VISIONS OF ECUMENISM IN A TROUBLED WORLD: SUFISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

*Arguably, the post September 11 world has been characterized by defining cultures along civilisational lines in accordance with Samuel Huntington's notion of **The Clash of Civilisations**. According to Huntington, Islam is antithetical to Western civilization, ideologically, politically and historically. Furthermore, Islam poses a potential threat to 'enlightened' Western nations. In this paper I will propose how Sufism may provide an alternate vision for promoting ecumenism between The West and Islam. It can provide a humanizing response to the emergence of modernist models and their ruthless debunking of traditional forms of religion and cultural systems.*

The current tension between the West and Islam has plunged the world to an uncertain period. The promises of universalism have been overshadowed by pervasive fundamentalist ideologies which encourage exclusivity and linkages to the past. The early years of the 21st century are reminiscent of the nascent period of the 20th century which saw the advent of technological war and genocide. This period has witnessed the birth of new forms of collective terror, vehicled by global medias. The attack on The World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, was a seminal event which forayed into the collective consciousness of cultures and nations. Arguably, the post September 11 world has been characterised by defining cultures along civilisational lines in accordance with Samuel Huntington's notion of *The Clash of Civilisations*.[1] According to Huntington, Islam is

antithetical to Western civilization, ideologically, politically and historically. Furthermore, Islam poses a potential threat to 'enlightened' Western nations. Huntington's vision evokes "the indeterminacy of modernity which has shattered the modernist belief" of the "existential safety of larger totalities",[2] "assured by western governments."[3] In this paper I will propose how Sufism may provide an alternate vision for promoting ecumenism between The West and Islam. Abdul Aziz Said views Sufism as a humanizing response to the emergence of modernist models and their ruthless debunking of traditional forms of religion and cultural systems. But how will Sufism act in this new social environment with its entourage of fundamentalist discourses? An overview of Sufism's past may shed some light as to how it can ecumenically respond to a 21st century global arena.

Sufism: Ecumenical Beginnings

Sufism or (Arabic, *tassawuf*) is a form of Islamic mysticism with the fundamental aim of experiencing a direct communion with the Allah, which in Sufism thought is called *fana fil-haqq* (annihilation of truth)[4] Sufism stipulates that this kind of engagement with Allah is achievable through the cultivation of intuitive and emotional faculties as a means of diminishing the nature of the false ego or false self (*nafs*), which prevents human beings attaining union with Allah. Nicholson (1914)[5] and Stoddart (1994)[6] suggest that the nature of this union between mystic (Sufi) and Allah aims in the mystic's detachment from the *nafs*, toward absorption into the Divine (*fana*).

From its beginnings in Arabia in the eighth century, Sufism showed signs of syncretism and religious ecumenism which was to be one of its crucial hallmarks. Writers such as Stoddart (1994), Schimmel (1975),[7] Knysh (2000),[8] Izutsu (1967-68),[9] Faruqi (1984),[10] Engineer (1991),[11] Begg (1972),[12] Burkhardt (1995),[13] and , Arberry (1950)[14] claim that elements of Sufi ideology and practice were influenced by various religious and philosophical schools of thought, for example, Judaism, Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Zoroastrianism, and Hinduism, as well as other "ancient

oriental" influences.[15] Early Sufi thinkers had "sometimes borrowed formulations deriving from Neo-platonic and other spiritual doctrines" in order to enrich and broaden Islamic thought.[16] Sufism's ability to incorporate beliefs and practices from other cosmologies probably enabled it to adapt to the particular socio-cultural environments where it found itself in.

Early Sufis were inspired by the Quranic passages which extolled the unity of humankind and all existence. Sufis found in the Qur'an both a criterion for right thought and action and a blueprint for sociality.

> O mankind! We have created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other, (Not that ye may despise (Each other) (Qu'ran, 49:13).

> O mankind, be mindful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the two created and spread many men and women (Qur'an 4:1).

The modus operandi of Sufism was posited on the notion of *tawhid* (Divine Unity). Sufism's elaborate system of esoteric knowledge and social action were "integrated by the principle of *tawhid*, running as an axis through every mode of knowledge and being."[17] Within the framework of *tawhid* Sufis could explain the inter-relatedness of "natural and human phenomena" and the "inexhaustible creativity" of the universe.[18] No longer was nature viewed as an arena of ambiguous power but rather a tapestry of divine design, "a *vestigia Dei* or signs of God (*ayat Allah*),"[19] perfect in its symmetry – imbued with *telos*. The unity of humanity was a reflection of cosmic unity. Behind the "manifest diversity" of cultures was an underlying unity bonding humankind.[20]

As Islam spread into North Africa, Asia and Europe during the 7th century it began to take on a cosmopolitan feel. Islamic scholars and administrators began to incorporate various knowledges from civilisations which they had encountered, inevitably leading to an efflorescence of scientific learning and inquiry – the age of Islamic science had been sparked.

