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The Rational verses The Irrational by Sheikh Mohammed Jakir Ahmed Jabbar LL.B(Hons), LL.M

NOT MY GOD AND NOT YOUR GOD BUT OUR GOD, FOR THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, MOST GRACIOUS MOST MERCIFUL.

Some Extracts from the book:

Introduction

Islam belongs to the same family of religions as Judaism and Christianity. The Patriarch of the three is the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), a descendant of Nuh's (Noah's) son Shem as illustrated in Chapter 57, Al-Hadid, Verse 26 of the Holy Quran. *And we sent Noah And Abraham, and established In their line Prophethood And Revelation.* The three monotheistic religions are rays from the same lamp and barring some (albeit fundamental) differences (discussed later) have strikingly common grounds. All emphasize the unseen, eternal, omnipotent Creator, the most compassionate and merciful imposing His structured will on earth. Yet the seeds of enmity and distrust between Islam and Christianity planted many centuries ago between 1095, marking the seeds of the first Christian Crusade at the behest of the Papacy; *Dues vult* (God wills it), and the penultimate medieval Crusade of 1248, the tolerance preached by the Prophets, Isa (Jesus) and Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Them) has been manipulated for vested political interest.

However, it must be emphasised like different strands of thread interwoven to make a fine tapestry the affinity and heritage of the monotheistic religions is clearly narrated in Chapter 2, Al Baqarah, Verse 136 of the Holy Quran where it states *Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya'qub (Jacob), and to Al-Asbat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya'qub (Jacob)], and that which has been given to Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus), and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam).*

With a common monotheistic lineage, Islam requires Muslims to believe in all the revealed books mentioned in the Holy Quran. They are the Tawrat (Torah) revealed to Musa (Moses); the Zabur (Psalms) revealed to Dawud (David); the Injil (the original Gospel) revealed to Isa (Jesus) and the Quran revealed to the final prophet and messenger Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Them). The Quran also mentions the Suhuf-i-Ibrahim (Scrolls of Abraham). By no measure or form therefore, is Islam an advancement or continuation of Arab paganism. In fact, the theological theme underlying the core message of Islam is its unrestrained rebellion against paganism, idolatry and religious bigotry repeatedly expressed in verses of the Holy Quran.

It is only when preceding revelation(s) became corrupted following distortions in the Divine texts as mentioned in

Chapter 3, Al Imran, Verse 78, where it mentions, "And Lo! there is a party of them who distort the Scripture with their tongues, that ye may think that what they say is from the Scripture, when it is not from the Scripture. And they say: it is from ALLAH, when it is not from ALLAH; and they speak a lie concerning ALLAH knowingly" that a subsequent revelation followed with Islam being the last religion or revelation as illustrated in Chapter 5, Al-Maidah, verse 3 where it states, "This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion".

Nothing comes between man and ALLAH in Islam. There is no requirement for spiritual intermediaries. The concept of priesthood is alien to classical Islamic tradition but is now prevalent in many Muslim countries inspired by Christian missionary influence of the last few centuries. There is no hierarchy of authority to clutter the Islamic Faith. There is nothing comparable to an organised Church. Any personal financial contribution in the way of Islam, though encouraged, is nevertheless entirely voluntary. Though there are religious scholars (Ulema) there is no equivalent to the archdeacons, bishops, archbishops or popes that can be found in the Christian Church. When leading the prayer in the Mosque the Imam is only the first among equals. Religious authority in Islam resides in the Holy Qur'an and according to Sunni Islam the Hadith as well, to which every Muslim has ready access. The Holy Qur'an is available in its unaltered Arabic version (the standardized text commencing from the reign of Caliph Uthman) though it has been subsequently translated into numerous languages.

