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## The Principles Upon Which The Islamic Civilization Was Built: How To Employ Them In Countering Violent Extremism And Terrorism

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### Abstract

The Islamic civilization was built upon the noble religious teachings, which aimed at honoring humans, preserving their lives, and ensuring their safety and prosperity. However, the peace of our societies has been tainted by the rise in extremist ideologies and terrorism. This study analyzed the foundation and principles upon which Islamic civilization was built, highlighting five key principles, namely; seeking knowledge, universality of religion, humanity, tolerance, and equality. The reasons behind the rise in violent extremism and terrorism we see in our Muslim communities were analyzed, shedding light upon seven core reasons. The study found that there are four key players that are critical in mobilizing the principles of Islamic civilization in combatting violent extremisms and terrorism: the family, the universities, the regulatory institutions, and the media agencies. Recommendations were developed based on the role of each in promoting and instilling Islamic principles.

**Keywords:** Islamic Principles, Muslim Civilization, Violent Extremism, Terrorism, Humanity, Tolerance, Media, Youth.

### Abstrak

Peradaban Islam dibangun di atas ajaran agama yang luhur, yang bertujuan untuk memuliakan manusia, memelihara kehidupannya, serta menjamin keselamatan dan kesejahteraannya. Namun, kedamaian masyarakat kita telah dinodai oleh munculnya ideologi ekstremis dan terorisme. Kajian ini menganalisis landasan dan prinsip yang mendasari peradaban Islam dibangun dengan menyoroti lima prinsip utama, yaitu; mencari ilmu, universalitas agama, kemanusiaan, toleransi, dan kesetaraan. Alasan di balik meningkatnya ekstremisme kekerasan dan terorisme yang kami lihat di komunitas Muslim kami dianalisis, menjelaskan tujuh alasan utama. Studi ini menemukan bahwa ada empat pemain kunci yang kritis dalam memobilisasi prinsip-prinsip peradaban Islam dalam memerangi ekstremisme kekerasan dan terorisme: keluarga, universitas, lembaga regulasi, dan lembaga media. Rekomendasi dikembangkan berdasarkan peran masing-masing dalam mempromosikan dan menanamkan prinsip-prinsip Islam.

**Kata Kunci:** Prinsip Islam, Peradaban Muslim, Ekstremisme Kekerasan, Terorisme, Kemanusiaan, Toleransi, Media, Pemuda.

## Introduction

Islam is a religion that aims to elevate humanity; it's a realistic religion that is based on the unity of all humans. The entire humanity is called to establishing the human civilization upon the united roots that brought us to be, as we all were created from one soul that is described in Quran (*i.e.*, Adam and Hawwa).<sup>1</sup> A fundamental principle that a civilization is based upon is accommodating the laws of cosmic diversity and their purpose. For we have been created as nations and tribes to know each other.<sup>2</sup>

The history of Islamic civilization witnessed numerous great scholars and intellectuals from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities who were all brought up under the oneness of Islam, like Ibn Hazm, Imam Abu Hanifa, Al-Bukhari, Ibn Rush, Khawarizmi, Al-Razi, Al-Tabari, and countless more. The scholarship was never confined to Muslims alone, the Islamic civilization deployed all the knowledge and discoveries of all preceding nations such as the Romans, Greeks, and Persians, all of which were united to form an exemplary model of global human civilization. Translators were hired from various faiths and ethnicities. A classic example for it was Haneen Bin Ishaq, who was a Christian

appointed as the president of the House of Wisdom (the Grand Library) by the Abbasid ruler Al-Ma'mun, setting an example of the first prestigious university utilizing intellectual diversity to achieve creativity and innovation.

Islamic civilization was built upon intellectual and scientific contributions, stemming from the core principle of "seeking knowledge is an obligation",<sup>3</sup> a duty of each and every Muslim, regardless of the hurdles and challenges. This principle and the elevated status given to knowledge has been the driving force for Muslims to excel in numerous fields of arts and sciences. This uniting driver ensured a just and fair system that promoted peace and human rights, preserving intellectual and cultural identities, the protection of environment and natural resources. As a result, nations would help each other in preserving their heritage, which in turn would promote peace, the central element in resolving conflicts, and combatting **Violent** extremism and terrorism.<sup>4</sup>

Very little research has been done to look into the fundamentals and principles that Islamic civilization has been built on. In fact, many have misunderstood the Islamic

teachings and denied the acknowledgement of this diversity and transgressed against it, causing the widely spread of intellectual extremism which we see today. Therefore, it is very crucial to identify the reasons behind this extremism, and the tools and mechanisms that can be derived from analyzing the true religious teachings, which can be used to address this critical issue. In addition to the roles of various institutions, the family, educational, social, corporate, media, and government institutions, all of which need to work together and play their part in combatting violent extremism and terrorism and to promote peace and stability among societies.

