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Panelists: Wafa Sultan (WS), Ibrahim al-Khouly (IK)

FQ: Greetings to our esteemed viewers. What is this blatant official Western hypocrisy? How come they imprisoned historian David Irving yesterday for three years merely for doubting the number killed during the Holocaust while they consider the actions of the Danish newspaper desecrating the holiest of Islamic sanctities [as things done] in the name of freedom of expression? One person asks: can there remain the slightest bit of doubt we are facing a clash of civilizations forced on us by the arrogant ruling regimes of the West? Haven't Western newspapers published the Danish outrages and confirmed the West's official position vis-a-vis Muslims and Islam?

Another person adds: who coined the term "Clash of Civilizations"? Was it Muslims originally or the American thinker Samuel Huntington, theorist, of neo-imperialism, which is now termed globalization? Isn't the one who initiates the aggressor? Are the calls for dialogue with the West made on behalf of Arab leaders not a form of deceit? Isn't this a new Crusade by which the Western world leaders aim to involve the followers of the Abrahamic religions in religious conflicts in order to take over and rule? Was Huntington's theory nothing except a marketing tool manufactured to eliminate the Eastern heritage? Didn't France at one point object to Turkey joining the European Union on the grounds that it was a Christian club?

On the other hand, why should Western thinkers be accused of creating the Clash of Civilizations? Wasn't Moroccan thinker Al-Mahdi al-Manjra the first to speak of a Clash of Civilizations, preceding Huntington by three years?

Why has the conflict been limited to the West and Islam? Didn't Huntington speak of a conflict even with Chinese civilization? Wasn't the term "Clash of Civilizations" itself limited to exchanges between intellectuals in newspaper pages until Bin Laden decided to destroy the Twin Towers and transform the term into reality? Isn't it a conflict between the contemporary understanding of religion as existing within the context of a democratic system and the totalitarian understanding of religion as represented by political Islam? Another person adds: who, besides Al-Qaida, has been inflaming the issue?

All of these questions I will address to our guests today, Dr. Ibrahim al-Khouly, lecturer at Al-Azhar University, and via-satellite link, the writer and researcher Dr. Wafa Sultan. We begin the discussion after the break.

(Commercial break)

The Clash of Civilizations and the Clash of Religions

FQ: Welcome once again, we are live on Opposite Direction.

Dr. Wafa Sultan in Los Angeles. To start, in the light of recent events, in the light of the commotion being made in Europe today regarding Islam, it is the Clash of Civilizations that Huntington predicted, it is the Crusade that was declared by George Bush Jr. following September 11 and in which several countries are participating in various ways, dividing roles between them, with some invading countries destroying, killing and looting Afghanistan and Iraq for example, while others are suppressing the freedoms of Muslim minorities in the West and preventing them from practicing religious rites and beliefs; others destabilize our countries and create justifications for intervention in our affairs in preparation for our destruction and fragmentation; others like Denmark mock Islam and its prophet and so on.

I have a poll that confirms this state of affairs, in which 81% state that the world is heading for a clash of civilizations while 19% disagree. How do you respond?

WS: Greetings, Dr. Faisal.

FQ: Welcome.

WS: I thank you, and thank the Al-Jazeera staff and all those viewing us. I hope that we all listen with care and benefit from this encounter. Before I answer I would like to ask a question: what is religion? What is civilization? And can they intersect?

Religion is a collection of values, principles and ideals that govern the relationship between man and a higher power in which a man believes, and the boundaries of this relationship should not be crossed. Civilization, on the other hand, is a superior level of social refinement which results from dynamic interaction between free thought and honest accomplishment in work or effort. When one reaches this level of development one lives in peace, respect and is in turn more able to create and accomplish.

Islam is not a civilization, Christianity is not a civilization, Judaism is not a civilization. In short, religion is not civilization. Civilization is much more comprehensive and all encompassing than religion; civilization includes religion existing under the umbrella of civilization, it is a part of a whole. What we see unfolding on the international scene is not a clash of religions or civilizations. It is a clash of two contradicting opposites, it is a clash of eras, between a mentality that belongs in the Middle Ages and that which belongs in the 21st century. It is a clash between civilization and backwardness, chaos and rationality, a conflict between freedom and oppression, democracy and dictatorship, human rights on the one hand and the violation of these rights on the other, between those who treat women like animals and those who treat them like human beings. What we are witnessing is not a clash of civilizations.

