

Hermeneutics in Muslim Sociology: Islamic “Race” Concept According to Snoukh Hurgronje

Milena Aziza Rampoldi

Information about the Author

Dr. phil. Milena Rampoldi, born in 1973 in Bolzano, Italy, studied theology, pedagogy, philosophy and oriental studies in Italy, before earning her doctorate in Vienna in the field of Arabic Qur'an methodology in the German-speaking countries.

She worked as a foreign language teacher in Italy, Austria and the Arab world. For years, she has been managing ProMosaik as a translator, author, journalist, and foreign language teacher.

The topics of her books relate to the Islamic religion, culture and history and to Islamic feminism and human rights, in particular slavery in Mauritania and FGM.

With her texts, she pursues the goal of dialogue between religions and is convinced that by approaching history and sociology, one can also better understand the present to be able to build a future in the sense of justice, diversity, and peace.

She also founded the projects ProMosaik Poetry and ProMosaik Children to publish books in cooperation with her publishing house ProMosaik LAPH. In her “Manifesto” of ProMosaik, she sets out the principles of her pedagogical, intercultural, and socio-political work for justice and peace by struggling against discrimination and racism in society.

Hermeneutics in Sociology: Complexity of the Matter of Race in Islam

The present article includes the introduction to and the commented English translation of the speech of the Dutch scholar Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, entitled *Islam and the Race problem*, held in 1922 at the University of Leiden, and showing the complexity of the matter of ethnicity in Islam, and the necessity of a fruitful integration of sociological hermeneutics into the discourse about slavery in today's Mauritania which is an example of the highest level of racial and social discrimination.

This article offers an “open” conclusion concerning the necessity of a radical de-racialisation of Muslim slavery as pointed out by Ahmed Baba in his *fatwa* about the prohibition of enslavement of Muslims only because of their black skin.

Some parts of Hurgronje's speech represent a true provocation, however, at the same time, the author touched some aspects of the discourse on Islam and ethnicity, hidden and suppressed by Muslim and Non-Muslim sociologists of our time.

The Life of C. S. Hurgronje and his Conversion to Islam

Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) was an important Dutch Arabist and Islamic scholar. His dissertation written in 1880 on the Islamic pilgrimage entitled *Het Mekkaansch feest*¹ is still being studied at many faculties.

His “colonialist” biography is, of course, controversial. There are also numerous points of view on his biography, on his family life and on his “conversion” to Islam with the Muslim name ‘Abd al-Ghaffar, which is seen by many as “played” in order to gain access to the Holy Places of Islam in Mecca and

Medina for research purposes. There is an interesting article on this topic written by the Dutch philologist Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld (1943-2021), published in *Muslims in Interwar Europe*. In his paper, van Koningsveld assumes that, at the beginning, Hurgronje converted to Islam only "opportunisticly". However, after that, his conversion then became a "final" (*permanent*) one over time, although his "Muslim" life was always part of a "double life"ⁱⁱⁱ as Koningsveld calls it. In this regard he writes:

"The Dutch orientalist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) is a special case; he accumulated the social and political advantages of a conversion of convenience to its fullest extent, during a long period of his active life. His conversion started as a temporary one but happened to develop into a more permanent form, though it remained restricted to a segment of his network, only. Snouck's half year stay in Mecca (1884–1885) was, probably, initially conceived by him in the framework of a temporary conversion needed only for that stay. It so happened, however, that the further vicissitudes of his life incited him to revitalize his "temporary" conversion after the original date of its expiration, when, in 1889 he went to the Dutch East Indies and stayed there for sixteen years as an official advisor to the Dutch government. There he resumed his Meccan Muslim network and expanded it considerably, also founding a Muslim family with Muslim wives and Muslim children. Here we observe the origins of a double life that continued until his death in 1936."

The study by the Indonesian Islamic scholar Rohmana Jajang, who also cites various attempts to explain Hurgronje's family life, is of great interest in this regard.ⁱⁱⁱ There are three episodes in Hurgronje's life where he personally got in touch with the problem of slavery and/or race, and there is an article Hurgronje wrote in 1891 on slavery in Singapore.

The first episode occurred in Mekka when he was there for pilgrimage and then worked at the embassy in Jeddah. He did something ethically reprehensible when he bought a slave girl and left her in a state of pregnancy, as reported by Rohmana Jajang^{iv}.

The second is the Islamic wedding ceremony with the native 17-years old Sangkana during his stay in the Dutch East Indies where he worked for the Dutch colonial administration (1889-1906)^v. Even if he officially denied the marriage, the four children he had with Sangkana could not be denied. A second Islamic marriage followed in 1889 with Siti Sadijah^{vi}, another Sundanese woman who was fifteen years old. The fifth child got born. Despite the fear of losing his self-image, Hurgronje cared about his children as the author shows when analysing the letters addressed to him by Hasan Mustapa, his closed friend.

The conclusion gained by the author about the dialectics between white and native and colonizer and colonized is that the existence of all these letters^{vii}

".... proves the continuity of contact between the colonizer and the colonized through family news that is always awaited. Such a contact unites the two nations in a familial bond, i.e. between the nativized colonizer and the colonial Native."

The Racial Theory as a Construct

I am convinced that Hurgronje's biography – even if it is full of contradictions – is also reflected in this conference I would like to analyse in the present article, held at the University of Leiden in 1922. My objective is to show how the Dutch Islamic scholar at the beginning of the 1920s presented the egalitarian and anti-racist standpoint of Islam he called "system Islam" and the Prophet Muhammad in

the context of the "racial theory" and the prevailing colonialism, by addressing the topic starting from the concept of "division/separation".

I firmly believe that the term "race" is a construct. There are thus "no" races at all, but at the same time those who oppose any division of humanity into races should deal with the theme of the "race" as a construct. For I can hardly disprove a term if I do not first put it into my mouth. The use of the word is wrong, but the lack of use by the people who refute it is also dangerous, because racist attitudes continue to be widespread, and we must oppose them forcefully.

In this context, I would like to mention an excerpt from the UNESCO workshop held in 1996 by the German anthropologist and biologist Ulrich Kattmann (born in 1941), from which between the lines I can gather precisely this danger^{viii}:

"Human "races" are traditionally regarded as genetically uniform, but different from one another. ... However, recent developments based on the methods of molecular genetics and mathematical models of population genetics show that this definition is completely inappropriate. The new scientific findings do not support the earlier view according to which the human populations are divided into separate "races" such as "Africans", "Eurasians" ... or any larger number of subgroups could be classified. ... The said document emphatically states that there is no scientifically reliable way to characterize human diversity with the rigid term of "racial" categories or the traditional "racial" concept. There is consequently no scientific reason to continue using the term "race"."