Therefore, this study aims at highlighting the diversity and how Islamic laws and teachings preserves it and analyzing the foundation and principles upon which Islamic civilization was built with its cultural diversity. This research also highlights the reasons behind the violent extremism and terrorism and analyzing the mechanism of utilizing Islamic teachings to combat them.

## **Method**

In this study, I relied on a range of research methods. First: I used the qualitative approach and the inductive approach that relied basically on the library and databases research, And I also used the

deductive approach, which is based on tightening the inferential relationship between the origin and what derives from it, so that the results do not become contradictory to the premises, and I also adopted the critical approach. Second: Inferring the noble verses from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet peace be upon him, and I went back to the books of interpretation and the sayings of the commentators.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **1. Foundation and principles of the Islamic Civilization and its cultural diversity**

#### **1.1. Principle 1: Seeking Knowledge**

The first principle of seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim male and female, and that knowledge is a basic human right. This can be clearly seen in the Hadith in which the Prophet – pbuh- said, (Whomever concealed knowledge will be bridled with a bridle of fire on the Day of Resurrection). It makes it no surprise that Muslims sought the knowledge from the preceding civilization, hired translators and multi-linguist scholars and positioned them at the center of libraries and their management and built upon the various knowledge to expand the horizon of all fields.

As a result of this movement of knowledge transfer and Arabization, the Islamic civilization witnessed great expansion in its worldview, since it was exposed to multi-cultures and ideologies. The Muslims then gained access to disciplines, which they were in crucial need of, such as mathematics and medicine. This gave the Islamic civilization an early chance to fulfill their duties and pass on knowledge and heritage to humanity. The Muslim civilization then elevated itself to hire statuses in various industries, agricultural, industrial, tourism, and medicine, and the Arabic language was enriched with scientific terms and philosophical expressions.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2. Principle 2: Universality of Islam

The second principle is the universality of Islam. The message of the Islamic religion, its objectives and teachings are universal across time and nations. Despite being a boundless message yet no one is compelled to follow it; for there is no compulsion in religion,<sup>6</sup> because Islam is a religion that does not negate or invalidate others, but rather acknowledges the human diversity and the right of choice. It is through this diversity that Islam promotes human cooperation and exchanging benefits and knowledge, as the Quran says (Oh mankind We have created you from a single pair of a male and a female and made you nations and tribes so that you may know

each other).<sup>7</sup> A part of this universality of Islam is ensuring security to every human, and combatting all forms of suppression and transgression. The Prophet -pbuh- said (Surely whoever wrongs a treaty, belittles him, or burden him beyond his ability, or takes something from him without a good heart, for I am his opponent on the day of judgment).<sup>8</sup>

Peace and mercy are another universal teaching of Islam. This principle extends to cover not only humans but animals, plants, and the general ecosystem with all its components. Many hadiths come to support this universal mercy such as the Hadith of the Prophet -pbuh- (He who is competent amongst you to benefit his brother should do so).<sup>9</sup> This usefulness is by spreading goodness, preventing evil whether in religious or worldly matters, with the former being of a higher regards and reward.<sup>10</sup>

Examples of having this mercy on animals and plants crystalizes in the Hadith of the Prophet – pbuh- (There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him).<sup>11</sup> In addition to the many Hadiths encouraging lands to be cultivated, whereby the Prophet said (Whoever has land should cultivate it himself or give it to his (Muslim) brother

gratis)<sup>12</sup> and he -pbuh- also said (If the Final Hour comes while you have a shoot of a plant in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it).<sup>13</sup>

### 1.3. Principle 3: Humanity of Islam

Humanity in Islam is not an envisioned ideal, but rather a divine legislation, and practical reality. From which the concept of unity materializes, and loving for others what one loves for themselves. For we all are all from one, and many texts come to commend and promote the links between humans beyond ethnicity, religion, or status. This does not contradict the priorities that must be considered, such that a person is not to obey their parents if they require them to disobey Allah. Hence all our relationships are governed by religious principles and moral values.

Humans in totality, with all their differences, have been honored and elevated over other creatures, as Allah says in the Quran (We have honored the children of Adam and carried them on both land and sea. We have provided them with good things and greatly preferred them above much of our creation).<sup>14</sup> This honor is given by the Creator, and no one has the right to take it away from anyone. It is from this honor that humans have been given the shared right to benefit and utilize all

resources of land, sea, and the general universe. This right that humanity has over the universe and its resources is shared equally on every human regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or status. From which we earn the equal social, economic, intellectual, and political rights.