Civilizations do not clash, they compete. Competition sheds light on points of reference for comparison better than conflict. The more human beings develop the more they find commonality, while the more they drift apart in terms of their refinement the more they clash. The difference between levels of development is the reason for the conflict.

FQ: Can your message be summarized in one sentence? Do we understand from your words that what is happening now is a clash between civilization in the form of the West, and backwardness and ignorance in the form of the Muslims?

WS: Yes that is what I mean.

IK: In the name of God the most Beneficent the most Merciful.

At the start, I state that no one has the right to define or delineate concepts that no individual can determine or apply. What is your understanding of civilization? What {is the} definition of civilization? We must begin by defining terms and concepts. What is civilization? What is progress? What are the criteria? All progress can be considered to be human progress and all progress can with the backwardness of humanity in every meaning of the word?

We begin first by determining: what is civilization? You seem to conflate civilization with culture. Civilization is the physical aspect, what you are speaking of now is urbanized society {{word??}} based on science and the application of science through advanced technology, the combating and controlling of nature for the service of man, the animal, and not man, the human being. This must be very clear from the start and civilizations within this narrow definition are the fruit of the cumulative outcome of science and technological effort. Civilizations, when defined thus, are neutral.

Indian civilization does not oppose Chinese civilization, Japanese civilization does not oppose American civilization. The situation is transformed into conflict by culture. Civilization's production is utilized in this war and conflict, and this is what America is doing today. Which concept should be laid out first? Native Americans are more advanced than the white Americans who exterminated them. Native Americans had a culture [level] that still has not been reached by advanced (according to you) white Americans. They exterminated an entire people, humiliated the Africans, and enslaved them. Is that what you call civilization? Is that the human criterion for development?

Civilization, including its cultural dimension, is ultimately progress in mankind's humanity, in mankind's values, in mankind's conscience, in mankind's manner of dealing with others. Here we must ask a question: who facilitated the conflict and indeed initiated it, is it the Muslims? He lies who claims that Muslims started it, as Muslims now are in a defensive position fighting off an aggressor. Our dialogue with the West is now, unfortunately because we do not have comparable physical power for expulsion, the dialogue of a lamb and a wolf, but we Muslims will never be lambs however powerful our enemy because we are armed with spiritual power great enough to disarm, defeat and render impotent our adversary.

We are not backward, who's said to you that that the nation, that Muslims, are backward? They are backward when it comes to the materialistic and technological human condition but

who said that such are the criteria for humanity? Muslims are more advanced on a human level in terms of the values and principles they endorse. I say this because the issue in question is not one that involves the West and Islam but one that involves all mankind. We have to put things in perspective and identify concepts in the way they should be identified without resorting to rhetoric, claims based on generalizations, and unfounded talk, this parrot-like repetition.

FQ: Right. Doctor, you've been listening, please proceed.

WS: I understood from what was said that civilization according to the Professor is man

IK: (Interrupting) Not true.

WS: (Continuing) A simple comparison between...

IK: I did not say that...

WS: Islamic societies...

IK: That is not what I said...

WS: He said...

FQ: One minute, proceed (to WS).

WS: Then...

IK: No no, do not put words in my mouth...

FQ: OK, he did not say that...

WS: Then what is civilization...

FQ: Proceed.

IK: So that my ideas my ideas are not sabotaged.

FQ: Yes.

IK: When others listen...

FQ: Proceed (to WS).

WS: The first thing that you said was that Muslims are not backward on a human level. If that is the case, how do you want me to understand your definition of civilization when you say that Muslims are not backward on a human level? What do you mean by that phrase?

IK: I said that Muslims are backward in the fields of material advancement and in material terms but civilization and humanity have different yardsticks.

FQ: Fine. Doctor, go ahead it is your turn, please move along so we do not spend too much time defining civilization, let's delve into the subject...

IK: No this is important, a starting point from which to depart...

FQ: Good, we departed from it.

Doctor, now let's get started: what the world is witnessing these days is a clash of civilizations and the simple question is who let this idea loose? Wasn't it Samuel Huntington and not Bin Laden, as is said? I would like to begin if you please.

WS: Muslims are the ones who started with this concept.

The Muslims, they began the clash of civilizations when Islam's prophet said "I was commanded to fight until they believe in God and his prophet". When Muslims divided people into Muslims and non-Muslims, and called for fighting others until those others believed in what they believed in, they sparked off this conflict, this war. And they must cease this war. They must revise their Islamic books and academic curricula, filled as they are with calls to denounce others as infidels, and to fight infidels. That is what I wanted to say.