Followers of the Islamic Faith possess a collective morality. Though the nation-states comprising the Muslim Ummah (world-wide community of Islam) may at times be immersed in bitter geo-political rivalry amongst themselves, in Faith, nevertheless, the vast majority of Muslims across the Globe (irrespective of national identity) are passionately united in their observance of the Five Pillars of Islam, if not in anything else, particularly in their declaration of the Shahada (Oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad), as well as in their vehement acceptance of the Divine truth of the Holy Qur'an. It is this passionate affirmation that underlines the strength and mysticism that characterizes the rationale behind the resurgence of Islam as a global phenomenon, especially in the face of perceived persecution of Muslims, particularly in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and not too long ago in Chechnya, Bosnia and Lebanon. Western societies and governments fail to understand this and therefore fail to comprehend the Muslim psyche. Capitalising on this, radical groups manifest themselves into expressions of extremism. This only emphasises the importance of understanding and advocating the correct interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and not its dissection to single verses or even phrases from verses that serve extremist agenda, deliberately contorting the true meaning of the Holy Qur'an.

Islam does not advocate aggression or war for the sole purpose of sacking lands, exerting power or amassing wealth, or to forcibly convert non-believers to embrace Islam. In fact this is flatly prohibited in Chapter 2, Al-Baqarah, Verse 256, of the Holy Qur'an, where Allah says, "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out Clear from Error: whosoever Rejects Tagut (anything worshipped other than Allah) and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy Handhold that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all."

There is however, a clear

obligation of self-defence upon Muslims. This is expressed in **Chapter 2,**
Al-Baqarah, Verses 190-193 of the Holy Qur'an: *Fight in the cause of Allah
Those who fight you But do not transgress limits; For Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay
them Wherever ye catch them, And turn them out From where they have Turned you out; For
persecution Is worse than slaughter; But fight them not At the Sacred Mosque, unless they
(first) Fight you there; But if they fight you, Slay them. Such is the reward Of those who reject
faith. But if they cease, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. And fight them on Until there is no
more persecution And the religion becomes Allah's. But if they cease, Let there be no hostility
Except to those Who practice oppression.* Unfortunately, in reality the distinction
between aggression and self-defence has often been blurred giving rise to misconceptions
about the Islamic duty of Jihad. While this will be analysed in some detail later, simply put, acts
of **terror** resulting in the death of innocent civilians clearly **transgresses**
limits. Muslims are required to provide a measured but effective response to persecution that
must be appropriately directed. Consequently, innocent civilians can never be legitimate targets
of war or Jihad. In fact such a course of conduct is prohibited in Islam.

? The followers of
the Islamic Faith are an inspired people. This is reflected in their history. A major achievement
of classical Islamic civilization was the preservation, study and dissemination of Greek scientific
tradition of late antiquity that later formed the basis of Western science and philosophy. It laid
the foundation for the **Age of Reason** igniting the flame of the European Renaissance. It
must be remembered that Renaissance European civilization took shape in the shadow of
powerful and already progressive Islamic empires, such as the Ottoman and Moghul empires.
Further back, when much of medieval Europe was reeling under plague and religious bigotry,
Islamic culture was flourishing expressed in its architecture and academic pursuits in the
sciences. The cities of Cordoba, Seville and Toledo bear testimony to these advances under the
rule of the Moors in Al-Andalus (in present day Spain and Portugal).

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While the Middle East is often considered to be the traditional heartland of Islam by no
means is it today representative of the Muslim Ummah. More than two thirds of all Muslims now
reside not in the Middle East but in the Asia-Pacific region, North and sub-Saharan Africa with a
sizeable number living in Europe. There are around 500 million Muslims living in the Indian
subcontinent alone, representing almost a third of the Muslim Ummah. As a country, Indonesia
has the world's largest Muslim population of 204 million. Around 44 million Muslims now live in
Europe, which is about 6 percent of Europe's population. Many of them have the right to vote.
In the United Kingdom, Muslims represent around 4.6 percent of her population and are second
or third generation migrants. There are more Muslims in Germany than there are in either Oman
or Bahrain. Interestingly enough, Saudi Arabia (the birthplace of Islam) has around 25 million
Muslims, which constitutes only 1.6 percent of the Muslim Ummah, yet commands one of the
strongest Gross National Product per capita incomes in the Muslim Ummah alongside the
United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. From a concerted study of demographic trends in the Muslim
Ummah it is evident that Islam will embrace the largest number of global religious adherents by
the middle of this century. The report by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life published in
January 2011 predicts that there will be around 2.2 billion Muslims by 2030 representing 26.4
percent of the world's population of 8.3 billion.

