34. Throughout the post-Soeharto era of democratic reform, the NU has adopted a resolute and unequivocal pro-NKRI/UUD-45/Pancasila position in order to thwart efforts to transform Indonesia from a sovereign nation state—whose constitution and laws are derived from modern political processes—into a theocracy whose rulers share the perennial Islamist aspiration for the political dominion of Islam and the establishment of a universal caliphate.

35. There can be little doubt that the outcome of this struggle, within Indonesia, will be impacted by the forces of globalization, which bring people and ideas from the far corners of the earth into daily contact with Indonesian Muslims, for both good and ill.

36. So long as obsolete, medieval tenets within Islamic orthodoxy remain the dominant source of religious authority throughout the Muslim world, Indonesian Islamists will continue to draw power and sustenance from developments in the world at large. This is especially true so long as key state actors—including Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Pakistan—continue to weaponize problematic tenets of Islamic orthodoxy in pursuit of their respective geopolitical agendas.

37. These considerations have led key figures within the NU—including Gus Dur in the months and years prior to his death, and former NU Chairman Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri—to conclude that it would be impossible to permanently resolve the tension that

is inherent between Islamic orthodoxy and NKRI/UUD-45, so long as we confine our efforts to the domestic, or purely Indonesian, context of the perennial Islamist threat.

38. Preserving Indonesia's unique civilizational heritage—which gave birth to NKRI as a multi-religious and pluralistic nation state—requires the successful implementation of a global strategy to develop a new Islamic orthodoxy that reflects the actual circumstances of the modern world in which Muslims must live and practice their faith.

39. This global effort, already launched by key elements of the Nahdlatul Ulama—including its 5-million-strong young adults organization, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor—is not just an inevitable corollary of efforts to defeat Islamist subversion of Indonesia. It is vital to the well-being and preservation of virtually every other nation in the world, whose laws are derived from modern political processes and whose people and governments do not wish to be subsumed in a universal Islamic caliphate or exhausted by the struggle to prevent its establishment.

40. The recontextualization and reform of Islamic orthodoxy is thus crucial to the welfare of Muslims and non-Muslims alike, for it constitutes the one indispensable prerequisite of any rational and humane solution to the multi-dimensional crisis that has plagued the Muslim world for over a century and not only shows no sign of abating—despite an ever-growing toll of human lives and misery—but rather, increasingly threatens to spill over and engulf humanity as a whole.

Part IV
Humanitarian Islam
(*al-Islām lil-Insānīyah*)

41. Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah li ad-Da'wa al-Islamiyyah Rahmatan li al-'Alamin launched the Humanitarian Islam movement on March 30, 2017, inspired by the primary message of Islam and the prophetic mission of the Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him.

42. The primary message of Islam is that religion should serve as a blessing for all creation (*raḥmatan lil-'ālamīn*) and a source of universal love and compassion—flexible and responsive to the needs of humanity in every time and place.

43. Humanitarian Islam is based upon the fundamental premise and teaching of *ahl al-sunnah wa-al-jamā'ah* (Sunni Islam) that the true purpose of religion is to perfect human life, from a spiritual as well as social perspective. Religion fulfills its spiritual function by helping people attain noble character and a full comprehension of the meaning, and essence, of life. From a social perspective religion calls for, and facilitates, the establishment of harmony and justice.

44. Religion invites all human beings, without exception, to realize their highest potential.

45. The spiritual pioneers who animate religion often succeed in altering the course of entire civilizations. Yet their very success may give rise to certain *interpretations* of religion that form the basis of organized groups that subsequently divide rather than unite humanity. Within every religious tradition may be found those who propagate hatred towards others in the name of God. Indeed, the world is full of groups that instrumentalize religion in pursuit of goals that have little if anything to do with the exalted purpose of religion itself.

46. The Humanitarian Islam movement seeks to restore human nature to what Islam regards as its pure and original state (*fiṭrah*)—as symbolized by the act of God *breathing life* into the Prophet Adam—and to eliminate the widespread practice of using religion to incite hatred and violence towards others.

47. *Fiṭrah* stands in fundamental opposition to tyranny (*ṭughyān*), which forcibly silences the liberating voice of conscience and subordinates it to the avaricious dictates of power.

48. Just as *fiṭrah* is the negation of *ṭughyān,* so true religion manifested socially is the negation of the domination of others.

Part V
An Islamic Perspective on the Nature of Tyranny and its Antidote, Noble Character

49. Islam teaches that God has endowed human beings with the ability to choose, and to engage in positive (i.e., virtuous and constructive) or negative (selfish and destructive) behavior. One's character depends upon his or her individual disposition, habits and the choices that he or she makes throughout life. The development of a noble or ignoble character (*akhlāq*) is the result of such choices and behavior.

50. In the absence of self-discipline, the innate human drive to seek pleasure and avoid pain—whether physical, emotional or psychological—fosters egotism, injustice and a relentless pursuit of power for the sake of personal gratification. From an Islamic perspective this is the root of tyranny, whether it manifests on an individual or collective scale.

51. On a personal level, every human being must contend with the tyranny of his or her own ego and senses. Conscience ("the voice within") summons one to behave in a virtuous, or noble, manner. When people fail to bridle their appetite for self-gratification and deliberately act against the interests of others, heedless of their suffering, they develop an ignoble character (*akhlāq al-madhmūmah*).

52. On a social level, tyrants subvert and suppress the functioning of individual conscience and its public manifestation, by enticing human beings to indulge their base instincts, while discouraging and/or punishing noble behavior.

53. From an Islamic perspective, a tyrant may be anyone who oppressively "governs"—i.e., controls or shapes—the behavior of others, through the exercise of political, economic, religious or socio-cultural power, in a manner whose inexorable, deleterious impact cannot be escaped.

54. It is the nature of tyrants to demand that their pronouncements be exalted and elevated beyond all judgment and criticism, and their desires unquestionably obeyed, as if they were gods.

55. To serve (i.e., submit to) God rather than tyranny requires immense courage and noble character. For true service to God entails liberating oneself from bondage to the senses, while renouncing the lures and/or defying the threats of a tyrant, whether within (the tyranny of ego and passion) or without.

56. To serve God requires that one submit to (i.e., follow or obey) the clear voice of conscience, which calls every human being to serve the truth.

57. In Islam, *al-ḥaqq* (the Truth) is one of the 99 names of God. To serve the truth is to serve God.

58. Tyrants often claim to act in the name of a higher power and to strive for a laudable objective, including the promotion of religious values or those eulogized by a secular ideology. The ultimate test of such claims, however, consists of dispassionately examining whether the actions in question embody, and encourage, noble or ignoble behavior.

59. From an Islamic perspective, noble character (*al-akhlāq al-karīmah*) manifests in the form of *tawāḍu'* (humility); *raḥmah* (universal love and compassion); *shukūr* (gratitude); *al-nīah al-ṣāliḥah* (virtuous intent) and other noble traits, which arise naturally from a state of self-transcendent awareness of, and devotion to, God (i.e., the state of *islām*).

60. The term *raḥmah* is derived from the same triconsonantal root (r-ḥ-m) as *al-Raḥmān* and *al-Raḥīm*, two of the ninety-nine names of God. All three words imply the loving safety of a mother's womb.

61. Noble behavior entails acting with compassion and treating others with respect.

62. "And We [God] sent you [Muhammad] for no purpose other than to be a blessing for all creation (*raḥmatan lil-'ālamīn*)." ~ *Qur'an*, 21:107

63. "I have been sent only to perfect the moral framework [of humanity]." ~ Hadith, *Sahih Muslim*

64. The mission of every prophet is to inspire human beings with a vision of moral and spiritual perfection, encourage them to attain this noble stature, and thereby empower them to successfully challenge tyranny, both within and without.