FQ: Doctor? (To IK)

IK: From whence does this conflict arise? From socialization, upbringing and culture, and what I say here is specific and clear. The Islam that you speak about now, and falsely, and unfoundedly blame, is that which taught mankind humaneness, the principles of co-existence, tolerance, and the acceptance of others. "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another". Islam is the agent that removed all reason for conflict or racism, supremacism, prejudice and all which divides man, as a result of "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female". May peace be upon the Prophet...

FQ: May peace be upon him.

IK: About whom you (Dr. Sultan) are speaking while having no idea what you are talking about.

Peace be upon him, he said at his last pilgrimage, "O people, your father is one, your God is one, you are of Adam and Adam was of dust. No Arab is better than a non-Arab except through piety." The ones whom the prophet was talking about when he said "I was commanded to fight" were those unbelievers of the Arabian Peninsula, because it is not acceptable that Islam should have allied with, or made peace with, polytheism. He wanted to purify the Arabian Peninsula so that it would be safe for Islam. Muslims did not attack those outside the Arabian Peninsula, indeed the governing principle was "no compulsion in religion". There is no compulsion in religion, whoever wishes to believe he may do so and who wishes to apostasize may do so. That is the position of Islam.

Islam taught the world respect for other people's doctrines and acknowledging their rights that their doctrines be respected without offering offense or ostracism. The Lord said, "And do not curse those who call on other than God, lest they blaspheme and curse God, out of ignorance. We have adorned the works of every group in their eyes ...". That is how the Qur'an describes the governing principle: respect the idolatry of idol worshippers, even those who worship trees, cows, donkeys. I don't transgress on any creed.

FQ: Good. Doctor, you heard what's been said.

IK: Can there be any superior form of tolerance?

FQ: Very good. Doctor (to WS) you've listened, please proceed.

WS: He claims he doesn't insult others' doctrines. What civilized values in this world allow him to give people names and appellations they have not chosen for themselves? In one place calling them People of the Book, in another non-Muslims under the protection of Muslims (*ahl al-dhimma*), in another comparing them to monkeys and pigs, in another calling them Nazarenes or those who have incurred God's wrath or those who have lost the path. Now you come here to claim that your doctrine has commanded you not to insult other people's religions? What do you explain to your child when you tell him to go "fight those who do not believe in God or his prophet", through to the verse's completion: "until they pay *jizya* (a poll tax for non-Muslims) in state of subjection."

IK: If you don't know the verse, don't recite it...

WS: How do you explain this verse to your child or grandchild?

IK: Produce a copy of the Qur'an, and read the verse so that you may understand it...

WS: Read me this verse and explain it and tell me how to explain it?

IK: You read it...

WS: Explain this...

IK: You bear responsibility for what you say, or you are an ignorant person speaking out of ignorance...

WS: Why? It isn't necessary.

IK: Take out your copy of the Qur'an and read it so that you may understand it...

WS: It's not necessary...

IK: "Fight those who do not believe"...

WS: I read more than you read, and understand more than you understand.

IK: "Nor do they prohibit what God and his Apostle have. Fight those who do not believe in God, nor in the latter day, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection." ... understand first before you speak

WS: If you have...

FS: One minute. Please proceed (to WS).

WS: If you have any justification for going to war with them, do you have any justification for them to pay a tax (*jizya*) in a state of subjection?

IK: Do you now understand? You mentioned ... you conflated issues, when Islam and Muslims call their non-Muslim brothers living amongst them protected non-Muslims...

WS: You, sir, claim that you...

IK: What is your understanding of the concept of protection of non-Muslims (*dhimma*)? It means that they are under the protection and guardianship of God and his Prophet. Muslims honor contracts with them and honor the things they reverence, safeguard their dignity, blood and wealth with along with all their objects of reverence, and their rights to freely express and practice their religion.

WS: Why do you want them to pay a tax in a state of subjection and submission?

IK: And to practice their rites, sharing the rights and duties of Muslims.

WS: Fine, you are correct (to IK).

IK: On the issue of the Books and other books, you confuse books of [Karl] Marx with the Torah and the Bible and the Qur'an. How many books came down to Moses? A thousand. How many came down to Jesus? A thousand books.

WS: You, sir, should not call others by names they haven't chosen...

