

# **A MANIFESTO**

on the New Character of the Language of Religion

**by Necmettin Şahinler**

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## **Biography**

Necmettin Şahinler was born in the city of Trabzon, Türkiye, in 1957. He studied respectively at Dumlupınar Primary School, Kanuni Secondary School and Trabzon High School. In 1979, he graduated from Fatih Faculty of Education with a degree in Social Sciences. His articles have been published in various newspapers and magazines such as Trabzon Gazetesi, Türk Sesi, Günebakış and Hizmet Gazetesi. On Kuzey TV, he presented and hosted series of television programs centered on the Quran. In 1997, he was awarded “Author of the Year” by Gökkuşığı TV. On February 27, 2010, he received “Kaaba-Special Jury Prize” given by TURKKAD.

His works related to Professor Ahmed Yüksel Özemre are; Kâmil Mürşidlerin Mirâsı [The Legacy of the Perfect Spiritual Masters], (2004), a collection of their conversations together; Misalli Kelimeler/Kavramlar Sözlüğü, I-II [Dictionary of Definitions and Concepts by Professor Ahmed Yüksel Özemre- 2 Volumes], (2012); Çetrefil Bir Adam: Prof. Dr. Ahmed Yüksel Özemre [An Intricate Man: Professor Ahmed Yüksel Özemre], (2012), a compilation of articles written about Özemre. He also authored the books Zeytindağı Sohbetleri [Conversations Took Place on the Mount of Olives], (2015) and Tao Tâ-O: Tao’dan Tâ-O’ya [From the “Way” (Tao) to the Absolute Reality (Tâ-O): Taoism and Sufism], (2019), so as to bring Özemre’s works to light again.

Necmettin Şahinler has authored over 75 books in Turkish that focus on the study of key terms of the Quran in a comprehensive approach, applying semantic analysis and feature various topics in aim to understand the message of the Quran, penned with a mystical/theosophical insight.

## PREFACE

I have been thinking about the necessity for a new approach to the language of religion for quite some time now. The term "language," as it is used here, is not meant to refer to the spoken language that allows us to communicate and understand each other in our daily lives. Rather, it is a language that can have a profound spiritual impact, offering a sense of connection and understanding. In essence, this language serves as a vehicle of truth, enabling individuals to engage with the deeper meanings and nuances of language in a way that transcends mere verbal communication. Given the definition of "the entire earth as a masjid," it is evident that this language should transcend the limitations of a particular geography, region, or district. Instead, it should hold a universal character that resonates with all members of the humanity, transcending the boundaries of race, color, and border. If Allah is the "Lord of all the worlds" and sent His last Messenger "as an unequalled mercy for the worlds," then the language of this final call/revelation must adhere to a methodology that considers the diverse realities of aforementioned realms. An ideal world can only be established through a "universal language of religion" which would have profound dimensions and should be voluntarily acknowledged by the members of mankind.

A unifying discourse on religion should be based on the principle of "One God, One Religion, and One Scripture," for the initial invitation of the Qur'ān to humanity is to come together on the "common tenet/term." Referred as "*kalimatīn sawā'in*"<sup>1</sup> in the Qur'ān, this concept denotes the belief in a single, omnipotent deity, otherwise known as "*tawhīd*," without involving in polytheist practices. Despite the fact that the existence of multiple religions is a social phenomenon, the new character of the language of religion should place emphasis on the notion of "One Religion." Qur'ān states<sup>2</sup> that Islām is the "One Religion", the only (true) one in the sight of God, signifying man's self-surrender unto God only. It is a common misconception that Islām is the religion of Muslims in a special sense; in fact, it is the name given to the shared monotheistic belief system embraced by all prophets from Ādam to the Prophet Muḥammad. Furthermore, Islām is not merely the doctrine spread by the Prophet over twenty-three years, it is the process of faith that was completed and fully actualized through Him.

Last but not least, the final call for the new character of the language of religion should be based on the notion of "One Scripture/Revelation." In other words, a pure, clear, and reliable form of divine theology that is devoid of any corruption, manipulation, or personal interpretation need to be considered the foundational principle of this new mode. In this context, the only dependable source we have is the Qur'ān. Combining all these concepts and elaborate a profound analysis thereof, the significance of the need for a new character of a religious language becomes evident. It is also clear that to form a universal methodology for the language of

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<sup>1</sup> Q 3: 64.

<sup>2</sup> Q 3: 19 *Innad deena 'indal laahil Islaam.*

religion is of paramount importance in order to facilitate communication across all cultures and promote peace and welfare among people.

Religion is not an interests, a hobby, or a social construct designed to rehabilitate the psychological conditions of those who are feeling overwhelmed, bored, or depressed. It is an existential reality and a sacred responsibility that urges humankind to pursue an everlasting life which will come after this transient earthly adventure. Therefore, it is incumbent on all the contemporary advocates of the new character of the language of religion to utilise a fashion in terms of “inspiration and consciousness-raising” instead of “quarrel and claim.” In the Qur’ān, the users of such a language are described as those who have “*aḥsan al-qawl*,” which can be translated as “the most beautiful speech”: “*And who could be better of speech than he who calls [his fellow-man] unto God, and does what is just and right, and says, ‘Verily, I am of those who have surrendered themselves to God’?*”<sup>3</sup>

It seems that only those who advocate the new character of this language are capable of instilling a sense of aspiration for striving in the path of God and the divine light (*nūr*) which will facilitate the reunion with the Source of life. These people are distinguished by their honesty, truthfulness, sincerity, and farsightedness, and have developed a universal personality, overcoming lower qualities like superficiality, arbitrariness, prejudice, and grudge. In other words, these people are *at the point of intersection of their individual perfection by differentiating the genuine call to God and the call that “appears” to be to God but actually is not.*

Now, as I find myself approaching seventy, and having dedicated a significant part of my life to the study of the Qur’ān, I regret to say that in the part of the world which I live in, there is a considerable scarcity of individuals who are sincere representatives of this new religious language. Needless to say, there are numerous esteemed religious scholars and academicians whose expertise is firmly grounded in rigorous training. However, the terminology they use and the methodology they employ in explaining the principles of *tawḥīd* have confined to a particular place, and have not yet found a universal tone of compassion that encompasses all human beings. As an example, it is almost impossible to observe a religious personality or a thinker with a significant number of followers on social media. The use of a language that is persistently divisive, argumentative, exclusionary, quarrelsome, othering, reductionist, and full of empty slogans caused a sense of overwhelm and confusion among people, weakening their aspirations and hopes for the future.