Generally speaking, early Muslims saw their relationship with their non-Muslim hosts as complementing their particular worldview. The saying of the Prophet Muhammad to "seek knowledge as far as China" prompted this spirit of co-existence and conveyed the "genius of authentic Islam".[21] Thus, the formation of Muslim societies was informed and contoured by their relationship with older civilisations.

The rationale of tolerance was further conveyed by various Sufi orders (*tariqa*) which spread throughout the Islamic world from the ninth century onwards. The Indian Sufi orders provided the most outstanding example of this syncretistic attitude. For example, the *Chistiyyah* order became renowned for its broad range of humanitarian activities and practice of religious tolerance, which became an integral ideological bridge between Islam and Hinduism. There is little doubt that Sufi orders such as the *Chistiyyah* adopted a more liberal understanding of Hinduism, and emphasised communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims. Khizer even claims that:

> The Sufis, unlike the 'ulama' did not keep themselves aloof from the Indian mainstream. They adopted local idiom and preached the message of love and universal brotherhood.[22]

On this note, it seems that Sufi orders were often more aware of the social conditions of the common people and tended to their spiritual and physical needs than the Islamic clerics.

The Golden Age of Islam (8th-13th centuries) hosted a litany of ecumenical figures. The celebrated Persian Sufi poet Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273) wrote many poetic works privileging the spirit of ecumenism and was respected by Christian and Jewish communities. Excerpts of Rumi's ecumenical poems are illustrated in the following:

> Cross and Christians, end to end, I examined. He was not on the Cross. I went to the Hindu temple, to the ancient pagoda. In neither was there any sign. To the heights of Herat I went, and Kandahar. I looked. He was not on height or lowland. Reso-

lutely, I went to the top of the Mountain of Kaf. There only was
the place of the 'Anqa bird. I went to the Kaaba. He was not
there. I asked of his state from Ibn Sina: he was beyond the
limits of the philosopher Avicenna. ... I looked into my own
heart. In that his place I saw him. He was in no other place.
What is to be done, O Muslims? For I do not recognize myself.
I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Gabar, nor Muslim. I am
not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land, nor of the sea;
I am not of Nature's mint, nor of the circling heavens.

Similarly, the Sufi philosopher Muhiyuddin Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240)
created a pantheistic doctrine referred to as *wahdat-ul-wujud* (Unity of
Being) which viewed creation as constituting a unity. Hirtenstein cites that
"Ibn Arabi's vision points precisely to this direct taking from God, in which
there is unanimity across all traditions."[23] Ibn 'Arabi's poem called *Wonder*
encapsulates this sentiment:

Wonder,
A garden among the flames!
My heart can take on any form:
A meadow for gazelles,
A cloister for monks,
For the idols, sacred ground,
Ka'ba for the circling pilgrim,
The tables of the Torah,
The scrolls of the Quran.
My creed is Love;
Wherever its caravan turns along the way,
That is my belief,
My faith.

Elsewhere Ibn Arabi writes on the unity of religions:

There is no knowledge except that taken from God, for He
alone is the Knower... the prophets, in spite of their great num-
ber and the long periods of time which separate them, had no
disagreement in knowledge of God, since they took it from God.

Although ecumenism was not a feature of all medieval Sufi orders, those which did follow ecumenical principles seemed to have had a better understanding of local communities and their social and religious needs. In many cases, the various heads of Sufi orders were viewed as saints in their own right and venerated at their shrines by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The cult of Sufi saints became popularized by poor folk and aristocrats throughout North Africa and Asia, and provided an avenue for communal relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.[24] Nowhere was this more evident than at Muslim shrines in north India which incorporated Muslim and Hindu symbols. These shrines were also important centers for humanitarian service and religious teaching. Indian Sufi saints such as Mu'inuddin Hasan Chishti (1142-1236) and Nizamuddin Auliya (1243-1325) were venerated by both Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Among Chisti's saying were:

> A friend of God must have affection like the Sun. When the sun rises, it is beneficial to all irrespective of whether they are Muslim, Christian, or Hindu.