IK: I assume that when you wrote a book you listed it with these books. What goal is this for humanity?

WS: You are the People of the Book.

IK: In all its heritage and values.

WS: You have become a captive of the Book; you are the ones who have failed to rise with your humanity beyond the mentality of the Middle Ages, are they People of the Book? They are not People of the Book, all the books that are now in your hands are their books with the exception of Abu Hurayrah [ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Sakhr Al-Azdi (d. 678), also Abu Hurayrah, is the narrator of Hadith most quoted by Sunni Muslims.]

IK: Like what?

WS: What remains of your books?

IK: Like what? Which books of theirs are...

WS: What remains in...

IK: That is not the heritage of Muslims? What are their books?

We educated them and extracted them from the Dark Ages, and you should become aware that it was during the Middle Ages and during one era in particular that the Pope pronounced a curse upon Ibn Rushd and cursed all who read his philosophies and made it incumbent on all priests and Christians to curse him. That is the Western civilization that you and others boast of as the civilization of freedom and freedom of speech and so forth.

The curse on Ibn Rushd and all who read him became part of religious worship. What happened ultimately was that Ibn Rushd, the Muslim philosopher, became the pioneer of the European renaissance and academic positions dedicated to studying his philosophy were established in European universities. If you have heard anything of the history of philosophy or read it -- are you familiar with Latin Rushdism? Have you heard of it? That is what enlightened Europe; a Europe that was to drown in darkness had it not been for the Muslims in Andalusia [Spain] and you know very well who was the bigoted party that exterminated the other when it was able to.

Was there even one Muslim left in Andalusia [Spain] after Ferdinand and Isabella imposed their control? What did they do? At first, they gave them [Muslims] a choice between conversion to Christianity and lifting the protection of the state (*tahdeer*) and [then] between conversion to Christianity or death; so Muslims in Andalusia [Spain] were totally exterminated, suffering the same fate as the Native Americans at the hands of white Americans.

Extremism and the Struggle to Dominate

FQ: Fine. So that we do not stray off topic, in regard to the Clash of Civilizations do you believe that history is repeating itself? And in one sentence please so that I may move on to Doctor Sultan.

IK: First of all, the clash of religious doctrine across the ages has never ceased and will never do so and it is not a question of who initiated it. Our God says "And had God not repelled some people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted" and the purpose of that conflict is to struggle healthily against all corruption on earth and its prevention...

FQ: And of those who initiate this corruption?

IK: Those that initiate this corruption are the aggressors, and the one aggressed upon has the right to defend with all their capabilities.

FQ: Very good. Doctor (to WS) please proceed.

WS: Extremism is a social illness that has plagued all mankind in every time and place, but when extremism becomes an epidemic all humanity must come together in an effort to obliterate it. Extremism consumes the societies that embrace it more than it damages other societies. A simple examination and comparison of Islamic societies and other societies allows one to see the extent of extremism in these [Islamic] societies. The deterioration on a human level that we see in Muslim societies is a clear indication that extremism is leading

those societies to a precipice. The state of affairs in Western societies yields the impression that extremism has failed to play a significant role in those societies.

IK: Don't you think...?

FQ: One minute.

WS: Doctor Ibrahim reads what he wants to read, and turns a blind eye to what he does not want to see. How was his religion spread? By the sword and by the invasion of countries, yet he claims it was propagated through justice and respect of the rights of others? When Doctor Ibrahim al-Khouly raises his megaphone at the door of a church and bellows, liars are those who say that "God is Jesus the son of Mary", is he respecting others' beliefs? Does denouncing people following their own creed as liars mean respect for those creeds? I want an answer to that question...

IK: First of all, one must not project the actions of one Muslim upon Islam nor those of one Christian upon Christianity.

There are TV channels in America that you are familiar with that do not have any mission apart from targeting Islam, insulting Islam and offending all Islam's sanctities. This to you is not aggression against religion or the freedoms and sanctities of others? Besides, what else can extremism mean when you have Bush, the biggest extremist and terrorist in history? A terrorist that does not hesitate to use a stick or a rifle or even the planes that struck the two towers. He used everything at his disposal within the American nuclear arsenal in the Gulf War and exterminated an entire nation and removed it from history.

What fault did Afghanistan commit to justify its destruction? Aren't you conscious of any duplicity or hypocrisy? Islam, during the Cold War when Afghans were in a war with the Soviet Union, Islam was the West's ally, Islam was a magnificent humanitarian religion of values. When the game was over and the Soviet Union had fallen, Islam exited the conflict.