The same scientifically correct statement can be found in the Jena Declaration of 2019, which Ulrich Kattmann discusses in his article written in 2021^{ix} in which he states the following:

"The genetic diversity of humans is not to be understood with a taxonomy of subspecies. The genetic differentiation of the populations is mainly based on the gradual settlement of the continents. Population genetic differences are therefore not to be understood statically as the result of geographical isolation, but dynamically as the result of migration. Consequently, they reflect the history of human populations, which can be explored on the basis of the (slight) population genetic differences [22, 32, 40, 46]. The interpretation of population history as a dynamic interpretation of migrations is fundamentally different from a static, racial classification. In contrast to the postulated "races", it does not attribute different qualities to human groups. These cannot even be derived from the detectable genetic distances between the populations."

Why the word "race" must be used to struggle against racism in Mauritania

In my opinion, however, the problem arising for an anti-racist movement at this point is the following: The word "racism" goes back to the word "race". And those who ignore the word "race", as a "non-existent construct", can no longer effectively and dynamically oppose any "racist" or "race-related" attitude, because they exclude this attitude as non-existent. And this is especially true today in Mauritania, where slavery still has a share of racial slavery, although the racialisation of slavery does not explain the overall phenomenon of slavery in Mauritania. However, it is an important component of slavery, which is reflected on a social level in the dialectic between the white Beydan and the black mosaic society, which has little or no access to power in the country.

The Italian anthropologist Anna Maria Rivera also takes this stance of the need to call the breed by its name in order to combat racism when she writes the following in her article entitled *Sul razzismo è meglio capirsi*^x:

“First of all, it should be noted that the term "racism" in the singular is preferable to the term "racisms" in plural if one wants to grasp the uniform character of the concept beyond the historical and empirical variations of the phenomenon. To designate such a system, we are paradoxically compelled to use a lemma whose etymology refers to the belief in the existence of “races”, which was criticized and then abandoned by much of the same social and biological sciences that contributed to its elaboration. The term “race” is indeed a pseudo-category which is as unfounded as it is paradoxical, because it is based on the postulate of a deterministic relationship between somatic, physical and genetic characteristics and psychological, intellectual, cultural and social characteristics.”

Racial war during Hurgronje’s epoch

As early as 1922, four years after the end of the First World War in the middle of Europe, Hurgronje foresaw that the European continent was moving towards a “racial war” or “racial conflict”. He understood the danger and the potential for violence of splitting the world into races that consider themselves the so-called “master races” and “races” that are oppressed by them. And he saw the division of the world in his epoch of colonialism as a division that would remain valid until the “next war” (Hurgronje consequently foresaw the Second World War in 1922 and felt his life to be a life between two wars), unless humanity could find a way to overcome the “racial conflict” by combining diversity with unity.

In this rector's speech held in 1922 at the University of Leiden and entitled “Islam and the Race Problem”, he then quotes the American journalist and historian Theodore Lothrop Stoddard (1883-1950), who in his unscientific work "The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy" warns against the invasion of the white “race” by “inferior races”. In fact, Stoddard is regarded as a pioneer and model of Nazi racial theory and politics.

Hurgronje also cites the American lawyer and author of works on race theory Madison Grant (1865-1937). Like Stoddard, he is also a contemporary of Hurgronje, whose works unfortunately found widespread circulation at that time^{xi}.

One of Grant's readers was Adolf Hitler, who sent him an enthusiastic letter in 1925. After having read this paragraph about these two authors, I should have just put Hurgronje's essay aside. And that's precisely what I decided not to do. For I have decided to reach the limits of my tolerance according to what I write in my “Manifesto” about tolerance and pseudo-tolerance:^{xii}

“The human being has the task of practicing tolerance in this mosaic-shaped world, which should not be transformed into a brown soup since diversity is the “normal status” of human existence. The alignment and forced assimilation of people are exactly the opposite of what is really human. The human dimension stands for radical diversity, innovative difference, healthy distance, constructive debate, well-thought-out tolerance and also for retreat in case people reach the limits of their tolerance.

For ProMosaik, the focus on the equality of all people is essential. Regardless of skin colour, religion, culture, social origin, sexual orientation and state of health, every person has one and the same dignity he/she confirms by acting humanly, by respecting others and by complying with the principle following the golden rule of Hillel the Elder^{xiii}, one of the most revered sages in Jewish history.

“What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn.”

Thus, in a world of diversity there is distance, the awareness of the limits of one’s own tolerance, the practice of empathy, the insufficient understanding of the Thou, but never open

discrimination, ideological racism and right-wing extremist and ethnocentric superiority thinking degenerating into the blind violence and elimination of political opponents.”

However, I have decided to pursue Hurgronje's line of thought to its conclusion. The author fears a new war precisely because of this "up and down"^{xiv} racial theory" of his time, in relation to which the just ended First World War would be a piece of cake as he calls it. Hurgronje now sees the dissolution of these pessimistic images of the future in the preoccupation with history. He sees himself as Democritus^{xv} with a lantern in his hand in search of an "illumination" of the subject, by dealing with the idea of the "race" in the Islamic world view, without thereby refuting or overcoming the idea of the existence of races.

System Islam as a partial solution

In this context, Hurgronje speaks of a "system Islam" and of a "racial issue" that he would like to discuss within the framework of this system. Hurgronje sees the Islamic system as the result of a development of the Muslim civilization according to the Prophet Mohammed over about three centuries, which coincides with the heyday of the Islamic civilization. When it comes to concepts such as ethnicity and "race", Islam can show groundbreaking positions, since the Qur'an addresses the diversity of "peoples and tribes" as being wanted by Allah and downright emphasizes these differences.^{xvi}

This in turn means that the "system Islam" openly deals with the question of race, ethnicity and ethnic diversity and discusses these differences as positive and created by Allah. The unity of humanity and the equality of all people in the Qur'an by no means contradicts the inner diversity of humanity, which is considered an expression of the *tawhid* itself.

Tawhid-based Islamic anthropology

In this context, I would like to mention the concept of *tawhid*-based Islamic anthropology.

The following four Qur'anic verses are exemplary of the unity of humanity and the equality of all human beings in the Qur'an.

4:1

"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women." And remain conscious of Allah, in whose name you demand [your rights] from one another, and of these ties of kinship. Allah hath been a watcher over you."^{xvii}

5:48

"Had Allah so willed, He would have made you all one single community. But He wished to try and test you by that which He gave you. Compete with each other in performing good deeds. All of you will return to Allah who will tell you the truth in the matter of your differences."^{xviii}

30:22

"Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Verily in that are signs for those who know."^{xix}

49:13

"Oh humans! You have been created from a man [Adam] and a woman [Eve], and [of their offspring] you gather peoples and tribes so that you may know each other. Verily, the most honourable of you with God is the one who fears Allah the most." Verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."^{xx}

The Arabic Qur'an

At the same time, however, together with the colours and ethnic differences, the Qur'an emphasizes several times that the Qur'an is "Arabic" and that Allah's message is addressed to the "Arabs" in their own native language. For example, in the Qur'anic verse 16:103, the clear Arabic language is contrasted with the incomprehensible language outside the text of the revelation:

"And We certainly know that they say, "It is only a human being who teaches the Prophet." But the language of him they allude to is foreign, while this is a clear Arabic language."^{xxi}

As Lirim Selmani summarizes in his article entitled „Der Koran und die arabische Schrift: Der mündliche Prophet und seine schriftliche Umma“, the following applies:^{xxii}

"In its typical self-reference, the Qur'an itself addresses its Arabic linguistic form. In many Meccan suras there is talk of an "Arabic Qur'an" – with the reference to the Arabic language an authoritative sura opening is achieved introducing the mantic character of the Qur'anic Arabic."