It is also from the humanity of Islam that each human has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and not to cause harm, be it physical or emotional, to anyone. This can be seen from the Quranic text that condemns us from causing harm to the disbelievers by cursing what they worship beside God, (And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they might abuse Allah out of ignorance).<sup>15</sup> According to the scholar of Quran Al-Qurtubi, the abuse mentioned in this verse extends beyond what they worship to include their places of worships, religious symbols, and religious practices, as abusing any of those equates to the abuse the verse mentions<sup>16</sup>.

This respect is the right of any human even after their death; the Prophet -pbuh- ordered us to remember the deceased only with goodness<sup>17</sup>. Once a funeral passed by the Prophet – pbuh- and he stood, when he was told it was a funeral of a Jewish person he responded, (Isn't it a soul?).<sup>18</sup> Just like the principle of universality, the humanity extends to our dealing with animals and plants, an example

of this was the Hadith of the Prophet -pbuh- (A woman entered the (Hell) Fire because of a cat which she had tied, neither giving it food nor setting it free to eat from the vermin of the earth),<sup>19</sup> this is the gravity of depriving an animal from food, let alone a human.

#### 1.4. Principle 4: Tolerance of Islam

Another key characteristic of Islam is that it is a religion of tolerance, flexibility, and leniency, in various aspects of worship, legislations, and general dealings., legal, and general. Not to say that there is a room for neglecting religious obligations, but rather a person gives their best and what they're able to do, but no one is required beyond that, the Quran says (Allah charges no soul except to its capacity)<sup>20</sup> and many other verses that reaffirms that no one is required beyond its ability, whether in religious or social obligations.

It is important to note that the opposite of compassion in Islam is extremism. Extremism and exaggeration in religion leads to alienation and blind fanaticism, which the Prophet- pbuh- warned us strongly from in many hadiths, (The religion (of Islam) is easy, and whoever makes the religion a rigor, it will overpower him. So, follow a middle course (in worship); if you can't do this, do something near to it and give glad tidings and seek help

(of Allah) at morn and at dusk and some part of night).<sup>21</sup>

Our Prophet -pbuh- has taken tolerance as a way of life as long as it is not a sin or a contradiction to Allah's commands. It was reported that the prophet has never been given two choices except that he chose the easier one as long as it is not a sin. This tolerance and compassion also extend to the general humanity, Muslims and non-Muslims, verses in the Quran in which Allah orders us to treat other religions with compassion and tolerance.<sup>22</sup>

Among the shapes of tolerance of our religion is when the Prophet -pbuh- ordered against attacking any religious houses during the times of war between Muslim and non-Muslims, in addition to forbidding anyone from killing those who weren't among the armed forces of the opponent including women and children (Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war, do not embezzle the spoils; do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (the dead) bodies; do not kill the children).<sup>23</sup>

This teaching was upheld by the companions and succeeding leaders of Islam. Sigrid Hunke, a German author, in her book, Allah's sun over the Occident, has mentioned that perhaps one of the most

important factors that contributed to the Muslim victories is what surprised the people with their tolerance, to the extent that the Knight King Keros himself said: "These victors do not come as vandals." Reflecting their attitude towards dealing with those they conquered. History does not present to us in its long pages except a small number of people who treated their opponents and those opposing them in the same way as the Muslims did. This gave the Muslims a victory that neither the Greek, with its false luster, nor the Roman civilization with its violence in imposing its will by force.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, the English Orientalist, Thomas Arnold, in his book, *The Preaching of Islam*, described how Muslims treated the Christians with great tolerance since the first century of Islam, and that the Christians who reverted to Islam reverted out of their own desire and acceptance, and the Christian still living among Muslims today bear witness to this.<sup>25</sup> Gustave Le Bon in his book, *Arab Civilization*, highlighted that humanity have not seen a more tolerant conquerors like the Muslims, nor a tolerant religion like Islam, and what historians were ignorant of about the clemency and tolerance of the conquering Muslims was one of the biggest reasons for their quick expansion, the ease of embracing their

religion and system, and their language - which became wide spread.<sup>26</sup>

### **1.5. Principle 5: Equality of Islam**

The principle of equality in Islam can be considered to include seven main rights. First freedom of belief, Islam considers religion and faith as a choice based on persuasion and will, not coercion. God honored a man and respected his will, his thought, his feelings, his choice, as well as his responsibility for this choice. God created us with an innate nature of faith, and made us a will and left us to determine our destiny by our own free will and choice, this is the greatest freedom and liberation that mankind is honored with. It is this freedom that guarantees us our right to thought, belief, and will. Therefore, whoever deprives a person of the freedom of belief, he deprives him of his humanity.