The life that I have been granted has brought me to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That is to say, my existence in this exact era, is predetermined by the Creature in accordance with the divine knowledge (*‘ilm*). Who knows how many more centuries will elapse until the Day of Resurrection. In light of the rapid pace of social, political, economic, and technological change in recent times, it is a daunting challenge to conceptualize what the future might hold. Nevertheless, instead of being occupied with anxiety and fear associated with the past and future, as the

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<sup>3</sup> Q 41: 33.

people of this era, we have to prioritize the fulfillment of the responsibilities inherent to the “present” moment and attempt to add positive value to life, both for the sake of ourselves and humanity as a whole.<sup>4</sup> A significant number of people are undoubtedly share these concerns, and dedicate their efforts on a daily basis in producing a certain effect to guiding humanity *-in accordance with the divine will-* towards a path which leads to good, beautiful, and benevolent.

In an ever-flowing world, the “language” that is used to transmit messages to human beings is also subject to constant alteration. The term “language” here refers to designate to the methods in order to reach people and to engage with their thoughts and emotions. One must note that the language of each era is different, and therefore, those who seek to capture the zeitgeist, rather attempting to adapt the language of the past to present, should choose or find a novel linguistic character. People who manage to grasp the importance of using this language are no longer confined within boundaries, and become a part of the global community. Within the context of “the spirit of continuity” of the common heritage of humanity, those who acquire the universal language of their own time, consistently emphasize the crucial role of this language.

Rūmī stated in one of his poems that “everything about yesterday has gone with yesterday. Today, it is needed to say new words.” Yūnus, a contemporary of Rūmī, said “at every moment we are reborn, who would be tired of us?” The deceased French thinker and writer, Roger Garaudy identified being faithful to the ancestors as “not to preserve the ashes of their fire but to transmit its flame”, a flame of “self-confidence, sacrifice, devotion, serving others, productivity, a firm stand, altruism, co-existence, and enlightenment.” In the words of Khalil Gibran, “life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.”

The final divine revelation mentions the rise and fall of past nations and gives the following warning: *Now those people have passed away; unto them shall be accounted what they have earned, and unto you, what you have earned; and you will not be judged on the strength of what they did.*<sup>5</sup> It is evident that this verse stresses the individual responsibility for what one has been or will be acquire in their own lifetime. Thus, as vicegerents who are entrusted with this responsibility, we should seek the ways of making the language of time universal, and try to make the call for goodness by means of it.

The great powers of twenty-first century have succeeded in forming a universal - *even pervasive and influential-* language promoting constant consumption which aims the material, sensual, and subjective dimensions of human beings. However, the same degree of success could not be achieved in addressing the immaterial, transcendent, and spiritual dimensions, and those who are given responsibility in this

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<sup>4</sup> Q 3: 104 *And that there might grow out of you a community [of people] who invite unto all that is good, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong: and it is they, they who shall attain to a happy state!*

<sup>5</sup> Q 2: 134, 141.

regard were unable to go beyond the limits of the traditional patterns of the past in building a new character in regard to the language of religion. In order to avoid any possible confusion, it is crucial to note that the term “language of religion” refers to a methodology, namely an approach that can be employed in conveying the Absolute/Unchanging Truth (*ḥaqīqa*). In fact, this approach is exemplified in the descent of the Qur’ān, which has unfolded gradually, taking the spiritual state or level of transformation of the human being into account. However, over time, this “prophetic manner,” which is grounded on a steady faith, nourished by righteous deeds<sup>6</sup> and sincerity<sup>7</sup> has been distort and disregarded.

This rupture caused a dichotomy between the fundamental level of faith and the peak level which is perfectly realized by Prophet Muḥammad, and whether intentionally or unintentionally, become a veil blocking the infinite compassion of God on existence. But it should be kept in mind that no one has the right to limit God’s limitless grace and mercy within the process of conveying the divine message.

### What Is Qur’ān Telling Us?

As previously stated, the initial call of the Qur’ān to humanity is to come together on the “common word.” The meaning of this term, referred as “*kalimatin sawā’in*”<sup>8</sup> in the Qur’ān, is explained as follows: *Say: “O followers of earlier revelation! Come unto that tenet [word] which we and you hold in common: that we shall worship non but God, and that we shall not ascribe divinity to aught beside Him, and that we shall not take human beings for our lords beside God.”*<sup>9</sup> In short, people are called to *Tawhīd*. Therefore, the primary principle of the new character of the language of religion is to invite people to a belief that is purely devoid of all forms of idolatry. The Qur’ān identifies idolatry as “the greatest oppression.”<sup>10</sup> Then, it can be stated that the most profound form of worship is that which is rooted in unwavering faith in the existence of a single, omnipotent God, without associating artificial deities beside Him.

The second principle of the new character of the language of religion should emphasize the notion of “One Religion,” despite the fact that religious diversity is a sociological phenomenon. As indicated in the verse, this “One Religion” refers to Islām, in the context of “submission to One God.”<sup>11</sup> The verse is as follows: *Today*

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<sup>6</sup> *‘Amal al-ṣāliḥa*: good, beautiful, and beneficial act; to behave in accordance with God’s content and pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> *Iḥsān*: beautification, excellence; to do right in the best and most perfect way, act well, or to master.

<sup>8</sup> A righteous, sincere word, which refers to the straight path, in alliance with justice and mercy.

<sup>9</sup> Q 3: 64 *Qul yaa Ahlal Kitaabi ta’aalaw ilaa Kalimatin sawaaa’im bainanaa wa bainakum allaa na’buda illal laaha wa laa nushrika bihee shai’anw wa laa yattakhiza ba’dunaa ba’dan arbaabam min doonil laah.*

<sup>10</sup> Q 31: 13 *And, ‘remember’ when Luqman said to his son, while advising him, ‘O my dear son! Never associate ‘anything’ with Allah ‘in worship’, for associating ‘others with Him’ is truly the worst of all wrongs.’*

<sup>11</sup> This is the last verse revealed in the Qur’ān, also known as *ikmal al-dīn* (completion of revelation) or verse of *ikmāl* (completion).

*have I perfected your religious law for you, and have bestowed upon you full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your religion.*<sup>12</sup> The religion that is referred to as “perfected” and “completed” in this verse should not be interpreted as “Islām,” the religion of the Muslims. Rather, it is the name of the shared belief of *tawhīd* held by all prophets begins with Ādam and ends with Prophet Muḥammad. Again, this perfected religion is not merely the religion preached by the Prophet within twenty-three years, but also the process of faith which was completed with him. It seems that the act of self-surrender to God (Islām) is regarded as the foundational or fundamental principle of true religion. Undoubtedly, this act of surrender is manifested not only through believing in one God, but also through obeying His commands unconditionally.