It is precisely in this manner that the religion of Islam overcomes all pseudo-tolerant attitudes and shows how humanity in its diversity (languages, colours, tribes, peoples) is one within the meaning of the *tawhid* whereby this aspect is affirmed without blurring the ethnic differences existing within humanity. At the same time, however, in the Qur'an it is emphasised in a positive sense how the different "peoples and tribes" and even different "(skin) colours", which are specifically addressed here, and "languages" get to know each other. This "getting to know one another", i.e. the inter-cultural, inter-language, inter-ethnic and inter-community contact, however, represents a continuum between war and mutual understanding among peoples, between conflict and harmony, between *jihad* and peace. And in my eyes, this realistic view expressed in the Qur'an is a groundbreaking aspect to approach discussions about war and peace today.

The position I take and at which point I see myself on this continuum, does not depend on my skin colour, language, ethnicity and tribal affiliation, which I cannot ignore because they are part of myself, but on my ethical superiority in the sense of righteousness and the focus on the peaceful resolution of socio-political conflicts.

Anti-racist system Islam opposed to Muslim racism in history: the example of Mauritania

Indeed, Hurgronje back in 1922 shows us how the "system" Islam, which describes the "racial differences" as a result of the creation of Allah without continuing to explain them and, as he emphasizes, without "further elaborating on the origin of such racial differences", did not stay away from conflicts in its history, because the conflict is something which belongs to the essence of being humans/being part of humanity.

Despite or precisely on the basis of the Qur'anic idea of the unity and equality of all people, conflicts between different ethnic groups and peoples are repeatedly found in Muslim history whereby this is also the case for racism and oppression as we can see in Mauritania where slavery exists up to our time.

And some of these conflicts include slavery, which was only partially racialized in its historical development, as Hakim Quick and Ahmed Baba have shown. Indeed, at the beginning of Muslim history, slavery had no relationship to black skin, but even mainly affected people with white skin.^{xxiii}

Despite the Qur'anic verse about the multicultural and multiethnic basic definition of the human being, despite the commandment of brotherhood and the principle according to which "an Arab is no better than a non-Arab except in his fear of Allah", throughout Muslim history, Hurgronje observes a certain

“assimilation” of converts through their “arabisation” and “adaptation” to Arab culture and lifestyle. This tendency is also reflected in slavery and its historical development.

Here, too, we have a shift of slavery to black skin and thus a superiority of the Muslim Arabs as slave owners and slave traders over the black slaves, although we must not forget that the caste system of the black ethnic groups of West Africa also continues a system of pre-Islamic slavery. As a consequence, Muslim slavery was only partially racialised.

Arabic had become the world and cultural language of an entire civilization. However, this language was also the language of a people, the Arabs. As a consequence, the new converts adapted to this “Arabic” language and thus also to the cultural customs of the “Arabs”, which united cultural diversity, but in some cases also assimilated it.

The Shuubiyya movement as the movement of so-called “racists”

The representatives of the so-called *Shuubiyya* movement, Hurgronje paradoxically calls the “racists” by making reference to the etymological meaning of the term, precisely rebelled against the arabisation, because they argued with the concept of race by opposing to a supposed Islamic “superiority” of the Arabs, which, however, does not exist neither in the Qur’an nor in the Islamic doctrine.

The whole thing is also paradoxical because the movement of *Shuubiyya* calls itself precisely in reference to verse 49:13, from which it takes the term “*Shuub*” (which stands for peoples) and consequently argues from an “ethno-centric” point of view.^{xxiv}

In this movement, however, Hurgronje sees a “failure” of the Islamic system when dealing with the reality of social and political circumstances. It is therefore the expression of a dialectics between Islam and Muslim societies from a historical and sociological point of view. In my opinion, the author gains this conclusion because he judges the movement too ethnically and disregards its almost exclusively literary-linguistic character.

As the Islamic historian Mottahedeh confirms, the movement rarely contained political elements or only rarely pursued ethnic-political objectives:

“At second sight, however, the remains of the shu’ubiyah controversy provide very little evidence of any overt political aspirations on the part of the shu’ubis. The shu’ubiyah was primarily a literary controversy, and it was used on rare occasions by political movements with a noticeable “ethnic” (or regional) character like the Saffarids^{xxv}, most shu’ubis were not political and were, as often as not, faithful servants of the caliphate.”^{xxvi}

Hurgronje’s Pessimistic Conclusion

The pessimistic stance of Hurgronje discussed above then also implies that the Dutch Islamic scholar does not apply the “system” Islam, which proposes the unity of humanity and the equality of all “races”, to the 1920s. The question now arises as to the reasons for such a pessimistic view.

And I analysed this issue during my study of the last part of Hurgronje’s speech. On the one hand, his aim is to refute theories of his epoch, because he considers them to be hostile to mankind and “belligerent” due to the ideology of the superiority of the white race. Consequently, in his role as a “do-gooder intellectual”, Hurgronje calls on his listeners in Leiden to develop a “racial theory” for peace, within the framework of which the equality of all “races” is emphasized. This does not contradict the Qur’anic view of inclusion and acceptance of diversity, but if approached by a Western view it runs the risk of drifting into discrimination, stigmatization and racism.

And the principle of this theory of the Dutch orientalist should be that of "humanity". And according to Hurgronje, this humanity is based on the cooperation among the "races" of this "race map" of the world, which, in his opinion, cannot be worked out exactly, which in turn shows that Hurgronje clearly sees the continuum of ethnicities and their constant mixing through migration. He concludes his speech by encouraging his audience in the hall of the university to cultivate a "general love of humanity".

And this is the aspect we should start with to draw new conclusions for today's Mauritania. For in this last appeal, the irony of the laughing philosopher Democritus, on whose lantern Hurgronje speaks at the beginning, is certainly evident. I think that the inadequate conclusions of Hurgronje are almost the perfect incentive to continue to deal with the topic today, 100 years after his speech, and to see how a dialogue with Islam can be so fruitful for the anti-racist movements around the world today^{xxvii}, and how the radically anti-racist view of the Qur'an can help the Mauritanian mosaic society to succeed.

Commented English translation: Islam and the race problem

Dear listeners!

For a long time, the latest maps will show us the division of humanity into states, dominions, mandated territories, protectorates and colonies, as they will be there until the outbreak of the next war^{xxviii}. Moreover, if, on such a map, we wanted to indicate our distribution according to criteria such as religion, language, level of civilisation, nationality or race, we would be confronted with an inextricable net; and even then, we would lack an overview of positions and classes, national and international political parties, which cannot be kept apart by local borderlines.