In her writing, Sigrid Hunke also explained how Muslims never imposed or forced the conquered people to convert to Islam. Meanwhile before Islam, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews witnessed the worst and most horrific examples of religious fanaticism, such as the blatant Byzantine persecution, and the atrocities of the Spaniards and the persecution of the Jews. The Muslim rulers did not involve themselves in the internal affairs of those

nations, nor did they use violence against them.<sup>27</sup>

The freedom that Islam calls for is one that creates a personality, preserves safety and security, protects the intellect and life, and contributes to elevating and developing the individual as a member of the society. This is what Islam came to teach at a time when religious fanaticism had reached its climax and people did not know freedom of religion.

Second the right to stable life, Life is a basic divine right given by God to each human regardless of his or her religion, color, or ethnicity, it is not for anyone to take or transgress upon it. Taking a single life is equated in the Quran as to taking the lives of all mankind, and whoever nurtured a person, it is like they have nurtured the whole mankind. This nurturing can be by promoting good and preventing evil.<sup>28</sup>

Third the right of justice, Muslims have been ordered to be just in speech and action.<sup>29</sup> We are ordered to be just even with those who oppose us or transgress against us.<sup>30</sup>

Fourth the right to safety and security is paramount to the right of life, it is a necessity without which a stable life cannot be achieved. Islamic law is built to preserve safety and ensuring security for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. By securing

themselves, their money, their places of worship, and protecting their beliefs. This is what distinguished the Islamic civilization from other civilizations; protecting the public from injustice and harm and providing security regardless of religion or ethnicity.

The second Caliph of Islam, Omar ibn Al-Khattab – may Allah be pleased with him- included in his will, a request to look after the non-Muslims who have covenants with the Muslims, for them to be fulfilled and for the Muslims not to burden them beyond their means.<sup>31</sup>

Fifth, the right of citizenship, a concept that the Prophet -pbuh- affirmed when building the Muslim state in Madinah. In a letter directed to the people of Madinah and the Muslims who came from Quraish, the Prophet -pbuh- said, (To the Muslims of Quraish, the people of Madinah, and whoever follows them, joins them, and strives with them, we are all one nation, and whoever follows us from the Jews shall be protected and treated kindly if they do not oppress nor retaliate).<sup>32</sup> This is a general principle upon which a society should be built.

Sixth, the right to protecting and guarding one's human rights. Islamic teachings govern the rights of all members of the society, especially the weak or

vulnerable. It commands us to care for the elderly, and visit the sick, fulfill the right of children, and providing for the animals.<sup>33</sup> The duty and responsibility to protect the rights is not only on the state but individuals too.

Seventh, the right to dignified and kind treatment. Islam mandates us to treat everyone kindly, including non-Muslims,<sup>34</sup> and treating them badly or badmouthing them is just as bad as badmouthing a Muslim. Islam also commands us to treat the neighbors with kindness, regardless of who they are. The Prophet -pbuh- said (Jibril kept on recommending that I treat neighbors well until I thought that he would order me to treat them as my heirs).<sup>35</sup> In addition, he -pbuh- used to prioritize his Jewish neighbor in many of his dealings and giving.<sup>36</sup>

## **2. Violent Extremism and Terrorism and their causes**

Extremism can exist in various forms including intellectual or religious. Similarly, terrorism also has many forms. According to the UNSCO terrorism can be committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, and it is condemned by many countries as it represent one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.<sup>37</sup>

In order to develop solutions to the violent extremism and terrorism we see today, it is pertinent to analyze the reasons that contribute and lead to them. There are seven key factors that can be associated with increasing levels of violent extremism and terrorism.

### **3.1. Ignorance of The Facts of Islam, and Distortion of Its Image**

There is great ignorance and distortion of the image of Islam in the brains of our youth. The lack of promoting Islam as a universal and uniting message aiming for our happiness here and hereafter, when coupled with ignorance, creates a distorted image that makes our youth easy preys to brain washing attempts by the media that have also contributed to this bad image by linking between Islam and Muslims with terrorism, extremism in general. And it is often equate Islam ‘with hatred, fanaticism and, intolerance’<sup>38</sup> Terrorists also exploit the situation and use the distorted image and faith to fulfill their own agendas through our youth and fuel more violence extremism and terrorism.