The third crucial principle of the new character of the language of religion should base on the notion of “One Scripture.” That is to say, a pure, explicit, and trustworthy divine text that has not been altered, distorted, or contaminated with personal interpretations should be the starting point. In this context, the only reliable source that fits the criteria is the Qur’ān. This is due to the fact that the majority of the Gospels, vessels of the divine revelation preceded the Qur’ān meaning “good news,” were written decades after the death of Jesus,<sup>13</sup> and composed not in Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, but rather in Greek. Additionally, the Qur’ān not only confirms the Torah and Bible which came before it,<sup>14</sup> but also revised and incorporated their tenets which were deviated from *tawhīd*, namely asserting oneness of God. It is seen that the Qur’ān is the sole final reliable source of revelation, and that being so, it is the ultimate opportunity for the eternal salvation of all humanity.

Considering the aforementioned, the crucial need for a universal approach to the new character of the language of religion founded on the three main principles, “One God, One Religion, and One Scripture,” becomes evident in the modern era. I believe that the efforts which do not take this fundamental principles into account are unlikely to achieve the desired results. Clearly, it is not difficult to anticipate that those who have same kind of institutionalized or stereotyped beliefs but express themselves under different names will not welcome my proposal. However, I strongly believe that eventually humanity is going to reach at this point as a consequence of all the suffering endured and sacrifices made. The role of religion is not merely being a means of regulating daily life. Its primary objective also includes to attain an infinite life within a finite span of time. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding and more accurate assessment of this new approach

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<sup>12</sup> Q 5: 3 *Alyawma akmaltu lakum deenakum wa atmamtu 'alaikum ni'matee wa radeetu lakumul Islaama deenaa.*

<sup>13</sup> Between 80 and 140 A.D.

<sup>14</sup> Q 4: 47 *O you who have been granted revelation [aforetime]! Believe in what We have [now] bestowed from on high in confirmation of whatever [of the truth] you already possess, lest We efface your hopes and bring them to an end -just as We rejected those people who broke the Sabbath: for God's will is always done.*

to the language of religion, it is essential to consider it from a perspective which extends beyond the limitations of this world.

Therefore, this effort should be seen as a humble attempt to draw attention to the need of a new character of the language of religion which we have been trying to provide a general framework for. I believe that those who are able to grasp this vision and have greater talent are going to build on this study, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all my brothers and sisters with whom I share a common understanding and enthusiasm, for their invaluable assistance as well as their constructive approach. It is my firm belief that the next generation will derive considerable benefit from this sincere effort, even if I may not be able to see it. May peace and blessings be upon those who assume accountability for engaging in the pursuit of forming a new character of the language of religion.

### **Primary Features of the New Character of the Language of Religion**

#### *O People*

As a Muslim, I believe that there is a pressing need for a new approach to the language in the *da'wah* of Islām as we draw nearer to the second quarter of the 21st century. If a religion claims to be universal, then its language must be universal either. Presenting a human-centered vision, it should encompass all people, regardless of ethnic origin, language, or geography. In other words, when the Qur'ān describes God as the Lord of the Worlds, whereas the Prophet as a mercy to the Worlds, and additionally, the humanity has been directly addressed as “O People” several times, then no one has the right to limit the scope of religion. Consequently, I find it essential to form the new character for the language of religion on the primary principles of the Qur'ān and on the teaching methods introduced by the Prophet wisely and gradually.

As believers, the first thing to do is to begin defining ourselves with the Quranic attributes ascribed to all humanity, rather emphasizing the differences derived from *madhab* (school of law), *mashrab* (spiritual path), or *mizāj* (temperament). The word “*ya ayyuhannas*”<sup>15</sup> (O People) occurs in 23 verses<sup>16</sup> in the Noble Qur'ān. It is a clear indication that first and foremost we are all “human beings” who have been directly addressed by God Himself and created by Him. That is to say, the verses commencing with “*ya ayyuhannas*” state God's commandments and prohibitions for all the members of humanity, a clear evidence of the universal character of the final divine message, the Qur'ān.

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<sup>15</sup> Q 2: 21 *Yaa aiyuhan naasu'budoo Rabbakumul lazee khalaqakum wallazeena min qablikum la'allakum tattaqoon.*

<sup>16</sup> According to the order of the verses in Uthmān's *muṣḥaf* (compilation of the Qur'ān), the phrase “O People” occurs 23 times, 21 in the singular form and two in plural. 12 of these verses are Makkan, and 11 of them were revealed in Madinah.

God's address to all humanity by using the term "nās" has a general and collective meaning, which is one of the significant implications of this term. Far from bringing out the individuality of human beings, this call in its entirety is made to whole of humanity. In other words, the message of the Qur'ān is global and regardless of their level of understanding, everyone has a share in it. The more one's range of knowledge increases, the more the scope of their perception of the things expands. What matters most is that the message does not include any sort of biological or social discrimination, or exclusivity, but rather, it is accessible to all.

Besides the general reference to "people," the Qur'ān makes a distinction between them based on their attitudes and behaviours they have towards the commands of divine revelation. According to the Qur'ān, the people fall into three categories: "the righteous" (*mu'min*), "the disbeliever" (*kāfir*), and "the hypocrite" (*munāfiq*). *Mu'min* is a righteous person who believes and trusts in God, affirms the principles of faith both with the heart and tongue, and obeys God's commands and keeps away from what He has forbidden. Those who are described as "*kāfir*" are people who denies God's authority, validates the tenets of the divine revelation, "covers" the truth and are ungrateful toward God. Of the three categories, those who are considered to be the most dangerous are the hypocrites, people who in public pretend to be a Muslim for their own benefit but actually reject the principles of faith inwardly. It is evident that God never addresses people in terms of their religious (theological, jurisprudent or Sufi) affiliation such as *Sunnī* or *Shiite*, *Hanafī* or *Shāfi'i*, *Ash'arite* or *Mu'tazilite*, or *Shāzili* or *Khalwati*. Furthermore, all of the prophets and their communities described themselves solely as "Muslims."<sup>17</sup>