Of all the worship that pleases Almighty Allah, the most is the granting of relief to the humble and the oppressed.

When I was conducting field-work during 1994-5 at the famous Muslim shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi I regularly witnessed Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs performing pilgrimage there. It was also common practice for Hindus to pray in the mosque there and for Sufi teachers to have non-Muslim disciples. One Sufi even compared the saint's shrine to an open bar where all people were welcome. This kind of communal harmony was all the more astonishing in light of the religious riots between Hindus and Muslims over the destruction of the Barbri mosque in Ayodha which had taken place in late 1992, as well as, the flagrant discrimination of Muslims in Maharashtra state and elsewhere in India.

Evans-Pritchard's classic study of the Sanusi order of Cyrenaica (1954) not only aroused a generation of studies of North African Sufi orders, but emphasised their social and political implications for North African societies. Evans-Pritchard pointed out that the austere nature of

Islam in North Africa was considered by many lay Muslims as too rigid.[25] Consequently, Sufi orders tended to adopt more individualistic and experientialist approaches which found their social expression in present day saints' cults. A similar scenario is observed in many Muslim societies today, reaffirming Sardar's view that traditional Muslim communities are constantly reinventing and innovating tradition.[26]

Towards the end of the Ottoman era many Muslim reformists who had been frustrated by colonial rule and the lack of social progress to modernise, became increasingly vitriolic against Sufi orders for their syncretistic practices.[27] The Islamic scholar Bernard Lewis even claimed that Sufis "were out of touch with the modern world, against which the new elites were struggling, and which at the same time they were striving to join".[28] In addition, in the modern period, Sufism was considered as "a shameful and dangerous superstition".[29] However, such allegations failed to realise the importance of Sufi culture in preserving local cultures in the face of systematic colonial repression of traditional forms of knowledge. Sufi culture also continued to fulfil "the psychological and communal needs of large segments of urban populations who sought refuge and solace from their daily struggle for existence caused by the displacements wrought by modernization."[30]

Sufi Ecumenism in the Muslim World

What can Sufi interpretations of Islam offer Muslim and non-Muslim societies in the present day and beyond? In order to examine this question there needs to be a reassessment of Sufism. This begins by dispelling the popular notion of Sufism as being an outdated and irrelevant form of "dervishism". The fact remains that in many Muslim societies such as India, Pakistan, the Central Asian Republics, and North Africa, Sufism continues to play a significant role in shaping and "sustaining communal identity".[31] In these societies a crucial source for the maintenance of Islamic cultural knowledge and practice derives from the belief in Sufi saints. To believe in the collective of God's saints (*auliya*) and to perform pilgrimage at their shrines are personal forms of piety, which confer spiritual merit to

believers. Not only are saints' shrines prominent features in the Islamic landscape, but they clearly demonstrate the religious sway of Sufism for millions of Muslims.

What the Sufi ecumenical model indicates is not only the possibility for Muslims to live peacefully with people from other religions, but assists in the development of conflict resolution strategies in those Muslim societies experiencing civil turmoil. In one interview, Hussein Aidid, son of the deceased Somali warlord, stated his intention to implement a system of law in Somalia based on a Sufi model which is in accordance with Somalia's clan based social system. Aidid's remarks in large reflects the "popularist and grass roots"[32] backing of Sufism by many Muslims. Given its respect for "native traditions and customs" Sufism is strongly placed as a relevant social model for Islamic liberalism in the 21st century. As Abdul Aziz Said notes:

> In the new international environment, viable conflict resolution requires an understanding of the beliefs, values, and behaviour of conflicting parties.[33]

In this vein, Sufism has provided and continues to offer a viable political and social rebuff of authoritarian regimes. Afghanistan is a case in point. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan Sufi orders played a significant role of resistance, "offering solidarity and stability" to Afghans without consideration of their ethnic backgrounds.[34]

Although the Sufi orders went underground during the ensuing civil wars, Sufi followers had pervaded every section of Afghan society. Sufi followers are also included in the present interim government.[35] The Sufi orders in the Central Asian Republics were also highly effective in fostering armed and ideological resistance against Tsarist and Soviet expansion.[36]

A case in point is the central Asian republic of Turkmenistan. Turkmen Muslim shrines were important places for Sufi activities and "for the transmission of local traditions and "communal history."[37] Soviet rule attempted to suppress shrine activities from the 1960's up to until the late 1980's through the use of anti-religious propaganda.[38] In post Soviet