What had been happening between the West and the Soviet Union? An ideological, cultural, doctrinal confrontation. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the ugly face of the West was exposed in its stark reality. Thatcher and others have said in their forums, the historical enemy of the West, Communism, has ended and the eternal enemy of the West, Islam, has risen. Did we impose this conflict? Did we initiate it? Who said we are responsible for this incendiary game?

The West and Bush are now using the War on Terror as a cover; it is a war on Islam and he himself has said so clearly, there is no need for speculation. Let it be a Crusade, and he is leading a Crusade and you know that behind all of this stands extremist Western Zionist Christianity, which controls America's resources and the decision-making powers which formulate American policies and control everything.

You know this very well, so who set off the conflict and who started it? Who is the aggressor and who is the victim? Are you asking us to allow ourselves to be attacked in our homes? Afghanistan is under occupation, Iraq is under occupation, the Gulf is under occupation, Muslim wealth is in a firm American grip. In addition, the raging Zionist state: who created it? Who has extended the resources necessary for its survival? Who guarantees its superiority over all Arabs combined? Who protects it from international law and prevents the application of that law where it is concerned? Who allows it to be the sole owner of nuclear weapons in the entire region?

When Iran attempts to initiate a peaceful nuclear program there is implacable outrage. I want to inform you that there are three prohibitions Muslims cannot breach. The first is the rise of a potent power in Muslim lands, this is forbidden and the strike against the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981 is evidence of this. The attack against the Iranian nuclear program and the prevention of Iran and Arabs and Muslims from constructing a defensive force equal to that of the Jews in Palestine, this is all part of the same principle.

FQ: Fine.

IK: [The above prohibition is] in addition to the barring of any regime governing in the name of Islam in any Islamic country and the marketing of the secularism that so many are peddling -- and I do not know if you are one of them or not -- a secularism that aims to banish Islam from life as Islam is not a relationship between man and God as you hold. If you are Christian then

that is your understanding of religion, but if you are Muslim then your understanding is mistaken.

FQ: Fine.

IK: The third goal is to prevent the unity of Muslims under any umbrella. In this day and age when the world is heading towards unity and integration, Europe is uniting, the states of America are united, South America is uniting, South Asia is uniting, Muslims and Arabs are forbidden from integrating with the aim of continuing global divisions which turn us into scattered pieces that are easy to chew and swallow, as is happening in our day and age.

FQ: Doctor (to W.S) You heard what was said, I don't suppose you have a reply to this when it comes to the clash of civilization. He presented you with all these past and present examples, who is who is wrestling with whom? Who is imposing this conflict? This struggle to dominate and control? Please respond if you have a response.

WS: I said, and I repeat, that Muslims are the ones who initiated this conflict.

IK: Not true.

WS: And they must stop this conflict and review those teachings that call for the rejection of the other, the murder of the other. He wants to read from his teachings what suits his opinion while turning a blind eye to other teachings that divide the world into two. They began this conflict and they must change their teachings in order to end it. I am not a Christian, nor a Muslim, nor a Jew; I am a secular human being and I do not believe in the supernatural.

IK: An atheist?

WS: But I respect the right of others to believe.

IK: You mean an atheist?

WS: You can say what you wish.

IK: I am asking you.

WS: I am a secular individual and do not believe in the supernatural.

IK: I am asking you in order to deal with you using your own system of logic, if you are an atheist then there is no censuring you if you curse Islam, Islam's prophet and Islam's Qur'an.

WS: This is a personal matter that does not concern you.

IK: One minute. Please proceed (to WS).

WS: I am not defending my opinion from a Christian perspective; I want to make this very clear: I am not Christian, I do not believe in any religion. I am a secular human being and do not believe in the supernatural, but I respect the right of all to believe in it. My brother, believe, if you wish, in a stone but do not dare strike me with it. You are free to worship what you wish but others beliefs do not concern you, whether they believe that Jesus is God the son of Mary or that the devil is God the son of Mary, leave people to their creeds. Muslims must be made aware of this truth and must take another look at this truth, people respect your creed when you respect theirs. To stigmatize them and insult them as deceived and lost, as you do, you don't have that right; you should know your boundaries and not overstep them.

FQ: Fine, but I mean let's return.

IK: You are the one who should not be overstepping your boundaries...