A division and further division, which usually means separation, often leads to rough collisions^{xxix}. Do we have to accept this division as a fact of nature?^{xxx} Do we have to accept that there will be an endless struggle which is a necessary condition of all development? Or will a miracle bring us back a bygone golden age of humanity? Or can we, without delving into the beginning and end of human history, assume that diversity can go hand in hand with unity^{xxxi}, that the problems that move humanity could be investigated by all these groups in unified cooperation, without the need for this difference of opinion^{xxxii} to force one group to face life after life? No one can object to an attempt in the latter direction.

According to many, in this context, the racial difference is the evil factor par excellence. For almost all other groups, gradual amalgamation or peaceful mutual understanding is considered feasible. However, the racial characteristics are unique to every person, independent of his/her will, from his/her birth to his/her death. Racial conflicts are the inevitable result, and the increase in the world population combined with the decrease in all distances makes an intensification of the racial conflict in the near future foreseeable with sufficient certainty^{xxxiii}.

In this context, it is difficult to address the matter as a strictly scientific issue because the race science^{xxxiv} is still very young. Anthropology, archaeology, comparative linguistics and ethnology together^{xxxv} do their all best to reach the right track, but they are still far from there. The criteria concerning the race classification vary, and no race map is still supported by the consensus of the experts. When discussing race-related issues of direct practical importance, however, even professionals often use the colour criterion for simplification^{xxxvi}. This is what a famous French physiologist did when he gave an academic lecture on race improvement at this university last year^{xxxvii}. This was also done by the American writer Stoddard, who in his recently published work entitled "The Rising Tide of Colour Against White World-Supremacy" hung up^{xxxviii} a frightening scene of the dangers that in the near future yellow, brown, black and red threaten the white race, unless the latter soon contemplates unification

instead of wasting its strength on the relatively unworthy political quarrels that now divide Europe. Especially since the early twentieth century, this racial problem has become so acute, in his view, that all other oppositions are dwarfed by it.

Stoddard's book is preceded by an extensive introduction by the biologist Madison Grant, who also wrote about the racial question himself^{xxxix}, and the author can also refer to the statements of various men of authority, who in the last twenty years have dealt with these questions, especially in North America, where the danger of racial flooding is felt most strongly as imminent.

It cannot be denied that the human groups, which, on the basis of whatever somatic and psychic affinity factors, feel themselves to be one and are called races, present humanity with previously unprecedented difficulties, especially in our epoch. The American writers referred to above now base their proposal to ward off the approaching crisis on the dogma of the absolute excellence of the white race, especially of a certain part of that race, and set as their goal the preservation, for that human group, of all the conditions of life under which it can remain what it is, no matter what comes of yellow, red, brown and black. They urge us to hurry up with the erection of the necessary dams; however, they overlook the fact that these would not turn the tide but would rather bring about a struggle to the death, in which the First World War was only child's play.

I would be so glad to show you, instead of such miserable images of the future, a more encouraging painting of what awaits us, but I do not consider myself qualified to do so. Let us suppose I were obliged today to lift a tip of the heavy veil that covers the near future for us. If this was the case, the light available to me would not reveal much more than chaos shrouded in darkness, such as Genesis mentions at the beginning of creation. However, such a vague and discouraging image does not really suit a day of remembrance like the one we are celebrating today^{xl}.

When the present and the future threaten to make us gloomy, we often find solace in a look of remembrance at what used to be in the past. Thus, where we are presented with frightening race problems such as the questions of life for today's humanity, we may derive some encouragement from history, which teaches us that there have also been race issues in the past and that they have not always remained completely unsolved^{xli}.

My lanterns^{xlii} are especially addressed to the Islamic world; so, I may draw your attention to a brief sketch of the attitude that the system Islam, which for more than thirteen centuries has stretched hundreds of millions of people from three parts of the world to the ideal of life, has taken towards the issue of race. My speech then automatically becomes a reverent tribute to the memory of my recently died friend Ignaz Goldziher, the Hungarian expert of Islamic studies, whose essays on this subject^{xliii} are among the most brilliant results of his work.

A few remarks should precede that outline. In this context, we should always bear in mind the following: The system Islam relates to Muhammad's preaching like the fully-grown tree to the seed, from which it sprouted; this growth took about three centuries^{xliv}.

In the course of those three centuries, the activity of the scholars in the central countries of Islam - North Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia - was always interpretative in form, often legislative in substance. In fact, these scholars regarded their own work as the continuation of Muhammad's with such assurance that they boldly derived it directly from the Prophet through fictional traditions^{xlv}. As a consequence, where we are concerned with Muhammad's personal conception, we must use the Qur'an, which contains his authentic divine sayings, almost as a sole source of knowledge^{xlvi}. The highly remarkable system, which sought to bind the individual, domestic, economic and political life of

Muslims to fixed rules forever in all its smallest parts, the edifice of Mohammedan law, dogmatics and mysticism was only completed in its main components in the 10th century AD.

Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that precisely because the legal scholars were formally considered only as interpreters, a wide space remained open for disagreement^{xlvi}. And last but not least, even among Muslims, doctrine and life tend to be separated by a great distance. However, there is a high degree of unity characterising the life of the various Mohammedan peoples, as well as a high level of recognition of the same system, worked out in detail, as an ideal of life which has become of eminent importance for their international society^{xlvi}.

However, Muhammad acted as a messenger of Allah not for the whole of humanity, but for the Arabs^{xlix}. Eleven times in the Qur'an the word "Arabic" appears^l; never otherwise than to say emphatically that the sayings of God, which Muhammad conveys, are given in the own language of those for whom they are intended, not in a barbaric tongue unintelligible to them. This series of revelations, which Muhammad promulgated over the course of more than two decades, is once again announcing itself as new, especially for the Arabs. The Prophet regarded the revelations simply as the Arabic edition entrusted to him by Allah of what Allah had to say to mankind and what the owners of the Holy Scripture, such as Jews and Christians, for example, had possessed for a long time in a form which was understandable to them^{li}. It is true that at a later stage the Qur'an showed its corrective character compared to the older editions of the revelation. When Mohammed realised that Jews and Christians could not accept his mission precisely on the basis of their holy books, this disappointing fact found its simplest explanation for him in the fact that those older scriptures must therefore have been corrupt or misunderstood. The system went one step further when the Qur'an which was seen as the final, most perfect, and unadulterated expression of Allah's word replaced all the previous revelations.

This universalisation of the Arab edition was an inevitable consequence of the Islamised Arabs' attempt at world conquest after Muhammad's death. These almost miraculous conquests were in large part the result of the violent blow that Mohammed gave to the energy of the Arabs first united under his banner, but an effect that he himself did not foresee, and by no means the execution of a plan he had formed. With many changes of purpose and method, Muhammad, as long as he lived, still remained the bearer of the Arab edition of the universal revelation addressed to the Arabs.