Turkmenistan the tradition of pilgrimage to Muslim shrines (*ziyarat*) was given official recognition by Turkmenistan's president Saparmïrat Nïyazov (Türkmenbashï) "as an expression of patriotism and an integral part of being Turkmen."[39] In recent years the Turkmenistan media have extolled the pilgrimage tradition, albeit, refraining from condoning some of the healing practices that are conducted there.[40]

Similarly, Uzbekistan, has recently recognised its Sufi tradition after decades of Soviet imposed atheism, by promoting pilgrimages to its various Muslims shrines.[41] These include the shrine of Baha'uddin Naqshband in Bukhara, as portrayed in a "recent film produced by the Foreign Trade Association of Bukhara."[42]

Sufi ecumenism has also played an important role during the fifteen year Lebanese civil war. The Ahbash movement, "a Lebanese Sufi group of African origin", established a program of religious pluralism at a time of extreme sectarian violence.[43] By positioning itself as a non-militant movement, the Ahbash attracted Sunni Muslims from professional and business classes within urban centers.[44] In addition, Ahbash encouraged religious moderation and internecine peace. Significantly, Ahbash was able to converge social values and socio-economic interests of Sunni middle classes within a secularist framework.[45] According to Ernst, the message of the Ahbash spiritual leader Shaykh Habashi wedded Arab nationalism and Lebanese identity, and a non-reproaching attitude towards the Syrian government.[46]

Sufism and the Global Citizen in the 21st Century

In the current climate of Islamist resurgence Sufi inspired paradigms of inter-ethnic tolerance and liberal humanism (an Islamic development) are still a potent social force. Given the profound influence of Sufism on Muslim polity[47] it is unreasonable to suggest that Sufism is a spent force in the 21st century. It is because Sufism draws much of its social and moral power from the grass roots level that makes it a positive model for social change. Ironically, it is the emerging global system's symbiotic paradigm

which corresponds with Sufism's integral approach to social relations. Here perhaps, Sufism may offer a crucial ideological nexus between Islam and the West in the 21st century and beyond.

From a Sufi perspective, there is a need to reinvest in spirituality in the collective consciousness of nations. My position coincides with Abdul Aziz Said's, that a reinvestment in spirituality ensures the human species with the possibility for a realistic and sustainable development. The concern in implementing holistic modes of being has been compelled by three failing points of an "unmitigated secularism", namely, "civilized peoples' capacity to commit acts of mass destruction" against each other and the natural world:[48] Eric Hobsbawm (cited in Geras 1994) calls the period from 1914 to 1990 "the most murderous era so far recorded in history;"[49] secondly, by the economic uncertainties of rapid globalisation, and thirdly, by the de-mystification of the universe via the scientific paradigm. In commenting on the last point, the mythos of science has been a poor substitute in providing ontological meaning which is kernel to human consciousness. Max Weber's concept of the "disenchantment of the world" explained the moral and intellectual conundrum of the modern age. Consequently, the "disenchantment of the world" has had a profound impact in the way in which modern humans have construed nature. For Rupp, the loss of the Judeo-Christian idea of universe as *telos* has verified human assertion over nature.[50] Ernest Gellner (cited in Greene 1999) writes that:

> *Our identities, freedom, norms are no longer underwritten by our vision and comprehension of things…Nietzsche referred to this intellectual development as "the death of God." C.S. Lewis spoke of it as "the abolition of man.[51]*

If anything, the history of modern thought tells us that human progress and human activity are borne out of a struggle of consciousness, or what Thomas Berry refers to as "allurement". The evolutionary pursuit of allurement is towards greater "self-reflexive awareness", which deepens human knowledge of humankind's role within the universe.[52] Joseph Campbell avers that it has been the apparent loss of our mythical traditions and their privileging of intuitive modes of being which has contributed to modernity's anomie. Berry points out that we now live at a time that the

"transformation in culture" involves a shift from a mechanistic understanding of the universe to a "self-organizing universe as having a psychic-spiritual aspect."[53]

Sufism's universalism provides a vital paradigm here. From its inception Sufism viewed the human world as intrinsically connected with the natural world. Nature was consistently consecrated by means of sacred activities which adumbrated Sufis' lives. For instance, the Indian Sufi practice of chanting the 'beautiful names of Allah'. (*asma-ul-husna*) mediates their engagement with the non-human world. Wherever north Indian Sufis go they seem to recite prayers, mystical chants or tell sacred stories. Thus, Sufis' journeys within spiritual spaces are measured according to the cycles of sacred words and poetic narratives. In this way, a Sufi's mystical words empower the sacred landscape. In Said's words "the consecration of the human" means that human activity is contoured to live harmoniously with the Other.[54]