We also see that the Qur'ān uses a variety of definitions to describe the believers. For instance, in the *sūrah an-Nisā* verse 69, along with the prophets, three other groups are mentioned whom God has blessed: *And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger will be in the company of those blessed by Allah: the prophets, the people of truth, the martyrs, and the righteous -what honourable company!*<sup>18</sup> In addition to these definitions, the Qur'ān also refers to *al-Muttaqīn*,<sup>19</sup> people who are fully conscious and cognizant of God and avoid sins; *al-Muqarrabīn*,<sup>20</sup> people who are granted special proximity to God, and *as-Sābiqūn*,<sup>21</sup> people who excel in their righteousness and their love for doing good, compared to others. In addition to the aforementioned, the terms *ashāb al-maymana*<sup>22</sup> and *ashāb al-yemīn*<sup>23</sup> is

<sup>17</sup> Q 3: 52 *Falammaaa ahassa 'Eesaa minhumul kufra qaala man ansaaree ilal laahi qaalal Hawaariyyoona nahnu ansaarul laahi aamannaa billaahi washhad bi annaa muslimoon*; Q 2: 136 *Qooloo aamannaa billaahi wa maaa unzila ilainaa wa maaa unzila ilaaa Ibraaheema wa Ismaa'eela wa Ishaaga wa Ya'qooba wal Asbaati wa maaootiya Moosa wa 'Eesaa wa maaa ootiyān Nabiiyyoona mir Rabbihim laa nufarriqoo baina ahadim minhum wa nahnu lahooh muslimoon.*

<sup>18</sup> Q 4: 69: *Wa many-yuti'il laaha war Rasoola fa ulaaa'ika ma'al lazeena an'amal laahu 'alaihim minan nabiiyyeena wassiddeeqeena washshuhadaaa'i wassaaliheen; wa hasuna ulaaa'ika rafeeqaa.*

<sup>19</sup> Q 3: 133 *Wa saari'ooo ilaa maghfiratim mir Rabbikum wa Jannatin arduhassamaawaatu wal ardu u'iddat lilmuttaqeen.*

<sup>20</sup> Q 56: 88 *Fa ammaaa in kaana minal muqarrabeen.*

<sup>21</sup> Q 56: 10 *Wassaabiqoonas saabiqoon.*

<sup>22</sup> Q 90: 18 *Ulaaa'ika As-haabul maimanah.*

<sup>23</sup> Q 56: 91 *Fasalaamul laka min as haabil yameen.*



interpreted as people who have attained righteousness and live in accordance with God's will, whereas *ashāb al-mash'ama*<sup>24</sup> and *ashāb al-shimāl*<sup>25</sup> are designated as people who take the side of falsehood and have persevered in evil. In light of this, from the perspective of the Qur'ān, it is groundless for Muslims to present and identify themselves by their social affiliations and this distinction causes harm to the principles of *tawhīd*, even though well-intended. Neither the schools of Islamic law (*madhāhib*) nor the spiritual paths (*mashārib*) cannot fully represent religion and take precedence over the brotherhood rooted in the Qur'ān. However, Muslims have been bearing the brunt of the lack of unity and as a result of these artificial controversies they play right into the hands of the opponents or enemies of Islām. It is unfortunate that the majority of the commentators have chosen to conclude the discussion by claiming that the words addressed to the Prophet in *sūrah al-An'am* verse 159 are aimed to the Jews and Christians only, and fail to emphasize that “*those who have been broken the unity and have become sects*” relates to the followers of the Qur'ān as well. The verse is as follows: *Verily, as for those who have been broken the unity of their faith and have become sects -thou hast nothing to do with them. Behold, their case rests with God: and in time He will make them understand what they were doing.*<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, all kinds of groupings and alliances formed by those who intolerantly claim exclusivity or priority in representing the teachings of the Qur'ān are within the scope of this verse. Another verse in this regard is as follows: *[or] among those who have broken the unity of their faith and have become sects, each group delighting in but what they themselves hold [by way of tenets].*<sup>27</sup> Similarly, this verse was narrowly interpreted.

Needless to say, my intention is not to belittle the positive contributions or efforts of the schools of law, which emerged long after the Prophet in order to facilitate the challenges faced by Muslims or that of the Sufi orders, which play a significant role in the spiritual perfection of human beings. What I wish to reiterate is the necessity for the Muslims not to deviate from the divine message and always stick to the principles of the Qur'ān in identifying themselves when forming the new character of the language of religion.

Sumayya bint Khayyat, mother of Yāsir family, tortured and killed by the spear of Abū Jahl in Makka and became the first ever martyr of Islām, but her martyrdom was not in the name of *Sunnī*, or *Salafī* or *Shiī* Islām. Martyrs of *Badr* did not belong to the *Hanafī*, *Mālikī*, *Shāfi'ī*, or *Jāfarī* schools of law. Seventy martyrs of *Uḥud*, including Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, paternal uncle of the Prophet were not the followers of the *Naqshī*, *Qādirī*, 'Arūsī, or *Mawlawī* Sufi orders. All three Muslim leaders, *Zayb ibn Ḥāritha*, *Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib*, and 'Abd Allah ibn *Rawāḥa* when

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<sup>24</sup> Q 56: 9 *Wa as haabul mash'amati maaa as haabul mash'amah.*

<sup>25</sup> Q 56: 41 *Wa as haabush shimaali maaa as haabush shimaal.*

<sup>26</sup> Q 6: 159 *Innal lazeena farraqoo deenahum wa kaanoo shiya'allasta minhum fee shaiyy'; innamaaa amruhum ilallaahi summa yunabbi'uhum bimaa kaanoo yaf'aloona.*

<sup>27</sup> Q 30: 32 *Minal lazeena farraqoo deenahum wa kaanoo shiya'an kullu hizbim bimaa ladaihim farihoon.*

falling one after the other in the Battle of *Mutah*, have had no concerns with the doctrines of *Māturīdiyya* or *Ash‘ariyya* schools of theology. And today, thousands of children and women killed by the oppression of Jewish forces in Palestine have become martyrs solely for the sake of God, not for the sake of the schools of jurisprudence or Sufi *tarīqa*. The parents of the innocent kids showed unfathomable resilience, “praising God” (*alhamdulillah*) when welcoming the bodies of their children covered with a burial shroud, and yet, they are not the *wayfarers* who has taken the spiritual journey. The honorable stance in Gaza caused a spiritual awakening and inspire the resurgence of human conscience throughout the world. Therefore, this shift in people’s perspective emphasizes the urgency for a new character of the language of religion, a new method in *da‘wah* of Islām once more.