Part VI
Religion, Tribalism and Secular Ideology

65. Throughout history, human beings have displayed astonishingly diverse behavior—both noble and, conversely, cruel and ignoble—while acting in the name of religion.

66. Every major religious tradition enjoins its followers to observe a common set of humane and ethical standards, quite similar to those described above in regard to Islam.

67. Yet for thousands of years humanity has been plagued by discord, animosity and violence perpetrated in the name of religion, which in turn often constitutes a de facto ethnic or "tribal" identity.

68. Again and again, those who crave worldly power have manipulated religious sentiment in their struggle to maintain or acquire political, economic and military supremacy, and to dominate their rivals. This has led to untold suffering and loss of life, and precipitated the ruin of entire civilizations.

69. This raises a fundamental question regarding the nature and practice of religion, whose ramifications for modern civilization we may seek to ignore but cannot escape.

70. As Dr. Rüdiger Lohlker observed in his essay, "Theology Matters: the case of jihadi Islam": "Flatly denying the importance of religion causes many in the West to overlook a crucial element of jihadi thought and action. This is particularly evident with regard to the mantra so often repeated in the wake of each new terrorist attack, viz.: 'Islam is the religion of peace.' The claim that religion motivates only positive behavior among human beings, and the implicit denial that religion may ever legitimize negative behavior, cannot withstand intellectual scrutiny. History provides countless examples of both positive and negative behavior legitimized by religion….

    "The only way to deconstruct this violent form of religion is to develop alternative forms of religion capable of resisting the theology of violence, which is characterized by apologetics that simultaneously demand and legitimize authoritarianism, socio-cultural and religious homogeneity, and the strict demarcation of boundaries, etc. [i.e., tyranny]."

71. Religious adherents tend to view their own faith in idealistic terms, while readily identifying and critiquing others' shortcomings. Ironically, even those who profess atheism are often in thrall to a dogmatic mindset, which they attempt to impose on others through social ostracism, economic disenfranchisement and/or government diktat. The atrocities committed in the name of militant atheism—including mass murder and the enslavement of entire peoples—suggest that the fault (i.e., an inclination towards dogmatism and tyranny) may reside within human nature, rather than reflect the intrinsic attributes of religion itself.

72. Still, the question remains: How do human beings actually *practice* their respective faiths, as individuals and within the larger framework of society as a whole? Do we employ religion as a means to attain genuine spiritual and material well-being for ourselves and our fellow human beings, in this life and the next? Or as a tool to gratify worldly ambitions, and a formidable weapon with which to attack and annihilate enemies?

73. Modified to accommodate an agnostic or atheistic worldview, these questions pertain equally to those who embrace a secular—and ostensibly idealistic—political ideology as a means to foster individual and collective well-being.

74. Despite the enormous technological and material progress that has been achieved over the course of human history, we have yet to resolve—collectively, and on a global scale—the profound dichotomy between ideals and practice that lies at the heart not only of religious and secular belief systems, but of human nature itself.

75. There is little awareness and virtually no consensus, in the public realm, regarding this dichotomy. Instead, there is a nearly universal tendency to advance one's own agenda beneath an idealistic flag while dismissing others as evil, foolish and/or blind to the "self-evident" flaws of their religious or secular dogma.

76. As a result, immense confusion and fierce, often violent disagreement exists as to the nature and purpose of religious and political ideologies and their respective roles in society—including, by implication, the proper role of government itself.

Part VII
The Civilizational Threat Posed by the Nexus of Dogma, Political and Economic Power, and Technology (i.e., the Threat of Tyranny)

77. The *Gerakan Pemuda Ansor Declaration on Humanitarian Islam* discussed, at length, the threat to modern civilization posed by "obsolete tenets of classical Islamic law, which are premised upon perpetual conflict with those who do not embrace or submit to Islam" (point 42). Yet these problematic tenets of Islamic orthodoxy do not constitute the sole—and perhaps not even the primary—threat to the future of humanity. For dogmatism, which naturally lends itself to tyranny, may readily manifest under various ideological guises, both religious and secular.

78. Nevertheless, the ease with which Islamists have been able to exploit problematic elements of Islamic orthodoxy to clothe their political agenda in religious authenticity has had the far-reaching and catastrophic result of strengthening dogmatic forces worldwide. The full ramifications of this process are still unfolding and threaten to produce an enduring radicalization of politics on a global level. This is a particularly alarming development, as it comes at a time when the diverse peoples, cultures and civilizations of the world are increasingly interconnected, interdependent and interfused.

79. In the Islamic world and those regions with localized Muslim majorities, Islamist groups have used the clarion call of establishing an Islamic state to launch civil wars, insurgencies and campaigns of terrorism that have left cities in ruin, countless dead and millions displaced over a vast arc of territory stretching from the Western Sahel to the southern Philippines. Many of these conflicts have lasted for decades and, in spite of their terrible toll, show no sign of abating in the decades to come.

80. The widespread perception of Muslims and Islam as a threat to non-Muslim societies is a direct and intentional result of Islamist groups' actions, and their astute use of propaganda, which transmits powerfully symbolic images of the dystopian reality they seek to create. Horrors of the past such as slavery, crucifixion and the public execution of alleged homosexuals, adulterers, infidels, apostates and magicians are resurrected, re-instituted as valid components of an Islamic social order and broadcast to a disgusted global audience.

81. Islamist terrorism has strengthened politically opportunistic elements in non-Muslim societies, as those seeking to maintain or acquire power exploit such violence to buttress their own political agendas.

82. The Communist Party of China's determination to build a hi-tech totalitarian surveillance state threatens not only the inhabitants of China, but potentially all who dwell within its sphere of influence, as the native populations of Tibet and Xinjiang can testify. Indeed, the CPC has exploited global concern about Islamist terrorism to shield this project from international criticism, and millions of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang have seen their homeland converted into a testing ground for radically new methods of totalitarian oppression, which could be exported worldwide. (See Ansor Decree Number 04/KONBES-XXI/IV/2017, *Gerakan Pemuda Ansor's View Regarding the Republic of Indonesia's Strategic Interests and National Security Agenda within the Cauldron of Current Geopolitical Dynamics*.)

83. In South and South-East Asia, the perceived threat of Islam has been exploited to confer legitimacy on local brands of exclusivist and authoritarian religious and political ideologies. Buddhist supremacism threatens Muslim minorities in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, while Hindutva ideology aims to subordinate Muslims, Christians and others in South Asia.

84. In the Western world, Islamist terrorism—and, in the case of Europe, the influx of refugees and migrants from the broader Middle East and Africa—have significantly contributed to a profound polarization that threatens the integrity of those societies' democratic systems. On both the political left and right, attitudes towards Islam have become a proxy battleground in a wider struggle for power that politicizes Islam and renders Muslims highly vulnerable to any breakdown in political order.

85. Efforts by corporations, ideological movements and governments in the West to harness technology, including artificial intelligence, to manipulate public opinion and restrict freedom of expression pose a different but no less alarming threat of tyranny, particularly

when wedded to social-cultural, economic, legislative and administrative efforts to accomplish the same agenda.

86. Although superficially distinct, these threats share a number of traits in common. Each is inextricably linked to the innate human tendency to dominate, or seek to dominate, others. And each illustrates the danger posed by welding dogma—whether secular or religious—to a political agenda backed by powerful economic interests and the use of technology to impose conformity (in effect, a "tribal identity") upon others, and crush the spirit of anyone who opposes this agenda.

Part VIII
Nusantara Civilization

87. For thousands of years, *Nusantara* (the Malay Archipelago) has been a civilizational crossroads and home to a wide array of peoples, cultures and religious beliefs. In their collective wisdom, the inhabitants of these islands developed a unique civilization founded upon the principle of "unity amid diversity" (*bhinneka tunggal ika*), which inspired the creation of Indonesia as a multi-religious and pluralistic state.