In accordance with the older revelations, Muhammad now learned the descent of humanity from one pair^{lii}, thus the fundamental equivalence of all people, in all the variety of features characterising individuals or groups. The later multitude of languages and colours presents the Qur'an as a great miracle of the creation^{liii}, without further considering the origin of such a racial difference. As an Arab prophet, Muhammad had little reason to oppose to disparities between the human races in general on the basis of this principle of equivalence, all the more to turn against the excessive tribal fanaticism that divided the Arabs^{liv}. Among the Arabs, right and duty were limited to the fellow members of their own tribe or their own tribal federation, and those who were outside were objects of contempt, mockery, and enmity. Muhammad did not succeed in eradicating the tribal feuds of the Arabs forever, but he nevertheless ensured the rule of the principle of unity, and temporarily he managed to unite those apparently, hopelessly divided under one banner in such a way that they were able to perform deeds that horrified the world.

The most fundamental expression of Muhammad's teaching of the unity of the human race can be found in the Qur'an^{lv}, which was apparently directed against mutual quarrels, contempt, humiliation and mockery in Muhammad's congregation in Medina. So again, the admonition could only target Arabs,

with at most a few more African, Greek, or Persian slaves and a few foreigners who happened to be among them. By saying that “The believers are brothers”, Allah calls out to them through Muhammad's mouth and attaches to it a strong condemnation of mocking groups of people, who are perhaps better than the mockers themselves, of malice and suspicion^{lvi}. Finally, there follows a verse which at a later stage was regarded in the system as the basis of the doctrine of the equality of all races or nations. It was called the “racial verse”. Starting from it, an entire body of literature on the races was written. However, in the literature, the principle was formulated in general terms, even though the application in Mohammed's thought was limited to the relations among Arab tribes^{lvii}:

“O humanity! Indeed, we created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.”

The inequality in appearance and features is therefore explained in this context in a simple teleological way as serving to distinguish individuals and groups one from another^{lviii}. However, the only valuation criterion mentioned is godliness, i.e. the attitude of man towards Allah and towards his fellow human beings^{lix}.

This single criterion of valuation was maintained in the system Islam. The division of humanity into three main groups based on this differs essentially little from that in civilized, semi-civilized and uncivilized or savages, which is still common among us. The fact that cultural boundaries were identified with religious boundaries speaks for the heyday of Islam (650—1000 AD C.); that view was a generalised one during that epoch. As a consequence, the first class are the Muslims, who enjoy the full light, the second class is made by the owners of the Holy Scripture, who reject Muhammad's message, it is said Jews and Christians, who walk in the twilight^{lx} and whom one may only try to educate to the higher level by moral means; and the third class consists of the pagans^{lxi}, who by persuasion or as necessary by violence must be enslaved by the culture or made harmless for it^{lxii}. The cultural criterion in this distinction, even irrespective of religion, applies in particular to the second class, because even in very ancient times, in addition to the people of the book, people such as the Parsis^{lxiii} were also included, who could be equated with the others on the basis of their level of development without any revelation recognised by Mohammed.

Now one does not smile at the self-conceit, expressed in the cultural task assigned to itself by the first class, that of Muslims. That world empire, which during the 8th century stretched from Morocco and Spain to beyond the borders of China and had absorbed the great cultural states of the ancient world and still showed a tendency to outgrow them, a world empire, which was feared as a constant threat in southern and eastern Europe, was indeed at the forefront of civilization in the early Middle Ages, and to consider itself called to bring the whole of humanity to its destination, Islam had at that time with more imagination than is now required for the white race to take on such a task without being asked.

As far as the racial difference is concerned, the system not only remained faithful to the pronouncement of the Qurân but also increased it by putting statements into the mouth of Muhammad in fictitious traditions, in which it was clearer than in the revelation that equality did not only concern Arab tribes, but in general a human nation as a whole. To mention an example, this saying was put into the Prophet's mouth:

"An Arab is not better than a non-Arab, except by piety and good action!"^{lxiv}

It is understandable that the repeated inculcation of this latter principle was necessary when one recalls the astonishing display of strength of the Arabs during the triumphal march of Islam through the world.

Within a short period of time, Persia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, southern Spain and other countries were subjected to the authority of a people which was hardly known by name^{lxv}. Those nomads, once united as Muslims and stepped outside their sterile peninsula, showed the aptitude to dominate as a top layer the cultivated lands succumbing to their fresh vitality, to change their administration as far as their interests as overlords seemed to require it, and to unify millions of people of all races behind the vanes of their Prophet. The Arabic language did at least as many miracles as the Arab armies; in almost all the above-mentioned countries, the Arabic language soon completely replaced the national languages, so that to this day Syrians, Mesopotamians, Egyptians and North Africans are simply called Arabs by foreigners. During those first centuries of Islamic history, the Islamization of a people included its Arabization^{lxvi}. One does not know what one should be more surprised about: about the speed with which the Arabic language managed to displace those many other languages, or about the flexibility with which this nomadic language managed to borrow its own character with complete preservation of its own feature in order to soon deal with the most profound theological, legal and philosophical matters, mathematics and physics, world history and agriculture and ethnology, grammar and poetry with fine distinction and grace^{lxvii}.

As a consequence, in that first time becoming Muslims meant in a certain sense to become Arabs^{lxviii}. The new converts took Arab surnames, joined Arab families as clients (*maulas*) and did their best to make them soon forget this incorporation and pass as true Arabs, which they often succeeded in doing, all the more so because after the new state of affairs had settled down, the leadership of spiritual life soon passed back into their more experienced hands. Indeed, the development of science and literature in the Muslim world has owed more to non-Arabs than to Arabs. When we speak of the rich Arabic literature and the scientific hegemony of the Arabs in the Middle Ages, we mean the international Muslim science and culture, which occupied the Arabic language as fodder. Only a few national languages, especially Persian and later Turkish, gradually managed to gain a place in the second rank, but this was even first after they had absorbed a considerable part of the Arabic vocabulary. Malays, Muslim Chinese, Indians, Persians, Turks and Egyptians still start their religious education with the careful recitation of the Arabic Qur'an; at their five-times-a-day religious services they use Arabic forms, on Fridays and on their annual religious celebrations they hear an Arabic sermon. Although everyone is allowed to pray in their mother tongue, an Arabic prayer is preferred for solemn and collective, even for private use. In the densely populated centres of all Muslim countries, there are literate people who know how to understand Arabic in writing, and, if necessary, verbally, and who are able to communicate with their peers at the other end of the earth.

This literary Arabic has few local peculiarities and has remained a world language^{lxix}. In contrast, various modern Arabic dialects are now used as spoken languages in the countries where Arabic is used^{lxx}. Some European orientalists have sometimes pushed for the elevation of these dialects to written languages which should replace the universal classical Arabic^{lxxi}. During the last Orientalist Congress, held in Athens in 1912^{lxxii}, an Egyptian scholar indignantly rejected this idea by saying: "You Westerners, seek to facilitate your intercourse with clever artistic languages such as Volapük, Esperanto or Ido, and force us, who possess a wonderful and perfect instrument for international exchange of a few hundred million people, to throw that away? We will be wiser!"