Finally and above all: instead of exercising a monopoly on truth based on their own sects or groups, Muslims have to provide new remedies for the welfare and peace for humanity and strive for implementing the solutions, which will be the greatest contribution to humankind, without expecting anything in return. Because *there shall be nothing for a man except what he strive for*.<sup>28</sup>

### **There Is Only One Religion, and That Is Islām**

Islām is the authentic religion which God taught to His first prophet Ādam through the prophets to the final Prophet Muḥammad. That is to say, each prophet is a prophet of Islām and was chosen to teach the message of *tawhīd* to their generations in accordance with their spiritual state. That is why the Qur’ān requires all believers not to draw distinction between the apostles and counts the belief in all prophets without exception among the pillars of faith.<sup>29</sup>

According to the sources, *sūrah al-Mā‘idah* is one the last revealed chapters of the Holy Qur’ān. As agreed upon by the authentic traditions, this verse was revealed in 10 A.H. on the occasion of the Prophet’s Farewell Pilgrimage. Containing 120 verses, the *sūrah* is the fifth chapter of the Qur’ān and 110th in the chronological order. As regards to the subject of this article, the third verse of the *sūrah* provides significant insights and implications: *Today have I perfected your religious law for you, and have bestowed upon you full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your religion*.<sup>30</sup>

Narrations of the spot witnesses to the moment of revelation of this verse indicate that the Prophet lived for only eighty one or eighty two days after the revelation, for this verse was revealed on the ninth day of Dhil-Hijjah in the Hijrah year 10, on a Friday afternoon in Arafat and no verse was revealed after that. Exegetes, in

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<sup>28</sup> Q 53: 39 *Wa al laisa lil insaani illaa maa sa'aa.*

<sup>29</sup> Q 2: 285 *Aamanar-Rasoolu bimaaa unzila ilaihi mir-Rabbihee walmu'minoon; kullun aamana billaahi wa Malaaa'ikathihee wa Kutubhihee wa Rusulihee laa nufarriqu baina ahadim-mir-Rusulih wa qaaloo sami'naa wa ata'naa ghufraanaka Rabbanaa wa ilaikal-maseer.*

<sup>30</sup> Q 5: 3 *Alyawma akmaltu lakum deenakum wa atmamtu 'alaikum ni'matee wa radeetu lakumul Islaama deenaa.*

general, have adopted different approaches while commentating on this verse. Those who embrace a historical point of view argue that by the end of the twenty-three year of struggle of the Prophet, began with the first revelation in 610, the polytheists or disbelievers had lost all hope of eradicating Islām anyway. Additionally, they claim that God had perfected and strengthened the faith of the believers and their determination to actualize divine revelation, which was perceived as the greatest blessing. Last but not foremost, they said that God Himself had chosen “Islām” as the religion for the believers. Apparently, Islām, namely man’s self-surrender or submission to God is regarded as the foundational principle of the true religion.

Nevertheless, from a broader context, it is also possible to assert that the religion that is referred to as “perfected” and “completed” in this verse should not be interpreted as “Islām,” the religion of the Muslims. Rather, it is the name of the shared belief of *tawhīd* held by all prophets from Prophet Ādam to Prophet Muḥammad. In other words, the perfected religion does not only refer to the religion revealed to the Prophet within twenty-three years, it is also the period of faith, perfection, and excellency in good manners completed solely by the Prophet. This perspective emphasizes on the notion of “One Religion” instead of multiple religions and suggests that the only religion preached by all prophets is Islām and those who surrender to God, regardless of which era they live in, should be defined as Muslims.

The Qur’ān provides us many examples on that matter. For instance, in *sūrah Āl ‘Imrān* verse 52, the Disciples<sup>31</sup> responded to the question of Prophet Jesus regarding who would accompany him on the path to God as follows: *We shall be [thy] helpers [in the cause] of God! We believe in God: and bear thou witness that we have surrendered ourselves unto Him!*<sup>32</sup> It is noteworthy that the Disciples of Jesus identify themselves as “Muslims” (*bi annaa muslimoon*), namely, the ones who have submitted themselves to God alone.

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<sup>31</sup> “Al-hawariyyun (sing. hawari) is the designation applied in the Qur’ān to the disciples of Jesus. Many interpretations of this term (derived from hawar, "whiteness") are given by the commentators, ranging from "one who whitens clothes by washing them" (because this was allegedly the occupation of some of Jesus' disciples) to "one who wears white garments", or "one whose heart is white", i.e., pure. It is, however, most probable - and the evidence provided by the recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls strongly supports this view - that the term hawari was popularly used to denote a member of the Essene Brotherhood, a Jewish religious group which existed in Palestine at the time of Jesus, and to which, possibly, he himself belonged. The Essenes were distinguished by their strong insistence on moral purity and unselfish conduct, and always wore white garments as the outward mark of their convictions; and this would satisfactorily explain the name given to them. The fact that the Prophet once said, "Every prophet has his hawari" (Bukhari and Muslim) does not conflict with the above view, since he obviously used this term figuratively, recalling thereby Jesus' "helpers in God's cause".” See fn. 42, Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur’ān*, <https://www.alim.org/quran/compare/surah/3/52/>.

<sup>32</sup> Q 3:52 *Falammaaa ahasaa 'Eesaa minhumul kufra qaala man ansaaree ilal laahi qaalal Hawaariyyoona nahnu ansaarul laahi aamannaa billaahi washhad bi annaa muslimoon.*

In another example, given in *sūrah Yūnus* verse 72, Prophet Noah addresses to his people who were persistently opposing him as follows: *But if you turn away [from the message which I bear, remember that] I have asked no reward whatever of you: my reward rests with none but God, for I have been bidden to be among those who have surrendered themselves unto Him.*<sup>33</sup> The original word translated as “those who have surrendered themselves unto Him” is “*Muslimīn*”.

In *sūrah Yūsuf*, we see Prophet Joseph praying to God, who had granted him a great deal of power and taught him a divinely-inspired knowledge: *O my Sustainer! Thou hast indeed bestowed upon me something of power, and hast imparted unto me some knowledge of the inner meaning of happenings. Originator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art near unto me in this world and in the life to come: let me die as one who has surrendered himself unto Thee, and make me one with the righteous!*<sup>34</sup> As seen in this verse as well, Prophet Joseph asked God to let him die as a “Muslim”.

When Prophet Jacob asked his sons as to who they would worship in his absence in *sūrah Baqara* verse 133, they responded as follows: *We will worship thy God, the God of thy forefathers Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, the One God; and unto Him we will surrender ourselves.*<sup>35</sup> Again, we see that the children of Jacob affirmed to live their lives in accordance with the principles of Islām, namely as “Muslims”.