88. A key element of this ancient "civilizational wisdom" is the ability not only to grasp but also *prioritize*, individually and collectively, the spiritual essence of religion, rather than purely formal and dogmatic elements that readily lend themselves to weaponization and, in the wrong hands, foster conflict rather than social unity.

89. This distinguishing characteristic of Nusantara society—i.e., the impulse to position spiritual wisdom, rather than dogma, as the central pillar of socio-cultural, religious and political life—enabled Nusantara civilization to embrace the essence of newly arrived religions; neutralize their potentially divisive effects; and transform religious pluralism into a source of social unity and strength, by cultivating humility, compassion and respect for others, rather than fear and hatred. By fostering social harmony and peaceful co-existence among and between those of widely varying ethnicities, cultures and faiths, religion served Nusantara inhabitants as a path to attain spiritual nobility, rather than a pragmatic means to claim privilege and/or supremacy vis-à-vis others.

90. As heirs to this noble civilization, which is under siege by an array of powerful forces—including the globalization of culture, geo-political instability and the weaponization of religion for political purposes—it is time for Indonesians to awaken and reclaim our ancient heritage, not merely for ourselves but humanity at large. For the profound wisdom that lies at the heart of Nusantara civilization is desperately needed in a world where ethnic, political and religious differences so often lead to enmity and violence.

91. In a spirit of humility and respect for the wisdom that resides—all too often neglected—at the heart of every culture and religion, ***we invite people of goodwill of every faith and***

nation to join Indonesia in rejecting any and all forms of tyranny, and in fostering the emergence of a global civilization endowed with nobility of character.

Part IX
Let Us Choose Compassion

92. Virtually all religions teach that the path to individual and collective "salvation," however defined, requires the ability to rise above egotistical self-interest through a transformation of the human heart and the attainment of a state of inner nobility.

93. Many religious figures describe this process as "the purification of the soul," which gives rise to a state of inner illumination.

94. This inner, or spiritual, nobility is said to find its outer expression in the form of noble character and behavior, both individual and collective—for a community of spiritually ennobled individuals will naturally strive to build a noble society and a civilization founded upon noble values, such as humility, compassion, gratitude and beneficial purpose.

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth;
the likeness of His Light is as a niche
wherein is a lamp
(the lamp in a glass,
the glass as it were a glittering star)
kindled from a Blessed Tree,
an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West
whose oil well nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it;
Light upon Light;
God guides to His Light whom He will.

~ *Qur'an*, 24:35

"The sunlight is one and the same wherever it falls, but only bright surfaces like water, mirrors and polished metals can reflect it fully. So is the Divine Light. It falls equally and impartially on all hearts, but only the pure and clean hearts of the good and holy can reflect it fully."

~ Sri Ramakrishna

"If a worshipper commits a mistake [sin] a black spot appears in his heart; if he removes [it], asks for forgiveness and repents, his heart is polished clean, but if he returns [to his sin] it increases until it overshadows his heart, and this is the 'corrosion' which Allah mentioned: 'Nay, but their hearts are corroded by all [the evil] that they were want to do!'[Qur'an, 83:14]"

~ *Jami` at-Tirmidhi*, Vol. 5, Book 44, Hadith 3334

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

~ *St. Matthew*, V. 8

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart: who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

~ *Psalm*, XXIV. 3 – 4

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

~ I. Corinthians, XIII. 1

"Accustomed long to contemplating love and compassion,
I have forgotten all difference between myself and others."

~ Milarepa

"As the bee collects nectar and departs without injuring the flower, or its color or scent, so let a sage dwell in his village."

~ *Dhammapada*, IV, 49

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

~ *Isaiah*, XI, V. 9

"He (Rama) has compassion, a sense of justice and courage, and he makes no distinctions between human beings—old or young, prince or peasant; he has the same consideration for everyone. . . Rama's whole purpose of incarnation was to abolish fear from the hearts of men and gods, and establish peace, gentleness, and justice in the world."

~ *The Ramayana*

"[L]et those who are to preside over the state obey two precepts of Plato—one, that they so watch for the well-being of their fellow citizens that they have reference to it in whatever they do, forgetting their own private interests; the other, that they care for the whole body politic, and not, while they watch over a portion of it, neglect other portions. For, as the guardianship of a minor, so the administration of a state is to be conducted for the benefit, not of those to whom it is entrusted, but of those who are entrusted to their care."

~ Cicero, *On Moral Duties* (*De Officiis*), I, 25

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge or gallantry would break the

strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

~ John Adams

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a basket, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."

~ *St. Matthew*, V. 14 – 15

"When a village embodies Tao, it is protected; when a country embodies Tao, it prospers; when the world embodies Tao, it reveals its perfection."

~ *Tao Te Ching*, V. 54

It is said that Buddha and Shiva are two distinct substances.
They are indeed different, yet it is impossible to regard them as fundamentally different,
for the essence of Buddha and the essence of Shiva is one.
[They appear] different, yet [are] one (*bhinneka tunggal ika*),
for Truth is indivisible.

~ Mpu Tantular, *Sutasoma*, 139:5

"And so, set thy face steadfastly towards the [one ever-true] religion, turning away from all that is false, in accordance with the natural disposition (*fiṭrah*) which God has instilled into mankind: not allowing any change to corrupt what God has thus created—this is the ever-true religion; but most people know it not.

"Turn unto Him, and remain conscious of Him, and be constant in prayer, and be not among those who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him, [nor] among those who have shattered the unity of religion and become sects, each group rejoicing only in what they themselves hold [by way of tenets]."

~ *Qur'an,* 30:30 – 32

Part X
Civilization is Built Upon the Division of Labor
The Role of Islam Nusantara

95. The civilizational threat of tyranny posed by the nexus of dogma, political and economic power, and technology is such that no single nation, religious organization or political movement is capable of addressing this threat single-handedly.

96. Hence, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor's and Bayt ar-Rahmah's call for people of good will of every faith and nation to join in building a global consensus to prevent the political weaponization of Islam, whether by Muslims or non-Muslims, and to curtail the spread of

communal hatred by fostering the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order, founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being.

97. ***Acting in accord with the principle of division of labor, Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah are moving systematically, and institutionally, to address those obsolete and historically-contingent (or mutaghayyirāt) elements within Islamic jurisprudence that lend themselves to tyranny, by creating a theological framework for the recontextualization of Islamic teachings and the reform of problematic tenets within Islamic orthodoxy.***

98. We invite others to join us in this endeavor, and to position these efforts within a much broader initiative to reject any and all forms of tyranny, and foster the emergence a global civilization endowed with nobility of character.

Part XI
Towards a Theological Framework for the Recontextualization of Islamic Teachings and the Reform of Problematic Tenets Within Islamic Orthodoxy

§11.1
Transcendent and Historically-Contingent Elements of Religious Orthodoxy (*Thawābit* and *Mutaghayyirāt*)

99. The majority of political conflicts within the Islamic world—and between Muslims and non-Muslims globally—stem from the Muslim world's failure to adapt, peacefully and harmoniously, to the realities of our current world civilization.

100. One factor that contributes to this failure—indeed, perhaps the *primary* factor—is a dominant mindset among Muslims, which tends to view the classical orthodoxy of Islam as an unchangeable set of religious rules and guidance.

101. Those who consider Islamic teachings to be immutable are, by definition, incapable of responding to the ever-changing circumstances of life in an appropriate and effective manner. They fail to apprehend the complex nature of Islamic orthodoxy, which evolved over a number of centuries in response to divine revelation and historical—i.e., socio-cultural, political and military—circumstances encountered by Muslim communities in the broader Middle East and North Africa.