The language is only one manifestation of the wonderful unity shown by the union of Muslim peoples in history. Up to now, it proudly shows the detrimental influence of the political events of the last century. A striking feature consists of the multiplicity of points of similarity, characterizing the individual and

social behaviour as well as the spiritual attitude of Muslims of different races and historical development^{lxxiii}. Now this common attitude to life is by no means a simple reproduction of the habitus of the Arabs from Muhammad's time, as the vocabulary of the Arabic world language is identical with that of the ancient poets and the Qur'an, but all these human forms of movement nevertheless show an Arabic stamp, which is strongly reminiscent of life in the central countries of Islam during the three centuries of the growth of the system. Two Muslims, no matter from which countries, learn to understand each other more quickly than, *ceteris paribus*, two members of another international community in the world.

The rapid success of the Islamised Arabs, which has not been matched in world history, must be explained by a complex of causes, which are only very partly known. But in addition to the elemental life force of Arabs at their first appearance on the world stage, we can certainly mention among the main causes the restriction of his message to the Arabs, so strongly accentuated by Muhammad. When the circumstances transformed that truly Arab message into a universal one, the entire Islam was already so Arabic that the non-Arabs, in order to feel at home in it, had to submit, to a greater or lesser extent, to a linguistic confusion as well as a life distortion.

As I mentioned, this course of action was not apt to vividly impress upon Arabs the principle of equality of all human groups preached by Mohammed^{lxxiv}. During its first century, the Muslim state was rightly called an Arab empire. The Arab supremacy weighed heavily on the subjugated peoples^{lxxv}; this was in particular the case for those who had possessed the most developed culture before Islam. The artificial grafting of the genealogy of individuals, families, genders, and even entire peoples onto the Arabian family tree relieved the pressure on many, but it had its limits, and not all converts wanted to be naturalized in this way: they soon demanded recognition of their equality or majority on the basis of their personal merits. This equitable demand was not well received by the many Arabs, in whom Islam did not have the ability to extinguish the fire of their pagan tribal pride: streams of contempt and reproach poured out on the heads of those barbarians who had sat next to or above them at the hands of Muhammad.

But the reaction didn't stop there. Especially since 750, when under the Abbasid Caliphate Persians, and later also Turks, occupied the highest places in state and society, the non-Arabs did not let their mouths be silenced. In fact, during the 2nd and 3rd century after Muhammad, a rich literature focused on the race-related struggle flourished. The opponents of the Arab prerogatives, the Persians at the front, but soon also representatives of numerous other Islamized nations, took the racial verse of the Qur'an as a starting point; in the words: "We have made you into groups (races) and tribes" they understood by the "races" in particular the non-Arabs and by the "tribes" the Arabs and they derived all kinds of weapons from the arsenals of sacred and profane history and legend, now no longer just to prove the equality of all, but to prove the inferiority of Arabs. These non-Arab racial fanatics were referred to by a name (*shuubiyya*), which is derived from the word *shuub*, races, taken from the racial verse. As a consequence, we can translate their designation by using the term "racists"^{lxxvi}. From the Arab side, they still owed them the answer. There is an amusing aspect of the polemic which was conducted by both sides in Arabic prose and in Arabic satirical poetry, and what is even more remarkable is that among the "racists" one finds genuine Arabs while among the advocates of Arab hegemony one finds writers of non-Arab blood.

Behind this scorn literature there was an audience who was neither the people nor the scholars. The latter honestly maintained the doctrine of equality in their system, albeit with recognition of the historical claims of the Arabs, which were truly not taken out of the blue, to a certain priority, to a nobility derived

from Islam itself. Consequently, they included in the system the provision according to which the supremacy over the Muslims belonged only to members of the Meccan tribe of Quraysh^{lxxvii}, from which Muhammad had sprouted; here they only made as a rule what for more than six centuries, until the downfall of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad, has been taken for granted. In addition, in more than one school of law interpreters, it was considered that the marriage of an Arab woman with a non-Arab, of a Quraysh with a non-Quraysh, of a descendant of Muhammad with a man from another family should only be considered an exceptionally permissible *mésalliance*.^{lxxviii}

However, even these few rules of nobility have never gained dogmatic strength^{lxxix}. Opinions remained divided over the *connubium* and ultimately everything depended on the locally various social relationships. Even during these last years, an important party in the Arab colony in the Netherlands once again vigorously fought the pretensions of the sayyids and sharifs, the descendants of the Prophet, with the arguments known from immemorial time^{lxxx}. Egypt has known dynasties in which the road from slavery through the army to the throne was the normal one^{lxxxi}. When, since the 16th century, the Ottomans^{lxxxii} had become the most powerful rulers in the Muslim world, scholars as well as the people dropped their objections to khalifs who were not Quraysh, indeed descendants of Mohammed later endeavoured to refute in writing the objections raised against this apparent disregard for Arab nobility; their main argument was the principle that merit, and not descent, determined the value of human beings^{lxxxiii}.

In Islam, neither origin nor colour hindered the attainment of the highest ranks. Persians, Turks, Mongols, Berbers and Negroes have held high state offices there and excelled in the sciences.

Islam gave equal opportunity to all races, and all have benefited according to the measure of their gifts.

In the mosque in Mecca, students and teachers of all shades of skin colour can be seen during lecture hours: coal black, green (as the Arabs call a lighter shade), brown, yellow and white, fraternising together, and the same variety is displayed by the citizens of the holy city, even sometimes the members of one Meccan family. The old tendency of mutual disregard, against which the "racial verse" of the Qur'an was directed, is admittedly not yet extinct, but the principle of equality is considered sacred and has also triumphed in life.

The attempt to unite the entire humanity under one banner has also not succeeded in Islam. The religious dogma, to which this form of civilisation had committed itself, was too much to be plausible; the law, which wanted to bind even the slightest expressions of life to unchangeable rules, showed too much the traces of its native land - North Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt - and of the era, in which it had grown up - 650- 1000 AD. Moreover, the rapid disintegration of the theocratic republic, which was the Chaldean Empire at first, into numerous despotic, poorly administered states, which often fought against each other contrary to all Muslim doctrine, stood in the way of the continuation of unity. However, the racial section of the Muslim system contributed much to the initial, not inconsiderable success, and it serves this international community to immortal honour.^{lxxxiv}

Muhammad made no claim to novelty for his revelations, and in Christianity, to which he often appealed, the difference between Greek and Jew, barbarian and Scythian, servant and free had already been abolished^{lxxxv}. However, the League of Nations, which has become the result of Muhammad's thrust, took that principle of equality of human races seriously, which shames other communities. Islam has not remained free of racial conflicts — the racist literature is not the only testimony to this. However, these conflicts have never attained dangerous dimensions.^{lxxxvi} In America and South Africa, churches of white Christians are kept closed to co-religionists among the Negroes and disbelievers. An English

missionary was expelled by his fellow racialists because he had married a Negro woman. The lynching habit makes a few victims every year, but the arrogance shown by whites towards people of colour makes thousands every day and is one of the biggest obstacles to racial peace. The Muslim community has managed to keep itself free in doctrine and life from all such stains.^{lxxxvii}