More than three quarters of the
Muslim Ummah are adherents of **Sunni Islam** and comprise of **developing**

countries. Many are heavily resigned to elected dynastic rule, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, while a sizeable majority of those populations live in abject poverty. We are witnessing with both hope and apprehension the wave of protests in the Arab World (Bahrain and Syria amongst them) against dictatorships and a move in favour of political pluralism. Crucial for Western policy makers is what form of government these new representative democracies will produce, particularly against the backdrop of Arab perceptions of Western interference in the region both past and present. Subsequent democratic elections may well produce non-secular governments. What the Arab World may end up with is fundamentalism through the front door. The same can be said of North Africa in particular, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. In fact, during Mr Morsi's presidency, Cairo witnessed widespread protests against a draft constitution in November-December 2012 with protesters branding it as pro-Islamic/Shari'ah oriented. With a failing economy, months of political stalemate and crucially the Army's suspicions over Mr Morsi's Islamic agenda, he was finally ousted from power on 3 July 2013 in what can be described as a military coup against Egypt's first democratically elected president. At the same time, these countries may end up with pro-Western puppet governments backed by Western corporate stakeholders.

The principal theological split between Islam and Judaism arises over which of the two sons the prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) was prepared to sacrifice at ALLAH's command to show his obedience. Followers of the Jewish Faith believe that it was Ishaq (Isaac), the younger of the two sons. The Holy Qur'an directly contradicts this, rendering a different account. Ibrahim (Abraham) had only Isma'il (Ishmael) at the time of the proposed sacrifice and Ishaq (Isaac) was born subsequently as a bounty to Ibrahim (Abraham) for his obedience. This is narrated in Chapter 37, As-Saffat, Verses 101-113, *So we gave him, Ibrahim tidings of a gentle son. And when (the son) was old enough to walk with him, Ibrahim said: O my dear son! I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look what thinkest thou? He said: O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shall find me of the steadfast. So when they had both submitted to ALLAH, and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to him, O, Ibrahim! Thou hast already fulfilled the dream! Lo! thus do we reward the good. Lo! that verily was a clear test. And we ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice. And we left for him among generations (To come) in later times: Peace and salutations To Ibrahim! Thus do we award the good. For he was one of our believing Servants. And we gave him tidings of the birth of Ishaq, a prophet of the righteous. And we blessed him and Ishaq. And of their seed are some who do good, and some who plainly wrong themselves.*

The Holy Qur'an makes it clear however, that ALLAH is the God of all creation with Muhammad as His last messenger sent to all mankind, not limited to any race or region and includes the Arabs and Israelites. This is made clear in Chapter 7, Al-Araf, Verse 158 where it states, *Say (O Muhammad): O Mankind! Lo! I am sent unto you all, as the messenger of ALLAH, to whom belongeth the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no God but He: it is He that giveth both life and death. So believe in ALLAH and His Messenger, the prophet who can neither read nor write, who believeth in ALLAH and in His words and follow him that happily ye may be led aright.*

With Christianity the theological split essentially lies with the concept of Trinity, Islam brandishing it as a form of polytheism and

denying outright the divinity of Isa (Jesus) as expressed in no uncertain terms in **Chapter 112, Al-Ikhlās, Verses 1-4** where it states, *Say: He is ALLAH, The One; ALLAH, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, Nor is He begotten; And there is none comparable unto him.* Furthermore, it is stated in **Chapter 19, Maryam, Verses 88-93**, *And they say: the Beneficent hath taken unto him a son. Assuredly ye utter a disastrous thing. Whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins. That ye ascribe unto the Beneficent a son. For it is not consonant With the majesty of the Beneficent that He should choose a son. There is none in the heavens and the earth but cometh unto the Beneficent as a slave.*