102. As the majority of *'ulamā'* (Muslim scholars) have traditionally recognized, Islamic orthodoxy consists of both transcendent (i.e., immutable) elements (*thawābit*) and contingent responses to historical reality (*mutaghayyirāt*), which may be adapted to address and reflect the ever-changing circumstances of life.

103. In order to appreciate this analytical distinction, it is necessary to differentiate between the spiritual (i.e., essential) values of Islam and its contingent expressions, including numerous tenets of Islamic orthodoxy that emerged within the context of Islamic civilization in the Middle East.

104. The transcendent (immutable) elements of Islam include a perennial set of messages embedded within scripture as guidelines (also known as *sharī'ah*) that apply to all Muslims throughout space and time. These eternal values may be described as the religion of Islam, if we wish the term religion (*al-dīn*) to refer to that which is noble and enduring.

105. Temporal elements within Islamic orthodoxy, on the other hand, constitute historically-determined responses to specific circumstances on the part of Muslims. These responses may be described as the historical (or civilizational) manifestation of Islam, which occurred within specific territories at specific points in time, primarily within the Arab, Persian and Turkish cultural basins, often in response to armed conflict with neighboring states and the administration of conquered territories and peoples.

106. Islamic orthodoxy contains internal mechanisms, including the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh*—the methodology of independent legal reasoning employed to create Islamic law, or *fiqh* (often conflated with *sharī'ah*)—that allow Muslim scholars to adjust the temporal elements of religious orthodoxy in response to the ever-changing circumstances of life. These internal mechanisms entail a process of independent legal reasoning known as *ijtihād*, which fell into disuse among Sunni Muslim scholars approximately five centuries ago.

107. If Muslims are to live at peace with themselves and the modern world, it is essential that we recognize and acknowledge that the context of our current global civilization is profoundly different from that in which the religion of Islam was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, and the circumstances in which the temporal elements of Islamic orthodoxy emerged and gradually became ossified towards the end of the medieval era.

§11.2
Changed Circumstances Necessitate New *Ijtihād* to Ensure the Well-Being of Humanity (*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*)

108. Major political, economic, technological and socio-cultural changes have swept the world in recent centuries, thoroughly transforming the circumstances in which Muslims must live and practice their faith. These developments, which have notably accelerated since the First World War, include:

    i) A complete transformation of the global political order;

    ii) Fundamental changes in demography;

iii) Evolving societal norms; and

iv) Globalization, driven by scientific and technological developments that enable mass communications, travel and the emergence of a tightly integrated world economy.

109. To date, there has been no systematic effort by Muslim authorities to adapt the temporal elements—i.e., the historically-determined "operational values"—of Islamic orthodoxy to reflect and address these changes. The current crisis of the Muslim world may be largely attributed to this failure, as evidenced by extremist efforts to reestablish an Islamic Caliphate; abolish nation states; reject laws derived from modern political processes; and revivify obsolete elements of *fiqh* (which they invariably conflate with *sharī'ah*), such as offensive *jihād*, slavery, the subordination of infidels, stoning adulterers, executing homosexuals and amputating the hands of thieves.

§11.2.1
Transformation of the Global Political Order

110. Prior to the American and French Revolutions, and particularly the First World War, the political map of the world consisted primarily of competing empires, kingdoms and tribal confederations. Virtually all developed states embraced an official religion, whose orthodox tenets were shaped and/or enforced by the ruler and officials of the administrative state.

111. Within the Islamic world, the Ottoman Caliphate (1362 – 1924 CE) asserted its claim to embody the orthodox ideal of a unified Muslim community, led by a pious Muslim ruler who adhered to the basic tenets of Islamic (Sunni) orthodoxy. Similarly, the Safavid dynasty and its successors, in Iran, based their claim to political power on fundamental tenets of Islamic (Shi'ite) orthodoxy.

112. The full enjoyment of legal privileges by the subjects of these empires was predicated upon their religious identity conforming to that of the empire. For example, the Ottoman Caliphate systematically discriminated against non-Muslims by enforcing a wide range of orthodox Islamic tenets that govern the treatment of conquered non-Muslims, or *dhimmīyūn,* as did other Sunni and Shi'ite rulers throughout the Islamic world, with the exception of Nusantara (the Malay Archipelago) and of Java in particular.

113. Even more severe restrictions were common in Europe. Prior to the modern era, Muslims were generally not allowed to reside in the Christian-ruled states of Europe, which routinely persecuted unauthorized Christian sects and systematically discriminated against Jews as a whole.

114. The collapse of this geopolitical structure, in the wake of colonialism and the First World War, convulsed and disoriented both the Islamic world and the West. Kemal Ataturk abolished the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, just a few years after the Bolshevik Revolution and the dissolution of the Habsburg and Hohenzollern Empires in Europe.

115. For the first time since the death of the Prophet Muhammad (saw.) in 632 CE—and a brief interruption following the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258—the Muslim world was without a caliphate.

116. The following decades witnessed a number of profound changes to the global political order, including:

    i) The division of the world into sovereign nation states, rather than empires;

    ii) The explicit or de facto adoption of a secular identity by modern nation states and the concept of equal citizenship, in which a person's legal status is no longer a function of his or her religious identity; and

    iii) The emergence of intergovernmental organizations—such as the United Nations, European Union, OSCE, OIC and WTO—multi-lateral pacts and an intense regime of rules-based governance in the field of international relations.

117. These geopolitical developments have, to a large extent, displaced the prior norm of neighboring states engaged in constant rivalry and frequent warfare, in which borders were heavily guarded and international relations often determined by rulers' military capabilities and calculations.

§11.2.2
Changes in Global Demography and Their Implications for Islamic Orthodoxy

118. Profound demographic shifts have occurred over the past two centuries, impacting the geographic distribution and political/legal status of various ethnic and religious populations worldwide. In regard to Muslims in particular: European colonialism, subsequent independence movements and Muslim immigration to the West have fundamentally transformed the nature and structure of governments under which the majority of Muslims worldwide live and practice their faith.

119. As noted in points 110 to 113 above: prior to the modern era, a strong correlation generally existed between a state's religious identity and the legal status accorded to its various subjects. Those who embraced the official religion enjoyed a privileged status vis-à-vis members of other religious groups, whether minority or otherwise. This situation has dramatically changed in much of the contemporary world, with the advent of secular nation states.

120. Throughout the pre-modern era—with notable exceptions during times of civil war, such as those triggered by the Protestant Reformation—religious conflict tended to occur on an international level, generally in the form of war between religiously (and often ethnically) distinct states. Military conflicts between Christians and Muslims, for example, were synonymous with war between Christian and Muslim states. Over eight

centuries of war between the Eastern Roman Empire and a series of Islamic caliphates—including the Rashidun, Umayyads, Abbasids and Ottoman Turks—culminated in the fall of Constantinople in 1453, followed by nearly four centuries of conflict between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires.

121. Certain tenets of Islamic orthodoxy emerged within the context of prolonged military conflict between Muslim and non-Muslim states. For example, one of the fundamental norms of Islamic orthodoxy is the assumption that a state of enmity exists between Muslims and non-Muslims.

122. It is not difficult to understand the origin and persistence of this particular tenet. From the persecution of early Muslims in the city of Mecca until the modern era, this norm may have served to ensure the survival and prosperity of Muslims, whose political entities—and, consequently, their enjoyment of full legal status within an Islamic state—were threatened by neighboring non-Muslim states. In this pre-modern context, it was necessary for the survival of Muslim communities, and of an Islamic state, that Muslims be constantly alert to the military threat posed by non-Muslim neighboring states and, by implication, non-Muslims who were allowed to dwell within their own borders.

123. The military power of the Islamic state—wielded by armed and vigilant Muslim warriors—guarded the borders (*ribāṭ*) and secured the population of Muslims dwelling within the state (*dār al-islām*, or "the abode of peace") from attack by neighboring non-Muslim polities (*dār al-ḥarb* or *dār al-kufr*, "the abode of war/abode of disbelief").