Our review does not help us to unveil riddles of the future, but it does raise the question of how we will have to determine our attitude towards racial injustice. The motivation of the unity of the human race and the equality of the races, which Muhammad proposed, and was then taken over by the system Islam, is no longer useful for our epoch^{lxxxviii}. Now, for these basic principles, one can rely on statements by renowned racial experts, including Americans^{lxxxix}, who, in contrast to the writers I mentioned in the preamble, came to the conclusion through their study that the talent of a race is not a constant quantity and that, especially with regard to the psychological characteristics, the variations that occur within a group of people considered to be a race are bigger than the differences existing between the races themselves.^{xc}

When choosing between such opposing views, however, sympathy will probably be more decisive than competence, and racial science betrays its youth least of all by the passion with which many of its practitioners praise their dogmas. But right and left, individuals and groups in the practice of race always take the unity of the human race as an axiom^{xc}. The government, which tries to raise the level of civilisation of peoples of other races under its care through administration, legislation and education, the missionaries, who try to convert them to their religion, the merchant, the industrialist and the planter, who try to involve them in international society in their own way, yes, even the racial fanatics, who do their best to convince them of the desirability of their theory of racial isolation, they all consciously or unconsciously stand on the basis of the unity of the human race, no matter how they explain the origin of that unity. The fundamental equality of the races finds supporters and opponents, but the conviction of the desirability of a peaceful society of all these groups is again generally supported. Those writers about the races, who have gained the deepest impression of the urgency of a solution to the racial problem, speak with annoyance of the present leaders of European political science, who stare blindly at essentially insignificant "political" issues, and who, with their peace treaty and their League of Nations, will be swallowed up for a long time by the growing flood of races as by a new flood, without ever having possessed the faintest awareness of the life principles of mankind.

One would be tempted to ask: Should not a racial union be founded instead of the League of Nations, which is based on this fictitious political division of interests, in order to ensure peace and tranquillity for mankind?^{xcii}

Let us imagine for a moment a universal racial congress, to which every group of people, united by a particularly close sense of kinship, had delegated their representatives. The fact of such a meeting alone would already testify to the general acceptance of the axiom of the oneness of humanity. However, before starting with the discussion on the race issues, one should agree on some fundamental issues. Can one now imagine that such a provisional status would include the superiority of one race over another? If general human love were not to be the first and principal article of the common confession of those representing the races, an honest joint search for the greatest common interest would be impossible, and the racial conference would be doomed to failure from the outset. This is a challenging demand for human egoism, but one that cannot be waived.

For now, we will have to look at the issues at hand, still without a racial union or conference, each by the light attributed to it. Our homeland has, even without international assignment or allocation, a crucial

part of the solution of the racial problem for its account; we can work on it without waiting for the permission of great or of the greatest powers, and if we seriously want to, we can even set an example to the other nations. That part of the Far East, which is still called the “Netherlands East Indies” on the map of the political division, has in this respect incontrovertible historical claims to our selfless engagement. The Dutch people started becoming aware of this duty at a very late stage, but fortunately we now see a steadily growing flood of active interest in the lives of Easterners, who were once subjected to the Netherlands.

We have now come into the period of "emancipation" with regard to those peoples^{xciii}. The word has even taken its place in official parlance, although it is still used there with exaggerated timidity. It is a transitional period from an old to a new epoch, and great difficulties can be overcome to make that transition proceed with the required urgency and without unwanted shocks. Due to race egoism or race pride, we would unnecessarily complicate the task. We can only succeed if we are fully prepared to cooperate between white and brown on the basis of racial equality in principle.

Fifty years ago, a discussion of Dutch participation in the solution of the race problem in this environment would have made a somewhat strange impression. At that time, Kern^{xciv} was the only one among our university professors who did call attention to the Dutch East Indies for a moment. He himself was born there, but he had left the tropical world as a child, and in the speech, he gave in 1865 accepting the professorship in Sanskrit, he asked for an apology for a small, casual digression about the Indian Archipelago, because he ventured into territory foreign to him. He then expressed the hope that the world would one day be able to mention the work of the Dutch in India with as much appreciation as he himself had done in his speech on the influence of the Hindus on Indonesia, namely that it would be possible to testify that "we too have given according to the measure of our civilization, out of the fullness of the many blessings that we ourselves share". Kern did not remain a stranger in this area for long. Already in 1883, in Amsterdam, on the occasion of the international colonial exhibition, Kern spoke with authority about the talent and development opportunities of the Malay-Polynesian race and about our task in improving the opportunities of these people; in this context, Kern gained the following conclusion: "There is still an awful lot missing before we, Europeans, can exalt ourselves on what we have achieved there, but there is noticeable progress, and therefore for the time being no reason to despair of the future". Kern, however, represented the languages and culture of Dutch East Indies, and apart from him there was not a single university professor here, of whom there was anything for the Dutch East Indies. No lessons were announced on the series that suggested that the Netherlands had problems to solve that affected Eastern peoples. How much all that has changed in that half-century! There are professors in Leiden now who know the Indies from first-hand experience; many of them have worked there for an important part of their lives. The main issues concerning India fall within the scope of our academic education. Most faculties count Indonesians among their pupils, and since the first of them, who became a doctor here, immediately showed in his dissertation to be an excellent historian and philologist, the talent of the race is no longer the object of meaningless discussion.

This tremendous change is partly a result of the awakened consciousness of the Dutch people, but it also points out that teaching and practice have come into closer contact with each other and that our university has previously become a central organ of our people's life to a greater extent.

This will benefit to such an urgent dealing with the race issue. In the serene atmosphere, which is usually characteristic of our learning rooms and workshops, the scientific determination of the boundary lines that separate the human races, or, who knows, perhaps of the vague transitions that confirm their unity,

can be tested with the best chance of result. But our alma mater also offers the most favourable place for dealing with existential problems, which can wait for the completion of the race card. For here it is easier than elsewhere to keep falsifying factors such as racial egoism, racial imagination, or racial hatred at bay, and to cultivate the love for the human race that is indispensable for finding a solution.

Almost half a century ago, on 8 February 1874, a year before our third centenary, Matthias de Vries^{xv} held an eloquent speech in preparation for this magnificent celebration: "De academia Lugduno-batava libertatis praesidio". At the next centenary, or no, let us hope much earlier, our academy can be sung as praesidium, not only of the libertas, but also of the caritas generis humani, as a bulwark of universal philanthropy!

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End notes

ⁱ Hurgronje, C. S., *Het Mekkaansche feest*, Brill, Leiden 1880.

ⁱⁱ Cf. van Koningsveld P.S., "Conversion of European Intellectuals to Islam: The Case of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje alias 'Abd al-Ghaffār", in: *Muslims in Interwar Europe*, published by Bekim Agai, Umar Ryad and Mehdi Sajid, Brill, Leiden 2016, p. 90.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Rohmana, Jajang, "Rereading Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje: His Islam, Marriage and Indo-European Descents in the Early Twentieth-Century Priangan", in: "Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan", volume 26, number 1 (2018), pp. 35-66. In this article, the author criticises and revises van Koningsveld position on Hurgronje's conversion, Islamic attitude and motivation.