Again in **Chapter 5, Al-Maidah, Verses 72-75**, the Holy Qur'an mentions: *Surely, they have disbelieved who say: ALLAH is the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary). But the Messiah (Isa himself) said: O Children of Israel! Worship ALLAH, my Lord and your Lord. Verily, whosoever sets up partners (in worship) with ALLAH, then ALLAH has forbidden Paradise to him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the Zalimun (polytheists and evildoers) there are no helpers. Surely, disbelievers are those who say: ALLAH is the third of the three (in the Trinity). But there is no God but the one God. And if they cease not from what they say, verily, a painful torment will befall on the disbelievers among them. Will they not turn with repentance to ALLAH and ask His forgiveness? For ALLAH is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. The Messiah (Isa), son of Maryam, was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother Maryam was a saintly woman. They both used to eat earthly food. See how We make the revelations clear to them; yet see how they are deluded away (from the truth).*

The Holy Qur'an does however confirm the birth of Isa (Jesus) of a Virgin Maryam (Mary), but only as a **sign** unto mankind. This is clearly narrated in **Chapter 19, Maryam, Verses 16-21**, *Relate in the Book (The story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them: Then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. She said: I seek refuge from thee to (Allah) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear Allah. He said: Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord (To announce) to thee the gift of a pure son. She said: How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, And I am not unchaste? He said: So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, That is Easy for Me: and (We Wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us: It is a matter (So) decreed.* The circumstances surrounding the birth of the prophet Isa (Jesus) is no doubt an affirmation unto mankind of ALLAH's omnipotence, compassion, mercy, and sovereignty over all creation.

Another crucial issue on which Islam and Christianity differ theologically is the crucifixion. In the Islamic narrative, Isa (Jesus) was not crucified on the cross. He was taken unto ALLAH. **Chapter 4, An-Nisa, Verses 157-8** of the Holy Qur'an states, *And because of their saying: We slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, ALLAH's messenger - they slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them; and lo those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of conjecture; they slew him not for certain. Nay, ALLAH raised him up unto Himself; and ALLAH is exalted in power, Wise.*

To suggest the separation of Islam from the State overlooks the **inescapable convergence** of religion and politics. **Islam, like Judaism and**

Christianity, is inherently political. If we turn back the pages of history the three major monotheistic religions essentially began as rebellions against persecution perpetrated by the political establishment of the time (whether such tyranny was religious, social or economic or a combination of the three). It culminated in the successful defiance and in some cases the uprooting of the existing political order. Briefly, with **Judaism** it was the defiance of the Jewish people against the slavery of Pharaoh that brought them out of Egypt and ultimately into **Israel**. With **Christianity** it was defiance against the Roman Empire and the misguided practices carried out by the religious establishment in the Temple of God in Jerusalem. With **Islam** it was the defiance against the oppression of the leaders of Mecca who thrived on the trade generated from idol worship that subsequently led to the victory of Mecca by Muslim forces, the destruction of the idols housed in the Ka**bah** and the banishment of idol worship in Arabia with Mecca becoming the centre-point/spiritual capital of Islam.

The three monotheist religions were conceived from wars, but only in response to persecution. The Book of Exodus narrates how Moses and Joshua had to fight many battles in their search of the **Promised Land** including the battle against the Amalekites. Christianity only saw the light of day when Roman Emperor Constantine had a vision of a figure of the Cross prior to his battle with Maxentius, which he subsequently won and in return declared that all religions including Christianity would be tolerated throughout his empire. This laid the platform for the spread of Christianity in the West. The turning point for Islam was the (bloodless) conquest of Mecca by Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). The triumph over Mecca was the springboard from which the message of Islam spread across Arabia and beyond. Prior to that however, the Muslims had to fight several battles perpetrated upon them mostly by the rulers of Mecca.