124. In the contemporary world, religious conflict is no longer synonymous with war between rival states. Rather, it is far more likely to assume the form of domestic upheaval and/or terrorist attacks committed by non-state actors who reject the very existence of the modern nation state.

125. More than 40 million Muslims now live in Europe and North America, and over 300 million others dwell as religious minorities in nations ruled by non-Muslims, including India, China, Russia, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The tenets of orthodox Islam do not prescribe how Muslims should adapt to living under such conditions. Rather, the classical texts of Islamic law forbid Muslims to dwell in *dār al-ḥarb/dār al-kufr*, for they reflect the assumption that a state of perpetual war—interrupted, at most, by a temporary truce—will exist between Muslims and non-Muslims "until the end of time."

126. This was the theological rationale employed by ISIS when it urged Muslims living in the West to perform *hijrah* (i.e., migrate) to its caliphate, or slaughter the infidels amidst whom they dwell.

127. As point 13 of the *Gerakan Pemuda Ansor Declaration on Humanitarian Islam* stated: "If Muslims do not address the key tenets of Islamic orthodoxy that authorize and explicitly enjoin such violence, anyone—at any time—may harness the orthodox teachings of Islam to defy what they claim to be the illegitimate laws and authority of an infidel state and butcher their fellow citizens, regardless of whether they live in the Islamic world or the

West. This is the bloody thread that links so many current events, from Egypt, Syria and Yemen to the streets of Mumbai, Jakarta, Berlin, Nice, Stockholm and Westminster."

128. As more and more Muslims live and work alongside non-Muslims throughout the contemporary world, obsolete tenets of Islamic orthodoxy—such as the 1,400-year-old "norm of enmity" towards non-Muslims—have increasingly come to threaten, rather than foster, the well-being of Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

129. Rather than ensure the security of the state and its inhabitants, continued propagation of this "norm of enmity" constitutes a recipe for social instability, communal violence and even genocide, as illustrated by the brutal conflicts now raging across a huge swath of territory inhabited by Muslims, from Africa and the Middle East to the borders of India and beyond; rampant social turbulence throughout the Islamic world; the unchecked spread of religious extremism and terror; and a rising tide of Islamophobia among non-Muslim populations, in direct response to these developments and the traumatic historical memories they awaken among populations as diverse as European Christians, sub-Saharan Africans and South Asian Hindus.

§11.2.3
Evolving Societal Norms and Their Implications for Islamic Orthodoxy

130. Over the past two centuries, the world has undergone a seismic change in terms of prevailing social norms. To cite three examples that are especially relevant to Islamic jurisprudence: from the dawn of human history until the 19th century, slavery was a widely accepted practice in many if not most parts of the world. Colonialism and imperialism were also standard practice, as were harsh forms of criminal punishment.

131. In past centuries, the behavior of ISIS would have appeared not only familiar but even normal within the context of religious warfare. Its propaganda videos cite and largely conform to established tenets of Islamic orthodoxy, as pertain to the conduct of war and the governance of an Islamic state. The fact that ISIS' behavior is now widely perceived as deviant illustrates just how much societal norms have changed over the past two hundred years, both within the Muslim world and globally.

132. The British Empire's prohibition of the slave trade, enforced by the Royal Navy; the anti-colonialist movements of the 20th century; prohibitions against "cruel and unusual punishment"; and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, all represent milestones in the emergence of a new and largely global set of norms.

133. In the West, many of these new societal norms have become institutionalized in the form of legislation adopted by the democratically-elected governments of modern nation states, with the endorsement of both religious and secular authorities.

134. Many Muslim-majority nations have also adopted these new norms (e.g., prohibiting slavery and abandoning *ḥudūd* punishments such as stoning and the amputation of hands), but with a crucial difference. There has not yet occurred, in the Muslim world, a systematic process of recontextualizing (i.e., reforming) Islamic teachings in a manner that effectively addresses obsolete elements of *fiqh,* and thereby establishes new societal norms, and the laws associated therewith, as the legitimate expression of Islamic orthodoxy, endorsed by both religious and secular authorities.

135. The Muslim world and the West tend to view these evolving societal norms, and the history that preceded them, in very different ways. In recent decades, it has become increasingly common in Europe and North America to judge historical figures—and Western civilization as a whole—by the yardstick of contemporary societal norms, while exempting other cultures from criticism.

136. Muslim societies, on the other hand, tend to embrace a hagiographic view regarding such matters. For example, it is common for Muslims to describe the Arab conquest of the Levant, Persia and North Africa; the devastation of India; and Ottoman rule in Southeast Europe as having "liberated" the inhabitants of these regions, rather than acknowledge the imperialist/colonialist nature of Islamic states ruled by Arab and Turkic elites, long before the European Age of Discovery.

137. Similarly, it is not uncommon for contemporary Muslims to speak about the "humane" nature of Islamic slavery, without acknowledging how tens of millions of human beings became slaves in the first place, and the devastating effect this had upon their lives, their families and their societies at large.

138. Key elements of Islamic jurisprudence, which remain an integral part of Islamic orthodoxy to the present day, were specifically designed to administer conquered territories and their inhabitants. The persistence of these obsolete tenets—and the manner in which they are so effectively exploited by extremists—reflects the dominant mindset among Muslims, who tend to view the classical orthodoxy of Islam as an unchangeable set of religious rules and guidance.

139. Rather than deny historical or contemporary reality, it is essential—to the well-being of the Muslim community and the world at large—that Muslim scholars (*'ulamā'*), political elites, intellectuals, educators and other opinion leaders summon the courage necessary to explicitly state that changing circumstances require the revision of certain historically-determined and now obsolete elements of Islamic law.

§11.2.4
Globalization Driven by Scientific and Technological Developments that Enable Mass Communications, Travel and a Tightly-Integrated World Economy

140. Scientific and technological progress over the past two centuries—fostered by the spread of universal education, scientific methodology and the intelligent use of capital—has enabled the development of mass communications, travel and a tightly-integrated world economy that has not only lifted the majority of the world's population out of poverty, but also brought people of diverse cultures and religions into intimate contact with one another on an unprecedented scale.

141. The deployment of fiber optic and cellular technologies, the internet and smart phones have enabled information to travel from one part of the world to another at the speed of light, rendering it impossible to prevent events in one region from quickly impacting others.

142. The persecution of Muslims in Myanmar and Sri Lanka—and a rising tide of Islamophobia in the West—are directly related to these developments, as are the success of al-Qaeda, ISIS and other terrorist groups that employ modern communications technology to encourage attacks against non-Muslims worldwide.

143. A majority of the world's population now live in cities, and are thus dependent on the smooth functioning of a tightly integrated global economy for their daily sustenance. These scientific, technological and economic developments represent an historic achievement, but also an unprecedented vulnerability, as former Indonesian president H.E. Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid wrote in a seminal article, "Right Islam vs. Wrong Islam," which the *Wall Street Journal* published on December 30, 2005: "The entire edifice of modern civilization is built on economic and technological foundations that terrorists hope to collapse... like so many fishing huts in the wake of a tsunami."

144. In other words, scientific, technological and economic progress have brought civilization to our present cross-roads, with greater opportunity for advancement—or mass destruction—than ever before.

145. God willing, the 21st century may witness the emergence of a truly global civilization, which offers an unprecedented opportunity for people of every faith and nation to cooperate in building a better life for themselves and their children.

146. Yet to realize this potential, we must foster the emergence of a global civilization endowed with noble character, so that the innate human will to dominate others—and the threat of tyranny posed by the nexus of dogma, political and economic power, and technology—do not lead, instead, to the dystopian future anticipated by George Orwell in his novel *1984*, whose most memorable image is that of "a boot stamping on a human face—forever."