We need to contain our children and youth, extend balance, true belief system, and promote tolerance and the true teachings of Islam. This step needs to be strategically planed and studied in order to

develop suitable and effective mechanisms and tools.

### **3.2. Insufficiency of The Role of The Media**

Media with all its types and channels plays a pivotal, and often dangerous, role in establishing the societal norms. It has always been a critical force of power that shapes the ideologies and beliefs. However, Many western media present the Islam and Muslims as the main source of extremism and fail to distinguish between the core values and teachings of Islam and the negative and destructive interpretations adopted by the extremists. Meanwhile, the assaults on Muslims and Islam are often ignored or marginalized in Western media<sup>39</sup>. Such approaches don't help in countering terrorism but lead to the emergence of a larger problem, which is Islamophobia.

It has been established that media has internal role in spreading and promoting just principles, and an external role in protecting against media sources that oppose those principles. The weakness of the Islamic media content is a critical challenge especially in those recent years that witnessed a huge increase in terroristic and extremist groups spreading and promoting their ideologies through media and the increasing number of platforms available to them that are used to promote

such content in a relatively safer manner, oftentimes far from the national security's radar.<sup>40</sup>

### **3.3. Absence of A Culture of Dialogue**

Dialogue is a fundamental practice in civilizations that is built upon a system of good ethics; such as acceptance, plurality, cooperation, and coexistence.<sup>41</sup> Dialogue is a tool for convincing and correcting wrong beliefs, and it is the strongest weapon against terrorists and transgressive ideologies. Our societies are in dire need to promote the culture of dialogue, and explore the arts of dialogue and arbitration through understanding the drivers over various opinions and their weaknesses.

### **3.4. The Void In All Its Forms, The Void of Times, The Intellectual, Psychological, and Emotional Void**

The contemporary lifestyle and technological advancements have brought to life the concept of leisure time. Soon this concept became a potential problem globally. In April of 1976, the Belgian institution, Van Cle, in collaboration with the UNESCO, organized a conference on leisure time. Over 500 delegates from fifty companies attended the conference. The discussions and presented research in the conference highlighted the significant and multi-faceted problems that are go deeper

than the mere face value of the leisure time concept.

One of the key problems of leisure time is boredom, which has significant mental and psychological ramifications. Boredom oftentimes leads people to fall into immoral and unethical behavior or to commit offenses with legal implications. Common examples are seen in the youth falling into drugs or joining the naysayers of the society that oppose its core beliefs and culture; all of which are natural and inevitable consequences of boredom.<sup>42</sup> It is crucial to utilize leisure time for personal development, and to enhance the lives of all members of the society to develop themselves through various beneficial activities, which will in turn be a great deterrent that protects them against extremist and terroristic ideologies.

### **3.5. Poverty and Unemployment**

Poverty is a chronic issue, and one of the biggest challenges facing the world in general. According to the Human Development Report of 2014, around 1.2 billion people live on under USD 1.25 a day, and 2.7 billion live under USD 2.5 a day. In addition, 1.5 billion people live in multidimensional poverty, 0.8 billion people on the poverty line, and 2.2 billion people live two or three aspects of deprivation. Statistics show that two third of the world's

population earns less than 13% of the global income. Meanwhile the richest 1% of the world own around half of the world's wealth.<sup>43</sup> The unemployment rate has increased according to the International Labour Organization, from 4.8% to 6.5% in the last 3 decades.<sup>44</sup>

The correlation between poverty and unemployment level, and the levels of terrorism and extremists' activities in a country has become very evident. Those extremist groups prey on unemployed youth who are most susceptible and vulnerable to their calls, making it easier for them to be exploited. This was seen from the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, and the tribal areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan that were breeding grounds for those extremists and terrorists.

It is natural for life crises and hardships to lead to emotional instability and religious extremism.<sup>45</sup>

### **3.6. Absence of Role Model**

Having a good role model is crucial for a holistic personal development, and in making good and active members of any society. Prophets were sent by God as role models for us to follow.<sup>46</sup> The Prophet Muhamamad – pbuh- was a holistic role model in all aspects of life; as a loving husband, a merciful father, a just leader, and a devoted worshipper. The companions

were raised upon his actions and teachings - pbuh-, with which they continued to spread justice and led the world with fairness.

But today's youth do not enjoy the same; they do not have such a role model to guide them. Leaving them to follow life's desires and material matters, forgetting about any greater cause and elevated roles to play. This led to the deterioration of thinking and weakening of ambitions. In addition, the enormous fame and popularity celebrities have gained through the growth of internet and social media platforms led those youth to take them as role models, leaving them following role models that did not get famous because of intellectual power or practical innovation but rather spotlight made fame. Lacking a mission and a calling, those celebrities oftentimes lead lifestyles lacking sound behavior. This in turn casts shade on the youth following their footsteps, impacting their way of thinking and views.