All of the passages quoted above from the Qur’ān clearly state that “there is only one religion and that is Islām,” and this unchanging fact is emphasized in the following verse: *Behold, the only [true] religion in the sight of God is [man’s] self-surrender unto Him; and those who were vouchsafed revelation aforetime took, out of mutual jealousy, to divergent views [in this point] only after knowledge [thereof] had come unto them. But as for him who denies the truth of God’s messages -behold, God is swift in reckoning!*<sup>36</sup> Another verse revealed in *sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* is as follows: *For, if one goes in search of a religion other than self-surrender unto God, it will never be accepted from him, and in the life to come he shall be among the lost.*<sup>37</sup>

With all this in mind, the following question inevitably arises: if Islām is the only true religion, then how should we treat the term “religions,” in particular those of Judaism and Christianity, mentioned in the Qur’ān? I would propose the following

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<sup>33</sup> Q 10: 72 *Fa in tawallaitum fama sa altukum min ajrin; in ajriya illaa 'al allaahi wa umirtu an akoona minal muslimeen.*

<sup>34</sup> Q 12: 101 *Rabbi qad aataitane minal mulki wa 'allamtanee min taaweelil ahaadees; faati ras samaawaati wal ardi Anta waliyee fid dunyaa wal Aakhirati tawaffanee muslimanw wa alhiqnee bissaaliheen.*

<sup>35</sup> Q 2: 133 *Am kuntum shuhadaaa'a iz hadara Ya'qoobal mawtu iz qaala libaneehi maa ta'budoona mim ba'dee qaaloo na'budu ilaahaka wa ilaaha aabaaa'ika Ibraaheema wa Ismaa'eela wa Ishaqaq Ilaahanw waahidanw wa nahnu lahoo muslimoon.*

<sup>36</sup> Q 3: 19 *Innad deena 'indal laahil Islaam; wa makhtalafal lazeena ootul Kitaaba illaa mim ba'di maa jaaa'ahumul 'ilmu baghyam bainahum; wa mai yakfur bi Ayaatil laahi fa innal laaha saree'ul hisaab.*

<sup>37</sup> Q 3: 85 *Wa mai yabtaghi ghairal Islaami deenan falany yuqbala minhu wa huwa fil Aakhirati minal khaasireen.*

response: The designation of certain names as “religions,” regardless of whether they are referenced in the Qur’ān, points out to a social classification to characterize those who deviate from the principles of *tawhīd* or Islām by adopting different perspectives and/or forming different sects, rather than the authentic divine revelation. In other words, the beliefs referred as “religions,” irrespective of how they are called, are all institutionalized belief systems which are in contrast with the tenets of Islām, have departed from the divine revelation and, for the most part, entangled with acts of polytheism. My response may at first seem to contradict the conventional or traditional way of understanding. However, a consequential verse in the Qur’ān confirms this approach as follows: *Abraham was neither a “Jew” nor a “Christian”, but was one who turned away from all that is false, having surrendered himself unto God; and he was not of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him.*<sup>38</sup> The verse unequivocally asserts Abraham, the founding father of *tawhīd*, was a Muslim and he is neither a Jew nor a Christian nor is he to be regarded as a polytheist. Another verse reads: *“Do you claim that Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their descendants were ‘Jews’ or ‘Christians’?” Say: “Do you know more than God does? And who could be more wicked than he who suppresses a testimony given to him by God? Yet God is not unmindful of what you do.”*<sup>39</sup> This verse too makes it clear that the aforesaid prophets are exemplars of monotheism, and were not categorized as “Jews” or “Christians.” Additionally, the verse points out the fact that “Judaism” emerged at a much later period than that of the Prophet Moses, likewise the terms “Christian” and “Christianity” were not yet known during the time of Jesus. To reiterate the emphasis of the Qur’ān made through this article, the last of all revelations clearly states that both Jews and Christians have lost their “Muslim” identity due to their deviation from the primary principles of both Islām and *tawhīd* and their engagement with polytheist practices.

To summarize the arguments presented above, one should admit that there is only one true religion and that is Islām. To put it another way, Islām is to submit to God by refraining from *shirk* (idolatry) and totally surrender one’s self to the Divine will by obeying the commands set down in the Qur’ān, without involving arbitrary interpretations. Therefore, regardless of whatever era they lived in, every human being on earth who believes in this primal tenet and strives to actualize it in their own lives is called Muslim. All the other belief system called as “religion” and claim to be of divine origin are only social establishments. Moreover, the theoreticians of that particular construct unfortunately has been contributing to distort the Scripture descended for their community and bent the truth.

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<sup>38</sup> Q 3: 67 *Maa kaana Ibraaheemu Yahoodiyyanw wa laa Nasraa niyyanw wa laakin kaana Haneefam Muslimanw wa maa kaana minal mushrikeen.*

<sup>39</sup> Q 2: 140 *Am taqooloona inna Ibraaheema wa Ismaa'eela wa Ishaaqa wa Ya'qooba wal asbaata kaanoo Hoodan aw Nasaaraa; qul 'a-antum a'lamu amil laah; wa man azlamu mimman katama shahaadatan 'indahoo minallaah; wa mallaahu bighaafilin 'ammaa ta'maloon.*

**A MANIFESTO**

on the New Character of the Language of Religion

1. The universal religion (Islām) should have an all-embracing language.
2. The new character of the language of religion should adopt a human-centred and all-encompassing approach to all people, irrespective of colour, language or nationality.
3. The new character of the language of religion should present the messages of the Qur'ān in a straightforward, unambiguous, and objective manner, without any personal bias or emotional interpretation involved.
4. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should initiate their invitation by acknowledging that they do not fully represent Islām.
5. The new character of the language of religion should exemplify the teachings of Islām through the lifestyle of the Prophet Muḥammad, who is described in the Qur'ān as "Uswa Ḥasana," namely, "the most beautiful example", and who is defined and praised through the assertions of "Surely, you are of a great morality" (Q 68:4) and " We have sent you 'O Prophet' only as a mercy for the whole worlds" (Q 21:107).
6. The new character of the language of religion should be based on the fundamental concepts declared in the Qur'ān and in accordance with the methodology of the Prophet's way to give Da'wah in a gradual process.
7. The new character of the language of religion should be based on the concept of "*Tawḥīd*" (Unity) and convey a warning message that is explicitly opposed to any forms of polytheism.
8. The new character of the language of religion should make its call based on the concept of "one religion", rather than the "religions".
9. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should present themselves using the Qur'ānic addresses, such as "O Mankind", not according to the features of *madhab* (way to act), *mashrab* (nature), or *mizāj* (temperament).
10. The new character of the language of religion should not focus on the reckonings with the past and expectations or dreams of the future, but it should be based on a language that is fitting to the needs of the day, a language that has a solution-oriented mindset rather than a problem-oriented one.
11. The new character of the language of religion should be built on "invitation," not "intimidation".
12. The new character of the language of religion should strongly emphasize the fact that "religion is for man, not man for religion".
13. The new character of the language of religion should be designed in such a way which hinders the paths of the deification of man, while allowing man to become divine.

14. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should focus on raising the Word of God, not raising their own voices.

15. The new character of the language of religion should be facilitating and encouraging, not complicating and repulsive.

16. The new character of the language of religion should be based on “*bayyinah*,” namely, clear evidence grounded in reason and the senses.

17. The new character of the language of religion should not be a language that immobilizes and numbs people, but one that maintains a vigorous consciousness of responsibility towards God.

18. The new character of the language of religion should align with the principle of “weighing one’s deeds before their deeds are weighed,” rather than one that seeks to interrogate others.

19. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should address people in a language that can be easily understood by all, rather than using Arabic, only because it is the language of the Qur’ān.

20. The new character of the language of religion should be in a tone which is neither “excessive” nor “extreme”, but rather “moderate”.

21. The new character of the language of religion should be free of sarcasm, sharpness, and vulgarness, which can be a sign of hidden arrogance and pride.

22. The new character of the language of religion should avoid accusing people of blasphemy.

23. The new character of the language of religion should appreciate and honor labor and hard work.

24. The new character of the language of religion should prioritize quality over quantity.

25. The new character of the language of religion should not make people feel beholden by harping on the favors done for them.

26. The new character of the language of religion should not be a language of strife, provocation, and division.

27. The new character of the language of religion should encourage goodness and piety among people.

28. The new character of the language of religion should be gender-neutral.

29. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should be trustworthy.

30. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should strictly avoid flattery and blarney, instead, they should keep their promises and be loyal.



31. The new character of the language of religion should not be used to mediate injustice.
32. The new character of the language of religion should have a content that favours forgiveness and should not foster feelings of hatred.
33. The new character of the language of religion should not be used to convey faultfinding.
34. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should not speak or behave among people in a way that is repulsive.
35. The new character of the language of religion should be built on inspiration and awakening consciousness, not on quarrels and claims.
36. The new character of the language of religion should not use insulting or blasphemous words for anything that other people hold sacred, even if it violates the principle of the Oneness of God.
37. The new character of the language of religion should be one that explains, preserves and represents the universal and timeless principles of the Qur'ān.
38. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should prioritize the contentment with God's decree (*riḍā*), and strictly avoid using religion to their benefit.
39. The new character of the language of religion should be a language free of superstitions, 'innovations' (*bid'ah*), and epic words and slogans.
40. The new character of the language of religion should not be constructed in a hypothetical and/or academic fashion, but rather should be universally comprehensible and engaged in everyday life.
41. The new character of the language of religion should not be a symbol of yearning to turn to the period of the revelation of the Qur'ān, rather should be serving to the principle of "Returning to the Qur'ān".
42. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should demonstrate altruistic behaviors, such as to prioritize other people's well-being while being volunteer to bear with hardship and lack of comfort.
43. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should avoid presenting themselves as "the sole authoritative representatives" of the Qur'ān, and furthermore should not trigger or be a part of arguments arising from such claims.
44. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should not expect anything in return for sharing God's enlightening and guiding commands.
45. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should prefer striving and struggling in the path of pleasing God, rather than seeking fame and fortune, and any kinds of political, religious and/or social superiority.

46. The new character of the language of religion should be constituted and presented by those who are solely committed to God, have a solid and steadfast faith and will, rather than by those who are running after fame and fortune.

47. The new character of the language of religion should be presented by those who are known for their “trustworthiness” not only among their own community, but also worldwide.

48. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should see “the bright spots” in their wrong actions, and should avoid being “self-assured” in their right ones.

49. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should not regard knowledge as a means of self-admiration. It is essential to share the knowledge with others, just as is the case with the distribution of wealth.

50. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should align their words and actions, and strictly avoid imposing on others what they fail to realize in their own lives.

51. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should make a clear distinction between the Divine Revelation and interpretation of the jurists (*ijtihād*), who were free to develop their own interpretive principles.

52. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should not wait for people to knock on their door, rather should they take every chance they get to reach out to them and do their best to make the most of it.

53. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should have the resilience to stand their ground, even if they are subjected to humiliation, disgrace, isolation, intimidation and/or exclusion.

54. The new character of the language of religion should emphasize “realization” (the process of discovery of the truth in one’s heart, *tahqīq*) over “imitation” (the method of gaining transmitted knowledge, *taqlīd*), and accentuate the concept of comprehension (*dirāya*), instead of transmission (*riwāya*).

55. The new character of the language of religion should be grounded in the verses of the Qur’ān, and sustained through the Best of Creation, Prophet Muḥammad, the “Walking Qur’ān”.

56. The new character of the language of religion should be designed to resonate with reason and common sense, and should not put forward *dogmas*, that is, fixed beliefs or established opinions.

57. The new character of the language of religion should align with the fundamental principles of the Qur’ān, such as to deem rising up against oppression as the driving force behind revolutions and make constant renewal the essence of life.

58. The new character of the language of religion should adopt an approach that treats all events which occurred subsequent to the Divine Revelation as the subject of history, not as a part of the religion (Islām).

59. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should bear in mind that it is the message, and not the language, that is of the utmost importance.

60. The new character of the language of religion should place stress on the exemplary role of the prophets, not on the miracles they performed.

61. The new character of the language of religion should strive for an understanding that prioritizes full trust in divine compassion, rather than relying on the rites of worship for salvation.

62. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should constantly be aware of the distinction between the unintentional state of neglect and the firm deliberate denial.

63. The new character of the language of religion should be established on the fact that the Qur'ān is the final revelation to mankind, and a completion and confirmation of the previous scriptures.

64. The new character of the language of religion should put as much emphasis on the signs of the universe as of the Qur'ān.

65. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should always remember that the first command of the Qur'ān, "Read!," is the initial and the most essential act of worship for mankind.

66. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should advocate the sacredness of all sciences, and avoid making a distinction between "sacred" and "profane".