§11.3
God Needs No Defense

147. H.E. Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid addressed the need to recontextualize Islamic teachings throughout his long and productive life, including his 15-year tenure as General Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board from 1984 – 1999. In a seminal essay entitled "God Needs No Defense" ("*Tuhan Tak Perlu Dibela"*), President Wahid offered a profound theological defense of freedom of thought, conscience and expression, which may contribute to a theological framework for the recontextualization of Islamic teachings in the 21st century.

148. Therefore, the *Nusantara Manifesto* incorporates the complete text of "God Needs No Defense," which illustrates why changed circumstances necessitate new *ijtihād* to ensure the well-being of humanity (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*):

> As K.H. Mustofa Bisri[1] wrote in his poem *Allahu Akbar*: "If all of the 6 billion human inhabitants of this earth, which is no greater than a speck of dust, were blasphemous… or pious… it would not have the slightest effect upon His greatness."
>
> Omnipotent, and existing as absolute and eternal Truth, nothing could possibly threaten God. And as *ar-Rahman* (the Merciful) and *ar-Rahim* (the Compassionate), God has no enemies. Those who claim to defend God, Islam or the Prophet are thus either deluding themselves, or manipulating religion for their own mundane and political purposes, as we witnessed in the carefully manufactured outrage that swept the Muslim world several years ago, claiming hundreds of lives, in response to cartoons published in Denmark. Those who presume to fully grasp God's will, and dare to impose their own limited understanding of this upon others, are essentially equating themselves with God, and unwittingly engaged in blasphemy.
>
> As Muslims, rather than harshly condemn others' speech or beliefs, and employing threats or violence to constrain these, we should ask: why is there so little freedom of expression, and religion, in the so-called Muslim world? Exactly whose interests are served by laws such as Section 295-C of the Pakistani legal code, "Defiling the Name of Muhammad," which mandates the death penalty for "blasphemy," which Pakistan's Federal Shari'a Court has effectively defined as:
>
> > "reviling or insulting the Prophet in writing or speech; speaking profanely or contemptuously about him or his family; attacking the Prophet's dignity and honor in an abusive manner; vilifying him or making an ugly face when his name is mentioned; showing enmity or hatred towards him, his family, his companions, and the Muslims; accusing, or slandering the Prophet and his family, including spreading evil reports about him or his family; defaming the Prophet; refusing the Prophet's jurisdiction or judgment in any manner;

[1] Descended from a long line of charismatic religious leaders, Kyai Haji Mustofa Bisri heads the Raudlatuth Tholibin Islamic boarding school in Rembang, Central Java. Widely revered as a religious scholar, poet, novelist, painter and Muslim intellectual, K.H. Mustofa Bisri has strongly influenced the Nahdlatul Ulama's social, educational and religious development over the past thirty years.

rejecting the Sunnah; showing disrespect, contempt for or rejection of the rights of Allah and His Prophet or rebelling against Allah and His Prophet."[2]

Rather than serve to protect God, Islam or Muhammad, such deliberately vague and repressive laws merely empower those with a worldly (i.e., political) agenda, and act as a "sword of Damocles" threatening not only religious minorities, but the right of mainstream Muslims to speak freely about their own religion without being threatened by the wrath of fundamentalists—exercised through the power of government or mobs—whose claims of "defending religion" are little more than a pretext for self-aggrandizement.

No objective observer can deny that Pakistani society—like so many others in the Muslim world—has undergone a process of coarsening under the influence of such laws, in tandem with the rise of religious extremism and the loss of true spirituality, without which the profound meaning and purpose of Islam remain veiled from human understanding.

The renowned Qur'anic injunction, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256), anticipated Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[3] by over 13 centuries, and should serve as a inspiration to Muslim societies today, guiding them on the path to religious freedom and tolerance.

In its original Qur'anic sense, the word *shari'a* refers to "the way," the path to God, and not to formally codified Islamic law, which only emerged in the centuries following Muhammad's death. In examining the issue of blasphemy and apostasy laws, it is thus vital that we differentiate between the Qur'an—from which much of the raw material for producing Islamic law is derived—and the law itself. For while its revelatory inspiration is divine, Islamic law is man-made and thus subject to human interpretation and revision.

For example, punishment for apostasy is merely the legacy of historical circumstances and political calculations stretching back to the early days of Islam, when apostasy generally coincided with desertion from the Caliph's army and/or rejection of his authority, and thus constituted treason or rebellion. The embedding (i.e., codification) of harsh punishments for apostasy into Islamic law must be recognized as an historical and political by-product of these circumstances framed in accordance with human calculations and expediency, rather than assuming that Islam, and *shari'a*, must forever dictate punishment for changing one's religion.

The historical development and use of the term *shari'a* to refer to Islamic law often leads those unfamiliar with this history to conflate man-made law with its revelatory inspiration, and to thereby elevate the products of human understanding—which are necessarily conditioned by space and time—to the status of Divine.

2 Mohammad Asrar Madani, *Verdict of Islamic Law on Blasphemy and Apostasy*. Lahore, Pakistan: Idara-e-Islamiat, 1994.

3 "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

Shari'a, properly understood, expresses and embodies perennial values. Islamic law, on the other hand, is the product of *ijtihad* (interpretation) which depends on circumstances (*al-hukm yadur ma'a al-'illah wujudan wa 'adaman*) and needs to be continuously reviewed in accordance with ever-changing circumstances, to prevent Islamic law from becoming out of date, rigid and non-correlative—not only with Muslims' contemporary lives and conditions, but also with the underlying perennial values of *shari'a* itself.

Throughout Islamic history, many of the greatest *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) scholars have also been deeply grounded in the traditions of *tassawuf*, or Islamic mysticism, and recognized the need to balance the letter with the spirit of the law. The profoundly humanistic and spiritual nature of Sufi Islam facilitated the accommodation of different social and cultural practices as Islam spread from its birthplace in the Arabian Peninsula to the Levant, North Africa, the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa, Persia, Central and South Asia, and the East Indies archipelago. By many estimates, a majority of the Muslim population in most of these regions still practice a form of religious piety either directly or indirectly derived from Sufism. And the greatness of traditional Islamic art and architecture—from the wonders of Fes and Grenada, to Istanbul, Isfahan, Samarkand and Agra—bears testimony to the long line of Sufi masters, guilds and individual artists who strove to ennoble matter, so as to transform our man-made environment into "the veritable counterpart of nature, a mosaic of 'Divine portents' revealing everywhere the handiwork of man as God's vice-regent."[4]

Indeed, the greatness of classical Islamic civilization—which incorporated a humane and cosmopolitan universalism—stemmed largely from the intellectual and spiritual maturity that grew from the amalgamation of Arab, Greek, Jewish, Christian and Persian influences. That is why I wept upon seeing Ibn Rushd's commentary on the *Nicomachian Ethics* lovingly preserved and displayed, during a visit some years ago to Fes, Morocco. For if not for Aristotle and his great treatise, I might have become a Muslim fundamentalist myself.

Among the various factors which have contributed to the long decline of Arab and Muslim civilizations in general, and greatly hindered their participation in the development of the modern world, was the triumph of normative religious constraints, which ultimately defeated the classical tradition of Islamic humanism. Absorption of "alien" influences—particularly in the realm of speculative thought, and the creation of individual, rational and independent sciences not constrained by religious scholasticism—was defeated by internal control mechanisms exercised by religious and governmental authorities, thus paralyzing Muslim societies.

These same tendencies are still on display in our contemporary world, not least in the form of severe blasphemy and apostasy laws that narrow the bounds of acceptable discourse in the Islamic world, and prevent most Muslims from thinking "outside

4 Seyyed Hossein Nasr in *Persia, Bridge of Turquoise*, 1975, New York Graphic Society.

the box" not only about religion, but about vast spheres of life, literature, science and culture in general.