Global Conflict and Western Designs

FQ: One moment. [Back to] the question on the table. Doctor [to IK], there is a point to be made: it is true that there exists a conflict or the term clash of civilizations that Huntington coined, but the term had remained confined to intellectual exchanges among intellectuals in the pages of newspapers and magazines until Bin Ladin targeted the Twin Towers, then the clash became a reality; that is what is said: how do you respond?

IK: In the beginning so that we do not stray...

FQ: What the West is doing now -- just a moment -- they say that what the West is doing now, all its actions against Islam is the natural result from that starting point.

IK: Were the towers destroyed in 1980?

FQ: No.

IK: Was there an attack launched on the United States?

FQ: No.

IK: Good. Pope John Paul II visited Africa three times in less than five years between 1980 and 1985 and mobilized with him nine thousand missionaries whom he unleashed on Africa. American newspapers declared before any others that the purpose of the Pope's visits and this heightened activity in Africa was to stem the Islamic tide in Africa. We said at the time that the call to religion is somehow part of...

FQ: In brief, yes.

IK: The heavens. His proper field, if it were not an undercover struggle between one religion and the other, his proper work is with pagans and those who have no religion. Here the struggle particularly targeted Islam, and there is also another issue that should not be ignored

FQ: In brief, yes.

IK: Being very brief, when I see a church or a university, the Biblical university in America specializes in conversion to Christianity, I have statistics in front of me detailing its budgets and its institutions, statistics that are hard to believe, missionary schools where millions of students enroll, armies of trained missionaries, unlimited funds, all of this for what purpose? Converting Muslims to Christianity first and foremost.

Who has been behind the war in southern Sudan for more than twenty years? The World Council of Churches, it is financing Garang [Leader of the southern Sudanese SPLA] and this is well known. And after all of this it is claimed that there is no war on Islam and no new Crusade? The man said it in all honesty even as nothing else he says is to be believed, Bush said: let it be a Crusade.

FQ: Good. Doctor (to W.S) you heard what's been said.

IK: We should raise our hands and cheer?

FQ: Doctor (to WS). I mean, it seems that, what can you say, I just...

WS: Doctor Ibrahim...

FQ: Please just allow me to ask you a simple question.

IK: Reply to my words and not to me.

FQ: One moment. There are those who say that what is happening is in fact not in any way shape or form a clash of civilizations, that it is not Islam versus Christianity but the West's war

or a war for dominance or control. They say that Islam would not have been the enemy necessarily, were it not for the riches, raw materials, specifically oil, the markets available in Muslim countries. Meaning that it should become clear that Muslims and Christians in the West are the victims.

The appetite of those hungry for power, dominance and control, the manipulation of those that impose globalization and so forth, and what we have witnessed in recent times are an integral part of this campaign against the region. How do you reply to this so we can simplify matters?

WS: What we see is not a conflict between the West and Islam, it is a conflict between Islam on the one hand and the rest of the world on the other, since Islam has divided the world into two parts, a Muslim one and a non-Muslim one. Dr. Ibrahim speaks of Christian missionary campaigns in Arab and African countries, why doesn't he tell us what happens if a Bible is found in the pocket of a Christian man in Saudi Arabia? What happens to him?

Don't Muslims practice their own beliefs in Western countries? Don't they spread their religion in Western countries freely? What will you do to a Western man preaching his religion in your country? Why don't you treat people in the same way you would like them to treat you?

IK: Are you finished?

WS: I want an answer.

IK: First of all Saudi Arabia is not an Islamic model that should be followed in its orientations and general practices. It is the first country that I condemn by Islamic standards.

FQ: How so? Its flag raises the slogan God is Great.

IK: Yes, it can raise whatever it wants...

FQ: How?

IK: These practices have nothing to do with Islam, as we are talking about Islam, Islam...

FQ: You mean Islam is unconnected with Saudi Arabia or that Saudi Arabia is unconnected with Islam?

IK: I am not saying that Saudi Arabia is unconnected with Islam, there is a perversion in the application of Islam, a great perversion and we have said so a million times and others have said it: Islam cannot be judged based on the behavior of Muslims just as Christianity cannot be judged based on the behavior of Christians. You say that Islam divided people into Muslims and non-Muslims, do Christians claim that the world is all Christian in its entirety, or are there Christians and non-Christians?