67. The new character of the language of religion should be a language that does not resign the Qur'ān to personal judgments, that is to say, while taking the figurative and allegorical verses (verses open to interpretation -*mutashābih*) into account, one should not ignore the definitive and lucid ones (verses that leave no room for doubt and debate -*muḥkam*).

68. The new character of the language of religion should make it clear that no sin is greater than God's mercy.

69. The new character of the language of religion should keep in mind that no one has the right or authority to act as a go-between for God and man.

70. The new character of the language of religion should not restrict the practices of worship to a single, physical location, instead should view the whole life as an act of worship.

71. The new character of the language of religion should consider the necessity to avoid any kind of pressure and compulsion in religion.

72. The new character of the language of religion should nourish the idea that the strongest adversary of the Qur'ān is oppression, and therefore should not allow a discourse which may potentially give rise to it.

73. The new character of the language of religion should be a language that eliminates the need for intermediaries between God and man.

74. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should be aware of the primary role of free will in existence.

75. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should notice that to despair of God's mercy is tantamount to reject the Truth (*kufṛ*).

76. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should recognize that rituals of worship considered as good deeds (*a'māl*) do not guarantee the salvation, rather, worship should be seen as an indication of hope for salvation and a motive for being on the straight path. Deeds are the instruments for gaining God's contentment.

77. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should always keep in mind that God is the ultimate authority on the matters pertaining to revelation.

78. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should be aware of the fact that God is as keen to see the observance of His prohibitions as well as the implemetation of His conveniences.

79. The new character of the language of religion should not be constrained by the customs and traditions -which came to be presented as "Sunnah"- of the period in which Islām emerged, nor of the cultures with which Islām interacted.

80. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should bear in mind that no one can be declared as infidel or non-believer, regardless of the way of their interpretation of *naṣṣ*, namely, "decisions and definitive rules of the religion," unless they explicitly deny or reject them.

81. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should recall and remind that all prophets from Ādam to Muḥammad are regarded as "Prophets of Islām", and those who have been following them should be decribed as "Muslims".

82. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should state that the terms "Christianity" and "Judaism," which are currently used to refer to a range of religious traditions, are in essence sociological definitions which have diverged from the original truth, that is Unity/*Tawḥīd*.

83. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should be in accordance with the principle that "to expel the evil is better to summon the good," that is to say warding off the wrongdoing should prevail over doing the right thing.

84. The new character of the language of religion should render its promoters effective by making them “subjects” rather than “objects” of life, namely, it is suggested that these should be people who set the agenda, not who comply with it.

85. The new character of the language of religion should have an inclusive tone that engages with people’s pain and joy, and serve as a refuge of compassion for all those who seek to have a meaningful and worthwhile life.

86. The new character of the language of religion should defend the rights of the vulnerable groups, including the waifs and helpless.

87. The new character of the language of religion should be capable of developing an educational system that foster the personal growth of people who embody righteousness within the society.

88. The new character of the language of religion should acknowledge a shift of emphasis from an emotional or reactionary rhetoric to a more principled universal approach.

89. The new character of the language of religion should prioritize merit, justice and diligence as the primary criteria in social and moral relations.

90. The new character of the language of religion should acknowledge the freedom of people to choose a path that may lead them to heaven as well as to hell.

91. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should bear in mind the principle that “no human being is innocent of a sin of which they have not encountered yet.”

92. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should recognize that piety (*taqwā*) is not an interhuman matter, rather, it is an affair between God and man.

93. The new character of the language of religion should view good deeds as actions generating value and peace for the benefit of humanity, regardless of whether they pertain to the matters of worship.

94. The new character of the language of religion should emphasize the individuality of sin and that there can be no transfer of criminal or religious liability.

95. The new character of the language of religion should aim to protect the five fundamental needs, namely, protection of life, religion, reason (*‘aql*), progeny and property.

96. The new character of the language of religion should encourage repentance (*tawba*) and serve as a reminder of the most praiseworthy human behaviour is the act of seeking God’s forgiveness and compassion.

97. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should be aware of that the act of worship under pressure is actually a sin full of hypocrisy, which deprives the worshippers of their authentic selves.

98. The new character of the language of religion should be structured in a way that allows people to make their own choices on the alternatives between “*rukḥṣā*”<sup>40</sup> (permission) and “*‘azima*”<sup>41</sup> (resolution). That is to say, one must be fully aware of God’s mercy through the permissions granted, however, should make the utmost effort to seek the divine reward which results from adhering to the rigorous practices.

99. The new character of the language of religion should be consistent with the principle that “actions are but by intention.”

100. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should realize that it is unfeasible to discuss matters of religion in an environment where there is a lack of freedom and free will, as well as in a context where human beings are not able to make their own choices and/or decisions freely.

101. The new character of the language of religion should not give rise to matters that are incompatible with man’s original nature (*fiṭra*).

102. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should keep in mind that God does not burden any human being with more than they can bear.

103. The new character of the language of religion should transmit a message that it is not enough to refrain from engaging in evil, rather, it is imperative to engage actively in benevolent actions.

104. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should endeavor to restore the dignity, rights, and freedom of the subjugated people without discriminating on the basis of colour, gender, religion, or origin.

105. The new character of the language of religion should prioritize the brotherhood of the Qur’ān and faith over any kind of interest group, formally organized on the basis of one or more shared concerns such as *madhab* (doctrine), *mashrab* (sect), political view, and economic benefit etc.

106. The new character of the language of religion should convey a universal message to all of humanity, irrespective of lineage, race, or cultural environment.

107. The new character of the language of religion, when spreading its message, should highlight God’s infinite and all-emcompassing mercy over all creatures, regardless of colour, language, and diversity.

108. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should be aware that the Qur’ān is for all eras, and time validates the Divine Truth in each era. In other words, time is the best interpreter of the Qur’ān.

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<sup>40</sup> A technical term in the discipline of Islamic jurisprudence, which indicates a special dispensation from performing an obligatory act or from submitting to a prohibition. The result is the replacement of a command with an easier alternative in cases of need or duress.

<sup>41</sup> A term that is used to describe the request to observe the duty without consideration of any obstacles.

109. The new character of the language of religion should build up goodness and create valueable outcomes for the society.

110. The new character of the language of religion should be a language that focuses on the objective principles of the Divine Revelation, as opposed to subjective opinions of people, which usually end up with marginalization, slander, criticism, exclusion, accusation, and offence.

111. The promoters of the new character of the language of religion should be conscious of the fact that a universal religion does not require a specific type of uniform or clothing. Additionally, they should acknowledge that Islam has no clergy in the sacerdotal sense, and that there is no mediator between God and man.

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