The vision of Ibn 'Arabi offers a relevant inroad for realising "the consecration of the human." In his philosophy *wahdat-ul-wujud* all creation manifests unity. All universal systems are inter-related and work towards maintaining singularity. Humankind (*insan*) is also ultimately one community expressed in plurality. The fulfillment of human existence lies in participating in the self disclosure of existence as a unified reality. As Peter Young puts it, "So, with this conjecture of the unity of existence, informed by knowledge, we live and it is our prayer, and the order itself it is knowledge, the knowledge of certainty."[55]

Ibn 'Arabi's vision of the disclosure of Being in the world is characterised by the movement towards globalisation in various areas. Firstly, the formation of the United Nation and the Universal Charter of Human Rights, reflects a conjoined effort between nations to understand humankind as a single entity. Unsurprisingly, the need to create the United Nations was prompted by the megadeaths of world war and the Jewish holocaust, and the concomitant ideologies which had renounced the humanity of others. On this note, George Mombiot's hope for a world government of the people corresponds with the medieval Sufi poet Attar

of Nishapur's famed work called *Parliament of the Birds* (*Mantiq al-Tayr*) in which a congregation of birds search for ultimate realisation.

A parallel phenomenon has been the exponentialise rise of technology which has engendered new organising principles. For instance, the advent of the internet and global communication networks has catapulted human consciousness. For the first time in human history human consciousness has been able to venture into space via space rockets and satellites. In the latter, human consciousness has been transformed into a "Noosphere" enveloping the earth in an infinitesimal communication matrix. Here, the symbiosis of silicone based cyber machines and biologically based consciousness are extending ontological boundaries. In Ibn Arabi's thought, the predominating technologies of our time are none other than the "Self disclosure of Being" in its desire to be known.[56]

There is little doubt that globalisation has expedited the appeal of Sufism in the West in a way in which orthodox Islam has not. A striking example is the popularity of Jalaluddin Rumi's poetry, especially in the United States where it has attracted a list of luminaries from the journalist Bill Moyers, Martin Sheen and Madonna.[57] As Ernst claims, Rumi has become a modern day doyen for rethinking identity in a non-dogmatic manner.[58]

From an ethnomusicological viewpoint, Sufi music has become widespread due mainly to the efforts of musicians such as the Pakistani qawwali exponent Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and the Senegalese Yossou N'Dour.[59] These and other artists have created various fusion styles, combining traditional Sufi lyrics with pop dance music. Sufi's ecumenical message has been exported by the Pakistani-American group Junoon whose music has been informed by the Sufi poet Bulle Shah as "a message of liberation" to "youth worldwide."[60]

The introduction of modern printing technology, as well as, generations of dedicated Islamic scholars has made it possible to access and disseminate the works of many Sufi masters including Ibn 'Arabi, Jalalludin Rumi, Sa'di of Shiraz, Hafiz, Amir Khosrau Dehlavi, Hakim

Sanai, Shabistari, and Attar of Nishapur. The print and audio propagation of "cultural products associated with Sufism" exemplify changes in some Muslim societies in publishing esoteric Sufi knowledge.[61] However, the spread of Sufi thought in the West and in some Muslim societies has provided different functions. While in "Muslim countries Sufi publications functioned as apologetics, to keep in touch with distant followers, and as acts of piety, Sufi material in Europe and America has joined the shelf of New Age teachings, in a veritable marketplace of spirituality."[62]

At present, relations between the West and Islam are posited on two distinct ideological approaches. The first approach is the retreat to traditional values which has increased polarisation and the appeal for fundamentalisms.[63] The global spread of Wahabism is an example how globalisation has assisted in the spread of a local ideology to a legitimate player in the conversion stakes. While the majority of Muslim societies are dissuaded by Wahabism's puritanism, it is having widespread appeal to some Muslims who have become disillusioned by the failure of secularism. The reversion of European and Middle-Eastern Muslim youth to Wahabist strains of Islam is proving tenuous to moderate Muslims who preach the ecumenical teaching of the *Qur'an*. For the latter, their hope is to ensure that Muslims are treated in a non-discriminatory fashion in their host countries.