Chapter 1: The Quran** **The Word of ALLAH (the Recital)****

The Holy Qur**an** occupies an unparalleled position to its reciters in comparison to other Divine Books. Across several continents more than a billion and half practising Muslims recite verses of the Holy Qur**an** in their compulsory daily prayers. The Holy Qur**an** is therefore, **a living revelation**, not restricted to the confines of a book kept in the Mosques, Madrassahs or homes of Muslims. Rather, it is the **heart of the Ummah** that beats life into the soul of all Muslims every time it is recited. All attempts, therefore, to undermine the Holy Qur**an** are futile. They amount to no more than bigoted steps adopted by ignorant people with the malicious intention of provoking a violent response by deliberately attacking the passionate sentiments of young Muslims. The **International Judge the Qur**an** Day** was a travesty beyond any rational comprehension. It amounted to no more than bigoted theatrical rhetoric based on misinformation that had no meaningful substance. This followed the **International Burn a Qur**an** Day** sought to mark the ninth 9/11 anniversary.

Chapter 4: Muhammad **the Seal of the Prophets**

In hindsight, the Prophet's decision not to avenge His former enemies proved to be a disastrous oversight in the context of the subsequent Fitna (civil wars) that engulfed the Caliphate after His death. For it was Abu Sufyan's son Mu**awiya** who founded the Umayyad Dynasty and whose successive Caliphs ruled the expanding Islamic

empire between 661 till 750 AD. Crucially, it was Muawiyah's son Yazid I who upon succeeding his father as Caliph, orchestrated the massacre of the Prophet's grandson Husayn, together with his family, at Karbala in 680 AD. Consequently, this effectively brought to an end any claim by the Hashemite Clan, i.e., Prophet's immediate household and blood relatives to the Caliphate. This murderous affair also marks the **principal schism** between Muslims that has persisted throughout the ages namely, that of Shi'ite and Sunni Islam, and continues today.

Chapter 5: Succession and the Seeds of War and Division

Abu Bakr along with Umar ibn al-Kattab, Uthman ibn Affan of the Umayya clan and the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law Ali ibn Abi Talib are referred to as the rightly-guided Caliphs: *Khulafa Ur Rashidin*. They had all heard the revelations from the Prophet himself and been guided by His example. Each served in turn as Caliph. However, with the exception of Abu Bakr, who died from illness, the **remaining three** Caliphs died a violent death, not in war, but as a consequence of conspiracies manifesting themselves in murder and assassinations.

The true reason behind the anti-Uthman movement is disputed among Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims. Nevertheless, a common thread emerges from historical texts. To consolidate his power base Uthman installed and retained members of his own tribe to positions of military and political prominence in key Provinces. These included Egypt, Syria, Kufa and Basra. This rapid rise to prominence of men of the Quraysh, who had until the Conquest of Mecca by the Prophet Muhammad in 630 AD had been bitter enemies against Islam, was naturally giving rise to resentment amongst the Muhajirun and Ansars. This Uthman failed to address by, among other things, retaining Muawiyah, the son of Abu Sufyan, as Governor of Syria.

Enraged at Ali's inability to bring the murderers of Uthman to justice, Talhah and Zubayr approached Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr and widow of the Prophet, to rally support against Ali. Aisha, grieving Uthman and angered at the subsequent election of Ali as the new Caliph, also demanded revenge for Uthman's death. Consequently, they succeeded in raising an army. Sensing a challenge to his leadership, Ali too raised an army. These two armies met at Basra in what is known as the **Battle of the Camel**, marking the beginning of the **first Fitna** (Civil War) in Islam.

During the course of the battle, fierce fighting took place, resulting in the deaths of many Muslims. Facing defeat, Talhah and Zubayr fled the battlefield and Ali's army took the upper hand. As a mark of victory Ali severed the hamstrings of the camel Aisha was riding on and had her sent back to Medina, after which she withdrew from active frontline political participation. This victory helped to consolidate Ali's rule over the Caliphate, with the exception of Syria.