The growth of art and entertainment industries has been a weapon used to invade our morality and sound behavior, colonizing our brains to follow what the mainstream media dictates. Art is undoubtedly a great field for innovation and development, Muslims have long had art as a key element in their civilizations, but we need directed efforts and governed art and entertainments that contribute to our intellect, enrich our

innovative skills, and heal our souls, this is what will make art be used for guiding the society and developing it in the right direction.

### **3.7. Cyber Terrorism**

Cyber-terrorism is using digital technologies to attack information systems to instill fear, intimidate and subjugate others for political, racial, or religious motives.<sup>47</sup> Some of those social media platforms that are directed to distort the thinking and attack governments can be dangerous for youth and young adults, those networks are filled with irresponsible communications and spreading false news and rumours, trespassing morality, and social ethics.

Terrorists today have mastered the art of using digital platforms in diverse ways to spread false and fabricated information and ideologies, attempting to weaken the patriotism and nationalism of people. Some go to the extent of recruiting youth through online games, especially those ones involving violence and war, making them more susceptible to the terrorists' manipulation.

## **4. Utilizing the principles of Islamic civilization to combat extremism and terrorism**

### **4.1. The Role of Family**

The family unit is the corner stone for building a society, and its relationship represents the bases of all human relations. It is from the family unit that most of us derive our principles, learn the norms, instill sound behavior, and develop our rationale. The strength of the family unit made it a target through history by all those who wish to break the social fabric. Today, the weapons used to break family units come in different forms; intellectual invasion, media, games, and many more. With the weakening upholding of the true Islamic values, the principles of compassion and tolerance have been lost, leaving people vulnerable to such attacks.

Today, we need to establish social incubators by establishing centers and adopting prepared social, media and electronic programs that reformulate the ideas of our youth and provide them with some values and skills that will help them build stable families capable of facing the challenges of globalization and combatting growing threats such as cyber-terrorism. The danger of this is in the creation of alternate societies in which an individual lives in, a world with various cultures, languages, ethnicities, and religions. This virtual world does not only desensitize a person from what is real, but also gives the illusion of control, being able to socialize, befriend, play, watch whoever they want,

whenever is needed, with the ability to block or stop at any time or resume at will. Consequently, people have less tolerance to basic life burdens and inconveniences whether socially, materially, or mentally.<sup>48</sup>

Those patters have led to increasing defragmentation of society as many people went into solitude and seclusion due to this social media and digitized world. Those pulling themselves into seclusion created their own values and belief systems that are not in accordance with social norms. With time, this seclusion grows at the cost of family and social responsibilities. Which in turn weakens those relationships. Digital technologies have posed great challenges for us as members of Muslim societies, it is a priority to stand up in solidarity and cooperate to find innovative solutions to maintain our culture and patriotism in order to preserve healthy and balanced relationships in our societies.

Among the innovative solutions that may be developed is creating a digital platform that connects various social media platforms in partnership with various ministries and relevant authorities and civil society institutions, that provides programs and tools for preserving culture and heritage developed and designed for families by specialists from various fields such as psychology, social sciences, family development, programming ...etc.

Comprehensive programs should be developed to address the various needs of all members of society. Programs can be delivered to train youth in different skills such as time management and leadership. Young women approaching marriage can be provided with programs that guides them on the roles of a women and responsibilities.

#### **4.2. The Role of Education**

Some may think that the media messages are specific to the mass communication and media system that bears the full responsibility of the information disseminated across the society. But the truth is others, Schools and universities have a great role, considering that thought and awareness are a product of the efforts of academic institutions, especially universities, and that they are required to activate their role in carrying out the duty of intellectual and moral development in societies and raising peoples' awareness and drawing A real picture of this danger that threatens everyone. On the other hand, its success in carrying out its mission depends on what it establishes by instilling the spirit of belonging and the values of honest and interactive citizenship with the homeland, and what it offers from advanced scientific research that addresses real problems and community awareness, educational and training services.

Education has a critical role to play in communicating the right messages to the masses to protect youth from extremist and terroristic ideologies. Some think that media messages are confined to media companies and reporters but that is untrue. Schools and Universities play a pivotal role in developing society's thinking and worldviews. They have many contributions to the formation and dissemination of awareness through many and varied means such as conferences, seminars, courses, debates, and many other events and programs. However, the reach of this remains limited to the educated segment of the society. Therefore, the more crucial role of Education is the interactive role with society with all its components without discriminating against gender, religion, or status. Unfortunately, there is a dichotomy between academic efforts and the state of social welfare.