It is the same thing and this is natural and how things are differentiated, do you want man to be woman and woman man and the earth the sky and the sky the earth; do we return ancient sophistry where we do not know what we are saying? Confusing concepts and facts and blurring all matters? This is not logic, this is not logic nor is it scientific, this is nonsense ... this is nonsense.

Freedom of Expression and Violation of Sanctities

FQ: So Doctor [to WS], so we can put things in perspective, you know, I mean you talk of freedom and democracy and human rights, do you know that yesterday English historian David Irving was sentenced to three years in prison merely for expressing doubts over the number of those killed in the Holocaust? How do you support this while people in the West boast that a violation of the most sacred Islamic principles is a form of freedom of expression? I ask you, is there any hypocrisy greater than that hypocrisy? This is a question that I have been hearing on many occasions, how do you respond? Do you accept this as a secularist and an advocate of a freedom that unifies all civilizations?

WS: Doctor Faisal...

FQ: Please proceed, yes.

WS: Respect from others...

FQ: Proceed.

WS: Respect from others is a right you earn through your own efforts, it is not something that is bestowed upon you. The Jews emerged from a tragedy and forced the world to respect them not through terrorism, but through their science and not their screams. Humanity owes most of the discoveries and science of the 19th and 20th century to Jewish scientists. Fifteen million scattered in the Diaspora managed to regroup and attained their rights through work and science. We have not seen one Jew blow himself up in a German restaurant, we have not seen one Jew destroy a church, we have not seen one Jew object to anything by murdering people.

Muslims reduced three statues of Buddha to dust; we did not see one Buddhist burn a mosque or kill a Muslim or burn a church or an embassy. Muslims alone defend their religion by burning churches, murdering people, and tearing down embassies. Such a method will not yield any results. Muslims must ask themselves: what can they offer mankind before they ask mankind to respect them? What the Danish artist did may have been unacceptable because transgressing sanctities is unacceptable, but freedom of expression and criticism are the holiest of sanctities. The Danish artist did not express any religious authority or political authority but merely expressed his own thoughts. A Muslim finds it hard to grasp this fact because Islam as a state and a religion does not allow him to overstep the boundaries of the religion, and in this state of things, an individual's opinion is the majority's opinion and thus he cannot soar in his thoughts beyond the limits circumscribed by the majority.

In the West, the situation is entirely different. An individual has the right to express his own opinion completely apart from the opinions of religious and political authorities. This is a point that Muslims find difficult to understand. When they burn an embassy, they are not taking revenge on an artist but on a state that the artist does not represent; still they are unable to catch on to this fact because they do not enjoy that freedom.

FQ: Doctor (to IK) the last word in brief, half a minute.

IK: Those you are speaking about do not have the correct grasp of Islam. When a non-Muslim insults Islam and Islam's prophet this doesn't disturb a hair on our heads, we excuse him if he is ignorant, and we accept the situation if he is a resentful extremist because he is not to be judged by our standards or our criteria. You demand that all Muslims become secularists in order to become progressive like you. We say that Islam is not for sale at auction.

What you are saying is clarified by the logic of the Qur'an: "Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion. Our religion is a religion of truth and when it discusses the beliefs of non-Muslims in all respect followers of the Book come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but God and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah. Exceed not the limits in your religion (by believing in something) other than the truth" That is the logic of the Qur'an when it discusses other religions and judges them in wisdom and lack of transgression in language or style or phrase, no feelings are hurt, no emotions are hurt.

FQ: Who is civilized and who is not civilized, in brief?

IK: The civilized party is the one that commits itself to human values and develops within that context...

FQ: And in the West they are not committed to them?

IK: There is no ... What civilized man [allows] homosexuality, homosexual marriage, loss of bloodline? Most of those who rule the West are bastards and illegitimate children, does she want that fate for us?

FQ: Thank you very much.

IK: That is unacceptable.

FQ: Do you believe that the world is heading for a Clash of Civilizations? More than three ...
time is up...

IK: Muslims will protect the world from the Clash of Civilizations, they are the ones who will
protect the world now. Their religion commands them to do so.

FQ: Do you believe that the world is heading for a Clash of Civilizations, [Our poll:] 81.5% Yes,
18.5% No. More than three thousand voters, 3235.

Dear viewers, we can now only thank our guests Dr. Ibrahim al-Khouly and via satellite
link from Los Angeles Doctor Wafa Sultan, we meet next Tuesday and until then, Faisal al-
Qassem sends his best wishes. Goodbye.