Like Huntington, influential thinkers like Daniel Pipes posit a real confrontation between "Judeo-Christian civilisation and militant Islam",[64] Daniel Pipes, 'The Muslims are Coming! The Muslims are Coming!' *National Review*, November 19, 1990. while claiming the looming threat of fundamentalist Islam. For Pipes, the West's response to Islamist fundamentalism is learning how to contain it, without specifying how. The problem here lies in Pipes' analogy between militant Islam and Soviet communism which is tenuous to say the least.[65] Eikelman's rebuff is relevant here as he ensures that the West's overt attention to Islamism distorts the immense social transformation that is taking place in the Muslim world.[66] One's perusal of the Muslim world will notice distinct differences in how Islam is practiced, from the Wahabist model of the Saudi Arabs to the Sufi inspired models found in South Asia and South-East Asia.

This intellectual angst is further provoked by the apparent fixation with Muslim procreative prowess which is viewed as a problem especially for Western societies with low birth rates. Here Pipes cites that the natural increase in birthrates in Muslim countries is 2.8 percent while in developed countries it is only 0.3 percent.[67] To put in another way there are "6 children born per Muslim women" to "1.7 children born per woman" in the developed world.[68]

Putting birth rates and civilisational clashes aside, the fact remains that from its inception Islam has been intertwined with the West, religiously, politically and intellectually.[69] The cross-cultural dialogue between the two has shaped both Judeo-Christian and Muslim societies for over a thousand years. In various periods and places (i.e. pre 12th century Moorish kingdom in Spain, early Ottoman era) there was a real intellectual and spiritual collaboration between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Moorish Spain's intellectual liberalism promoted an array of scientific and philosophic ideas which later influenced the European renaissance. On this theme, Vlahos points out that the initial period of the Ottoman state (14th-15th centuries) saw the emergence of an Islamo-Christian hybrid civilisation.[70] The Ottoman cultural melange becomes clearer when one learns that of the four men who founded the Ottoman state, "two of them were Greek and Catalan Christians", while "five of the six initial Ottoman rulers had Greek mothers", including "Mehmet II, conqueror of Constantinople, who "was almost wholly Greek by blood."[71] In the new Ottoman state,

Christianity and Islam were often preached as one religion. For example, in the early 15th century, the Brklce Mustafa movement stressed fraternization between Muslims and Christians supported by a mystic love of God, in which all differences of religion were overlooked in an attempt actually to unite two faiths as one.[72]

The Sufi undertones of the Brklce Mustafa movement indicate the Ottoman intent to become a cosmopolitan force in Eastern Europe at a time when Western Europe was still reeling from the ravages of the Great Plague.

The second ideological approach is the embracing of "universal tendencies" as espoused by both Sufism and globalisation[73] The promulgation of xenophobia post September 11 on various national and political fronts necessitates a re-evaluation of modernity. The western legacy of dividing religion and state will be supplanted according to Martin E. Marty to a "religio-secular world".[74] This is apparent in the genesis of 'democratic' Iraq and neighbouring Iran. However, it is in the emergence of a global culture which is compromising, inclusive and moderate that will eventually lead to the development of other synthesisations and new kinds of self disclosure. As Eikelman tells us, mass communication and mass education facilitate new modes of awareness which inform ways in which Western and Muslim values can conjoin.[75] Global networks have "multiplied the possibilities for dissolving previous barriers", and "opening new grounds for interaction and mutual recognition."[76] In this 'global renaissance' societies will be able to invest their energies to solving growing global problems with a singularity of purpose.

Endnotes

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[55] Peter Young, 'Ibn 'Arabi: Towards a Universal Point of View', Delivered at the MIAS Symposium Oxford, 1999, p.8. <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/pyoung.html>

[56] This passage was taken from an unpublished paper entitled 'Reinventing Nature: Thomas Berry's "New Story" as Universal *Communitas*', February 2006, p.13. See also *Ibn 'Arabi and Modern Thought. Extract for chapter 3: Ibn 'Arabi and the era.' <http://www.ibn-arabi.com/modernextract.htm>   The guiding thought of Ibn 'Arabi is contained in the sacred prophetic tradition of Islam which states: "I was a hidden treasure and I wanted to be known, so I created the world, so that all things could live in Me, and I could live in all things."*

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[59] ibid.

[60] ibid.

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[63] Bryan Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism, and Globalism*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, pp.77-114. < www.danielpipes.org/article/198>

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[67] Daniel Pipes, 'The Muslims are Coming! The Muslims are Coming!'

[68] ibid.

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