The technological revolution and development of social media provides universities the opportunity to reach out to the community and interact with it to fulfill its role in shaping the cultural, social, economic, and political awareness of the individual and the community. Therefore, educational programs need to be reinforced with the help of social media aiming to enhance the values of citizenship and patriotism. This would help develop a sense of union among the society and desire to

collaborate for what is good for humanity as whole.<sup>49</sup> Other education platforms can also be used. For instance, student's representative body should also have an online platform through which it can communicate and raise awareness that supports those visions of unity, collaboration, and civic duty that is in line with the teaching of Islam and our Muslim heritage. One of the successful approaches in this field is the implementation of the PPBI as Islam-based Peace Education in Indonesia which is a program aimed to promote peace culture through formal education using the comic-like illustrated handbook, based on Islamic values that calls for peace building and nonviolence.<sup>50</sup>

#### **4.3. The Role of Institutions and Regulations**

It is the role of institutions, in collaboration with various government entities, to provide areas that fill the void and extra time of the youth through developmental projects and volunteering activities. As has been discussed, the concept of leisure time has grown to be a threat to the members our societies, especially the youth, who are the future leaders of those societies. It is the duty of organizations and relevant authorities to take steps towards this matter and protecting the society against the negative consequences of leisure time that turns the

youth from the hope and leaders of the futures to a burden on societies.<sup>51</sup>

To this end, several initiatives were developed. The UAE launched two strategic programs, "Read", and "Innovation", which were under the patronage of the president and the vice president of the country, respectively. Both reading and innovation are principles from Islamic teaching at their core, the first word revealed to the Prophet -pbuh- was "*Iqra*", which means read,<sup>52</sup> and it follows to say (He have taught the human what he (the human) did not know),<sup>53</sup> in addition to the many verses and hadiths that command us to seek knowledge, and spend out time in thinking and innovating.

Volunteering activities play a crucial role especially with the nature of today's social network. Filling leisure time with productive volunteering activities would also put control to the negative effects associated with leisure time such as addiction, consumerism, and others. Therefore, it is crucial to utilize such tools to develop opportunities for the youth that would unleash their potentials for the goodness of the society. Many studies investigated the impact of volunteering and collaborative work and found that it has positive direct and indirect impact on good social behavior and civic responsibility.<sup>54</sup>

#### **4.4. The Role of Media and Marketing**

Developing media content that preserves the social values and mobilize media governance institutions to fulfill their roles. Psychologists and social scientists confirmed that media in all its forms is the most impactful tool on the brain and ideologies as it shapes people's perceptions and reactions to day to day matters as well as the general direction of the society as whole whether economically, politically, or socially.<sup>55</sup>

With the development of satellites and social media, the reach of media and mass communication has grown significantly. With this evolution, the potential threats have also grown, putting social values, culture, and the national identity under constant threats and pressures. This has created a crucial need to extend content that puts together moral ethics and social values into unique programs that preserve the social and civil principles. This is especially needed in a time where many movies and media contents have mixed concepts, falsified facts, distorted values, and inaccurate iterations of history and landmarks of civilizations.

Many of these educational materials may pass through media censorship channels under the pretext of openness to cultures. While openness to other cultures is good but assimilating into foreign ideologies at the expense of our own identity and

belonging is unacceptable. Therefore, activating media censorship efforts is of paramount importance so as not to fall into the quagmire of cultural contradictions and civilizational alienation. Which leads to chaos and rebellion.

## **Conclusion**

This study investigated the principles of Islam upon which our Islamic civilization was built, the reasons behind terrorism and extremisms were investigated, and the mechanisms of utilizing those principles in combatting terrorism were analyzed based on which recommendations were developed. Islam is a religion of logic and rationale, commanding us to live as one and it unites us with all our religious, ethnic, or cultural diversities, as God says in the Quran (and hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourself).<sup>56</sup> God honors mankind by subjugating the heavens and earth for us to utilize, and a requirement for this honor is the basic human right to coexist on the earth that is endowed to us with equal social, economic, intellectual, and political rights, and this right is a divine gift that no one can take away from anyone.

The Islamic law (*Shari'a*) is based on achieving security for Muslims and non-Muslims. This is by securing themselves, their money, their places of worship, and

protecting their beliefs. However, ignorance of those humanitarian realities of Islam is the main reason for the spread of forms of violence and terrorism. This ignorance started from the cracks and weaknesses of our societies and were leveraged by media mercenaries. Therefore, this study investigated the principles Islam is built upon and the mechanisms through which they can be revived.