Religious Understanding is a Process

Anyone who is sincere in understanding his or her faith necessarily undergoes a process of constant evolution in that understanding, as experience and insights give rise to new perceptions of the truth. For as God states in the Qur'an: "We will display Our Signs upon the horizon, and within themselves (humanity), until it is clear to them that God is the Truth (*al-Haqq*) (41:53).

Nothing that exists is self-sufficient, other than God. All living things are interdependent, and owe their very existence to God. Yet because God's creatures exist within time and space, their perceptions of truth and reality differ from one to the next, conditioned by their personal knowledge and experience.

As referenced above, Islam views the world and whatever information we may obtain from it, as signs leading to knowledge of God. Muslim scholars traditionally classify three stages of knowledge: *first*, the science of certainty (*'ilm al-yaqin*), which is inferential and concerns knowledge commonly held to be true, whether by scientists, intellectuals or ulama themselves. *Second*, the vision of certainty (*'ain al-yaqin*) represents a higher level of truth than the first. At this stage, one directly witnesses that information about an objective phenomenon is indeed true and accurate. *Third* is the truth or reality of certainty (*haqq al-yaqin*), i.e., truth which reaches the level of perfection through direct personal experience, as exemplified by a saint's mystical communion with God.

The fact that the Qur'an refers to God as "the Truth" is highly significant. If human knowledge is to attain this level of Truth, religious freedom is vital. Indeed, the search for Truth (i.e., the search for God)—whether employing the intellect, emotions or various forms of spiritual practice—should be allowed a free and broad range. For without freedom, the individual soul cannot attain absolute Truth… which is, by Its very nature, unconditional Freedom itself.

Intellectual and emotional efforts are mere preludes in the search for Truth. One's goal as a Muslim should be to completely surrender oneself (*islâm*) to the absolute Truth and Reality of God, rather than to mere intellectual or emotional concepts regarding the ultimate Truth. Without freedom, humans can only attain a self-satisfied and illusory grasp of the truth, rather than genuine Truth Itself (*haqq al-haqiqi*).

The spiritual aptitude of any given individual necessarily plays a key role in his or her ability to attain the Truth, while the particular expression of Truth apprehended by one person may differ from that of the next. Islam honors and values these

differences, and religious freedom itself, recognizing that each human being comprehends God in accord with his or her own native abilities and propensities, as expressed in the *Hadith Qudsi*[5] "A*na 'inda zann 'abdi bi*," — "I am as my servant thinks I am." Of course, one's efforts to know God (*mujahadah*, from the same root as *jihad*) should be genuine and sincere (*ikhlas*), leading to a state of self-transcendence. In such a state, humans experience God's ineffable Presence and their own annihilation. Muslim fundamentalists often reject this notion, because of their shallow grasp of religion and lack of spiritual experience. For them, God must be understood as completely transcendent (*tanzih*) and far beyond the reach of humanity, with no hope for anyone to experience God's Presence. Such views are mistaken, for as the Qur'an itself states: "Whichever way you turn, there is the face of God" (2:115).

Nothing can restrict the Absolute Truth. Sufism—whose purpose is to bring Muslims to the third stage of knowledge, i.e., the truth and reality of certainty (*haqq al-yaqin*)—emphasizes the value of freedom and diversity, both as reflections of God's will and purpose, and to prevent the inadvertent or deliberate conflation of human understanding (which is inherently limited and subject to error) with the Divine. Faith (*îmân*) and surrender to God (*islâm*) on a purely intellectual level are not enough. Rather, a Muslim should continuously strive (*mujahadah*) to experience the actual Presence of God (*ihsan*). For without experiencing God's Presence, a Muslim's religious practice remains on a purely theoretical level; *islâm* has not yet become an experiential reality.

Sanctions against freedom of religious inquiry and expression act to halt the developmental process of religious understanding dead in its tracks—conflating the sanctioning authority's current, limited grasp of the truth with ultimate Truth itself, and thereby transforming religion from a path to the Divine into a "divinized" goal, whose features and confines are generally dictated by those with an all-too-human agenda of earthly power and control.

We can see this process at work in attempts by the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC), the United Nations General Assembly and the UN Council on Human Rights to restrict freedom of expression and institute a legally-binding global ban on any perceived criticism of Islam, to prevent so-called "defamation of religion." Whether motivated by sincere concern for humanity, or political calculation, such efforts are woefully misguided and play directly into the hands of fundamentalists, who wish to avoid all criticism of their attempts to narrow the scope of discourse regarding Islam, and to inter 1.3 billion Muslims in a narrow, suffocating chamber of dogmatism.

While hostility towards Islam and Muslims is a legitimate and vital concern, we must recognize that a major cause of such hostility is the behavior of certain Muslims themselves, who propagate a harsh, repressive, supremacist and often

[5] Muslims regard *Hadith Qudsi* as the words of God, repeated by Muhammad and recorded on the condition of an *isnad* (chain of verification by witness(es) who heard Muhammad say the hadith).

violent understanding of Islam, which tends to aggravate and confirm non-Muslims' worst fears and prejudices about Islam and Muslims in general.

Rather than legally stifle criticism and debate—which will only encourage Muslim fundamentalists in their efforts to impose a spiritually void, harsh and monolithic understanding of Islam upon all the world—Western authorities should instead firmly defend freedom of expression, not only in their own nations, but globally, as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[6]

Those who are humble and strive to live in genuine submission to God (i.e., *islâm*), do not claim to be perfect in their understanding of the Truth. Rather, they are content to live in peace with others, whose paths and views may differ.

Defending freedom of expression is by no means synonymous with *personally* countenancing or encouraging disrespect towards others' religious beliefs, but it does imply greater faith in the judgment of God, than of man. Beyond the daily headlines of chaos and violence, the vast majority of the world's Muslims continue to express their admiration of Muhammad by seeking to emulate the peaceful and tolerant example of his life which they have been taught, without behaving violently in response to those who despise the Prophet, or proclaim the supremacy of their own limited understanding of the Truth. Such Muslims live in accordance with the Qur'anic verse which states, "And the servants of (Allah) the Most Gracious are those who walk in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say 'Peace'" (25:63).

~ H.E. Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid, "God Needs No Defense"
Forward to *Silenced: How Blasphemy and Apostasy Laws are Choking Freedom Worldwide*, by Nina Shea and Paul Marshall
Oxford University Press, 2011

§11.4
Cognitive Dissonance and the Challenge of Modernity

149. For a wide variety of reasons—including patterns of individual and collective behavior, shaped by a common legacy and shared perceptions of the past—a significant percentage of Muslims remain trapped within a mental framework that views Islam as inherently political (i.e., supremacist), despite the fact that this mindset gives rise to cognitive dissonance, and leads to profound alienation from one's environment, when faced by the current reality of world civilization.

6 "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

150. When confronted by the obvious discrepancy between obsolete tenets of Islamic orthodoxy and contemporary reality, all too many Muslims assume an aggrieved attitude and blame others for the world's failure to mirror the political, demographic and socio-cultural circumstances of the past, in which Muslim communities existed in a state of permanent conflict with the rest of humanity, constantly striving for political and military supremacy.

151. The fact that for over a thousand years, Muslim communities were generally successful in their competition with non-Muslim societies, tends to exacerbate this collective longing for the past.

152. The 21st century offers an unprecedented opportunity for Muslims to cooperate with non-Muslims—to our mutual benefit, and on a truly global scale—and thereby fulfill the prophetic mission, which was to perfect the moral framework of humanity and to serve as a blessing for all creation (*raḥmatan lil-'ālamīn*).