Chapter 6: Contemporary Islam and the Rise of Militancy

In Islam there is no valid terminology as **Islamic terrorism** to suggest so is to speak ignorantly of the religious tenets of Islam. Such stereotyping reflects an ill-informed and sometimes deliberate distortion of the facts that can seriously damage social cohesion within national communities. It raises suspicion and mistrust amongst such communities breeding fear and consequently

hatred. But in this global market driven economy **branding** has become the name game and so has **sensationalism** that is particularly noticeable in the context of media coverage of acts of terrorism. Extremism has no place in Islam. This is forcefully stated in **Chapter 2, Al-Baqarah, Verse 256** of the Holy Quran. Therefore, to label acts of terror as Islamic is **regrettable** while the vast majority of Muslims find such categorisation offensive. The religion of Islam does not deserve to be associated with violent extremism.

In hindsight, many in the Muslim world blame Osama bin Laden for unwittingly giving Western Powers the leverage to introduce a new wave of imperialism in Muslim Lands in the guise of **War on Terror**. They allege that this has provided ideological cover for Western imperial policy to be projected militarily upon Muslim countries. The horrific 9/11 attacks were by extension the platform for the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq in 2003 and the continued occupation of Afghanistan. It provides the template behind the rationale for Western imperialistic policy: i.e. perpetual strife in the Middle East, the control of strategic oil supplies and the fragmentation of nations into their ethnic and religious fractions, such as the **Shiite-Sunni tensions**, not only in Iraq but much of that region also. They allege bin Laden was a **godsend** for the hawkish elements within the US Military establishment.

How much more can Barak Obama achieve during the last years of his final term in office as U.S. President against a staunchly pro-Israeli Congress remains to be seen. What is alarming for global Muslims and potentially damaging for renewed peace prospects is the move made by Israeli right-wing politicians in February 2014 forcing a debate in the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) to annex/enforce sovereignty over the Al-Aqsa mosque compound which is currently being managed by an Islamic trust and administered by Jordan by virtue of the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty of 1994. Furthermore, eager of finding evidences of what Israeli authorities believe to be ancient Jewish temples, excavation works are being carried out not only in the Old City of Jerusalem but also at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, posing a threat to the structural integrity of the sacred mosque. All the while elements within the Israeli political establishment wish to fulfil the **Jewish prophecy** of building the Third Temple at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound.

Chapter 7: One Ummah: Revival of the Islamic Caliphate

If we use the concept of **Shura** in a contemporary political setting, it can be argued that it refers to democratic processes to include democratic institutions and elections. Consequently, arbitrary governments and repressive political processes are contrary to political Islam. There is little conflict between (liberal) political Islam and political pluralism in its broad sense.

Any notion to re-establish the **Islamic Caliphate** based upon the concept of a unitary state will prove futile and only result in a violent reaction. Today the **Muslim Ummah** is divided among 50 plus nation-states forged in large part as a struggle against colonial rule and exploitation. The advocates of an Islamic Caliphate need to respond to the contemporary global political situation. It may be based on the European Union model and/or the United States Federal System. **Core characteristics** could include: a common citizenship; a single currency; a Federal Reserve Bank operating on the principles of Islamic Shari'ah; a single customs union; a representative central political authority respecting the national, political and in parts the legal sovereignty of individual Member States much like the EU; an independent legal

entity sitting as the highest appellate body on the interpretation of (Federal) legislation and a common foreign and defence policy similar to the US Federal system. The West and particularly Israel have nothing to lose from the re-establishment of an Islamic Caliphate but everything to gain from it in terms of regional security and economic cooperation. The bedrock, however, upon which the Caliphate should be re-established, to give it any chance of success, can only be the practice of political pluralism among the Member States.

Any attempt to re-establish an Islamic Caliphate through violence and destruction has the potential of having serious consequences in terms of its sustainability. This is particularly so if a narrow narrative of Shari'ah is enforced on the population with an iron hand. The absence of democratic norms and practices will give rise to despotic leaders who are unaccountable to any legitimate democratic processes.

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the pace of events as they continue to unfold in the Middle East publication of the Second Book
in the series has been postponed until the summer of 2017.</p> <p>◆</p> <p><span
style="font-family: book antiqua,palatino; font-size: 10pt;"><span style="text-decoration:
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