One of the principles of Islam in dealing with others, is its call for constructive dialogue, logical and rational debate, and an attempt to bring the views closer while remaining firm on the truth. Dialogue is a means of persuasion and changing false convictions, and it is the most powerful way to break up terrorism, ward off aggressive ideas, to replace them with sound thought. To confront and fight terrorism, we need to spread the culture of dialogue and master the arts of arbitration and conflict management by understanding their motives and addressing shortcomings. Another key presented recommendation is to establish social incubators. Centers adopting prepared social, media and electronic programs that reformulate the ideologies of the youth and provide them with some values and skills that will help them build stable families that are able to face the challenges of globalization, represented by the electronic invasion.

Lastly, the media needs to be leveraged and used to produce media programs that preserve the values of society and activating media monitoring bodies to fulfill the roles assigned to them. This can be done in collaboration with universities and educational institutions who have the role of creating and instilling ideas to protect the youth from extremist ideologies.

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### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Quran (4:1)

<sup>2</sup> Quran (49:13)

<sup>3</sup> (Sunan Ibn Majah 224, n.d.)

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO, “Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.”

<sup>5</sup> Faruqi, “Contributions of Islamic Scholars to the Scientific Enterprise.”

<sup>6</sup> Quran (2:256)

<sup>7</sup> Quran (49:13)

<sup>8</sup> (Abi Dawud 3052, n.d.)

<sup>9</sup> (Sahih Muslim 2199, n.d.)

<sup>10</sup> Krafess, “The Influence of the Muslim Religion in Humanitarian Aid.”

<sup>11</sup> (Sahih Al-Bukhari 2320, n.d.)

<sup>12</sup> (Sahih al-Bukhari 2340, 2341, n.d.)

<sup>13</sup> (Al-Albani Book 27, n.d.)

<sup>14</sup> Quran (17:70)

<sup>15</sup> Quran (6:108)

<sup>16</sup> (Al-Qurtubi 7/61, n.d.)

<sup>17</sup> Al-Dawoody, “Respect for the Dead under Islamic Law: Considerations for Humanitarian Forensics.”

<sup>18</sup> (Sunan An-Nasa’i 1929, n.d.)

<sup>19</sup> (Sahih al-Bukhari 3318, n.d.)

<sup>20</sup> Quran (2:286)

<sup>21</sup> (Riyad as-Salihin 145, n.d.)

<sup>22</sup> Quran, (60:8).

<sup>23</sup> (Sahih Muslim 1731a, b, n.d.)

<sup>24</sup> Hunke, *Allah’s Sun Over the Occident*.

<sup>25</sup> Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*.

<sup>26</sup> Bon, *The Civilization of the Arabs*.

<sup>27</sup> Hunke, *Arab’s Sun Shining Over the West*.

<sup>28</sup> Khalid, Mir, and Ahad, “Social Justice and Human Rights in Islam: Challenges and Prospects.”

<sup>29</sup> Quran (5: 2; 5:8; 16:90)

<sup>30</sup> (Al-Sa’di, 1937)

<sup>31</sup> Yahya bin Adam Al-Qurashi, *Al-Kharaj 80/1*.

<sup>32</sup> Khel, “Foundation of the Islamic State at Medina and Its Constitution.”

<sup>33</sup> Mawdudi, “Human Rights, The West and Islam.”

<sup>34</sup> Quran (60:8; 29:46)

<sup>35</sup> (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 101, n.d.)

<sup>36</sup> (Al-Qurtubi 184/4, n.d.)

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<sup>46</sup> Quran (6:90)

<sup>47</sup> UNODC, “Cyberterrorism.”

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<sup>49</sup> Lee and Suzanne Horsley, “The Role of Social Media on Positive Youth Development: An Analysis of 4-H Facebook Page and 4-H’ers’ Positive Development.”

<sup>50</sup> M Abdul Fattah Santoso, Yayasan Khisbiyah ,Islam-based peace education: values, program, reflection and implication 2020

<sup>51</sup> Anderson-Butcher et al., “Institutions of Youth Development: The Significance of Supportive Staff-Youth Relationships.”

<sup>52</sup> Quran (96:1)

<sup>53</sup> Quran (96:5)

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<sup>54</sup> Santinello et al., “‘Volunteering by Chance’ to Promote Civic Responsibility and Civic Engagement: Does It Work?”

<sup>55</sup> Dijk, “Power and the News Media.”

<sup>56</sup> Quran (3:103)