153. Yet rather than gratefully accept and adjust to contemporary reality, many Muslims seek to alter reality itself, and restore the political, demographic and socio-cultural conditions of the medieval era, as if this were not only possible, but obligatory and even praiseworthy in the eyes of God, regardless of the enormous dislocation and incalculable suffering that would be required to bring this about.

154. To one who is intellectually honest and informed about the facts in question, it is obvious that many (though of course not all) members of ISIS, al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, Iran's Revolutionary Guard and countless other Islamist groups are true believers in the problematic tenets of Islamic orthodoxy and possess the courage of their convictions, to the point that they are prepared to suffer and die for their beliefs.

155. The question is: do *we* possess the courage of our convictions—and the physical, intellectual and spiritual fortitude—required to face this challenge and persevere through the difficulties that will inevitably confront those who seek to recontextualize (i.e., reform) Islamic teachings, in order to liberate Islam from the bondage of history and bring its historically-contingent (*mutaghayyirāt*) elements into alignment with the reality of 21st century civilization?

156. Certain that this is a noble task, incumbent upon us as the heirs to a noble faith and a noble civilization, we join Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf in stating: "We shall not stop halfway nor abandon this path before we have reached our goal. We shall not return home [from the field of struggle] until victory is in our hands."

§11.5

فقه الحضارة العالمية المتصهرة

Fiqh al-Ḥaḍārah al-‘Ālamīyah al-Mutaṣahirah
Islamic Jurisprudence for a Global Civilization, Whose Constituent Elements Retain Their Distinctive Characteristics: From Conflict to Cooperation

157. One of the most significant phenomena of the modern era is the emergence of what may ultimately become a single, interfused global civilization. As this civilization gradually comes into existence—through a multi-generational, evolutionary process that began well over a century ago—the distinct cultures and ancient civilizations of the world are experiencing profound transformation, while nonetheless retaining key elements of their unique identity. The civilizations of Africa, the Middle East, Europe, India, China and the Malay Archipelago all continue to maintain a distinct civilizational character.

158. Thus, it appears that a process is underway in which a new, global civilization is emerging which may, for many generations, co-exist with local cultures that are profoundly rooted in the history, traditions and religious/socio-cultural/environmental circumstances that pertain to their specific regions.

159. These developments have enormous ramifications for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

160. For over 1,400 years, Islam has provided a moral compass—in effect, a kind of standard moral guidance—to its followers, shaping the manner in which they engage with reality.

161. As discussed in Section §11.2 above: the past century has been characterized by enormous political, demographic, socio-cultural and technological change, precipitating the emergence of an historically unprecedented "modern reality," which medieval *'ulamā'* and *fuqahā'* (Muslim scholars and jurists) neither experienced nor anticipated during their lifetimes.

162. When Muslims insist upon employing certain obsolete tenets of Islamic orthodoxy to shape and guide their behavior in the modern world, they naturally encounter profound difficulties.

163. The basic premise of Islamic orthodoxy is that its various tenets are intended to guide Muslims towards individual and collective well-being. Because of the historically-conditioned circumstances in which Islamic orthodoxy emerged, its authoritative texts depict infidel states as *dār al-ḥarb* ("the abode of war")—inhabited by enemies to be fought and conquered—and do not prioritize the welfare of non-Muslims.

164. Viewed from the perspective of the era in which these teachings emerged, *fiqh* may be regarded as having been largely successful historically—from its genesis to the dawn of the modern era—in its mandate to safeguard Muslim lives and prosperity.

165. No one can reasonably dispute the magnificence of Islamic civilization during the Abbassid era, and other centers of cultural efflorescence within the Muslim world as a whole. Classical Islamic civilization may be said to rival that of China, India, Greece and Rome.

166. The tenets of Islamic orthodoxy are clearly infused with an understanding of the contemporary reality (i.e., circumstances) in which Muslim scholars formulated these tenets, including those elements which have now become obsolete and problematic. For their reality was characterized not by a single, interfused global civilization, but rather by fierce competition and conflict between rival, religiously supremacist political entities.

167. In our current era it is counterproductive, and indeed highly dangerous, for Muslims to automatically view non-Muslims with suspicion—either as active, hostile enemies or as conquered peoples subject to administration by an Islamic state—as can be seen from the actions of terrorist groups and the consequent rise of Islamophobia worldwide.

168. In fact, seeking to apply obsolete tenets of classical *fiqh* within the context of our present reality negates the very purpose of Islamic orthodoxy (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). For obsolete tenets of *fiqh* have not only ceased to promote the well-being of Muslims; they actively threaten the lives and prosperity of Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

169. As observed above (cf. points 157 and 158), a global civilization is gradually emerging in which people of every faith and ethnicity live, learn, love and work side by side. Given this reality, it is essential that Muslim scholars (*'ulamā'*) develop the elements of a new Islamic jurisprudence that will truly foster the well-being of contemporary Muslims who live in regions of the world dominated by non-Muslims, and/or in the midst of a single, interfused (i.e., cosmopolitan) global civilization.

170. It is also necessary to develop the elements of a new Islamic jurisprudence that will promote the welfare of Muslims who dwell in regions whose culture and traditions remain largely Islamic, but are nonetheless heavily impacted by modern political, socio-cultural and technological developments.

171. In both cases, the new guidance in question (*sharī'ah*) should foster the welfare of *all* human beings, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, for it has become virtually impossible—and certainly undesirable—to economically, culturally, politically and physically isolate all Muslims from non-Muslims, and/or to subordinate non-Muslims to the "rule" of Islam.

172. *Fiqh al-ḥaḍārah al-'ālamīyah al-mutaṣahirah* (Islamic jurisprudence for a global civilization, whose constituent elements retain their distinctive characteristics) and its regional variants should address the need for social harmony at a global level and in each of the world's regions where Muslims actually live and work, through a process of

recontextualizing and "indigenizing" Islam, as historically occurred in *Nusantara* (the Malay Archipelago).

173. Through this process of *ijtihād*, we may witness the development of a new religious sensibility that reflects the actual circumstances of our modern civilization, and contributes to the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order, founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being.

Part XII
Social Unity: the Highest Virtue and Most Powerful Instrument for Promoting the Common Good

174. Hatred of others—whether based upon ethnic, religious or ideological "tribalism"—is inimical to noble character, which represents the only secure foundation upon which to build a peaceful and prosperous global civilization.

175. In October of 1926 the Nahdlatul Ulama's founding Chairman, Hadratus Shaykh Hasyim Asy'ari, delivered a speech to the organization's inaugural Congress held in Surabaya, East Java. In that speech—which was irrevocably incorporated into the Nahdlatul Ulama's by-laws (*Muqaddimah Qonun Asasi*)—Kyai Hasyim said:

> As is universally acknowledged, human beings are inherently social creatures, mingling with others; for no one can fulfill his or her every need by acting alone. Willing or not, every person must interact socially, interaction that should ideally contribute to the well-being of all other members of society while preserving them from danger.
>
> The unity of human hearts, and minds, as people help one other achieve a common goal, is the most important source of human happiness and the strongest factor inducing human beings to love one another.
>
> Because of this principle, many nations have become prosperous. Slaves have become rulers, fostering widespread development. Nations have become advanced; the rule of law enforced; transportation networks constructed, enabling economic and cultural exchange to flourish. Countless other benefits arise from social unity, for social unity is the highest virtue and most powerful instrument for promoting the common good.

Conclusion
A Call to Action

In the spirit of Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari
and others who established the Republic of Indonesia
as a multi-religious and pluralistic nation state,
based on the principles of Pancasila
and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity Amid Diversity):

Gerakan Pemuda Ansor and Bayt ar-Rahmah invite
people of goodwill of every faith and nation
to join in building a global consensus
to prevent the political weaponization of Islam,
whether by Muslims or non-Muslims,
and to curtail the spread of communal hatred
by fostering the emergence of a truly just and
harmonious world order,
founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity
of every human being.