^{iv} Rohmana, Jajang, "Rereading Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje: His Islam, Marriage and Indo-European Descents in the Early Twentieth-Century Priangan" in: "Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan", volume 26, number 1 (2018), p. 41.

^v Rohmana, Jajang, "Rereading Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje: His Islam, Marriage and Indo-European Descents in the Early Twentieth-Century Priangan" in: "Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan", volume 26, number 1 (2018), p. 44.

^{vi} Rohmana, Jajang, "Rereading Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje: His Islam, Marriage and Indo-European Descents in the Early Twentieth-Century Priangan", in: "Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan", volume 26, number 1 (2018), p. 46.

^{vii} Rohmana, Jajang, "Rereading Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje: His Islam, Marriage and Indo-European Descents in the Early Twentieth-Century Priangan", in: "Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan", volume 26, number 1 (2018), p. 62.

^{viii} Cf. Kattmann U., *Vielfalt der Menschen aber keine Rassen. Explanations of the statement on the racial question of a UNESCO workshop*, in: *Biologen in unserer Zeit*, 1996 (5), pp. 70-72, Statement on Race of a scientific UNESCO workshop 1995.

^{ix} Kattmann U., „Die genetische Vielfalt der Menschen widerspricht der Einteilung der Menschen in „Rassen““, *Naturwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, 74. Jahrgang, Heft 6, 2021.

^x Rivera A.M., *Sul razzismo è meglio capirsi*, in: *Comune Info*, <https://comuneinfo.net/sul-razzismo-e-meglio-capirsi/>, dated 20 January 2022.

^{xi} Cf. M. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race or the Racial Basis of European History*. Series: American Immigration Collection, Series 2. 1916; 2nd edition, with a New Preface by Henry Fairfield Osborn. Scribner's Sons, New York 1918; reprint of the edition of 1916 in 2009. In the article entitled „Hitlers Bibel“ by Markus Günther, published on 11 October 2018 in the German newspaper FAZ about Grants influence on Hitler it says: „In dem Machwerk, das 1916 in den Vereinigten Staaten erschien, schnell ein Bestseller wurde und bald eine Millionenaufgabe erreichte, heißt es: „Wir haben fünfzig Jahre gebraucht, um zu verstehen, dass die englische Sprache und ordentliche Kleidung, Schulbesuch und Kirchgang aus einem Neger noch keinen Weißen machen“ (English translation of the quote: The work, which was published in the United States in 1916, quickly became a bestseller and soon sold millions of copies, states: 'It has taken us fifty years to understand that the English language and proper dress, school attendance and churchgoing do not make a Negro a white man). In his book "Mein Kampf" Hitler states: "It is a mistake to assume that a Negro or Chinese person becomes a German if he only learns German and is willing to speak the German language." In "Mein Kampf", Hitler looks with admiration and envy at the "progressive" American laws with which the state was able to prevent the reproduction of "inferior" people.

^{xii} Cf. Rampoldi M., *Pro-Mosaik Manifesto*, ProMosaik LAPH, Istanbul 2022, p. 17.

^{xiii} Cf. Goldin, Judah. "Hillel". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 29 Oct. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hillel>. Accessed 13 July 2026.

^{xiv} The concept of "Up" and "down" is taken from Paul Watzlawick's Axioms of Communication. This theory was expressed by the Austrian-American communication theorist in the book entitled *Pragmatics of Human Communication* he wrote together with Janet Beavin Bavelas and Don D. Jackson. Cf. Watzlawick, Paul, et al. *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes*. W. W. Norton, New York 1967.

^{xv} The known analogy between the eye and the lantern actually goes back to the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles and not to the philosopher Democritus. Cf. O'Brien D. The Effect of A Simile: Empedocles' Theories of Seeing and Breathing. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*. 1970;90:140-179. doi:10.2307/629759

^{xvi} Cf. *Cultural diversity in Islam*, edited by Abdul Aziz Said, Meena Sharify-Funk, University Press of America, Inc, Lanham, MD 2003.

^{xvii} Cf. the interpretation of Ibn Kathir: Virtues of Surat An-Nisa, A Madinan Surah Al-'Awfi Reported that Ibn 'Abbas said that Surat An-Nisa' was revealed in Al-Madinah. Ibn Marduwah recorded similar statements from 'Abdullah bin Az-Zubayr and Zayd bin Thabit. In his Mustadrak, Al-Hakim recorded that 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud said, "There are five Ayat in Surat An-Nisa' that I would prefer to the life of this world and all that is in it, إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ (Surely, Allah wrongs not even the weight of an atom,) [4:40], إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ (If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden to do) [4:31], إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ (Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He

forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills) [4:48], وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ (If they (hypocrites), when they had been unjust to themselves, had come to you) [4:64], and, وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا (And whoever does evil or wrongs himself, but afterwards seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful) [4:110]. Al-Hakim recorded that Ibn 'Abbas said, "Ask me about Surat An-Nisa', for I learned the Qur'an when I was still young." Al-Hakim said, "This Hadith is Sahih according to the criteria of the Two Sahihs, and they did not collect it." بِسْمِ اللَّهِ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً (1. O mankind! Have Taqwa of your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him He created his mate, and from them both He created many men and women and have Taqwa of Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and revere the wombs. Surely, Allah is always watching over you.) The Command to have Taqwa, a Reminder about Creation, and Being Kind to Relatives Allah commands His creatures to have Taqwa of Him by worshipping Him Alone without partners. He also reminds to them of His ability, in that He created them all from a single person, Adam, peace be unto him. وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا (And from him He created his wife) Hawwa' (Eve), who was created from Adam's left rib, from his back while he was sleeping. When Adam woke up and saw Hawwa', he liked her and had affection for her, and she felt the same toward him. An authentic Hadith states, إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلْعٍ، وَإِنَّ أَعْوَجَ شَيْءٍ فِي الضِّلْعِ أَغْلَاهُ، فَإِنْ ذَهَبْتَ تُقِيمُهُ كَسَرْتَهُ، وَإِنْ اسْتَمْتَعْتَ بِهَا اسْتَمْتَعْتَ بِهَا وَفِيهَا عَوْجٌ (Woman was created from a rib. Verily, the most curved portion of the rib is its upper part, so, if you should try to straighten it, you will break it, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked.) Allah's statement, وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً (And from them both He created many men and women;) means, Allah created from Adam and Hawwa' many men and women and distributed them throughout the world in various shapes, characteristics, colors and languages. In the end, their gathering and return will be to Allah. Allah then said, وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ (And have Taqwa of Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights) and revere the wombs), protect yourself from Allah by your acts of obedience to Him. Allah's statement, الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ (through Whom you demand your mutual (rights)), is in reference to when some people say, "I ask you by Allah, and then by the relation of the Rahim (the womb, i.e. my relationship to you)", according to Ibrahim, Mujahid and Al-Hasan. Ad-Dahhak said; "Fear Allah Whom you invoke when you conduct transactions and contracts." "And revere the womb by not cutting the relations of the womb, but keep and honor them, as Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah, Mujahid, Al-Hasan, Ad-Dahhak, Ar-Rabi', and others have stated. Allah's statement, إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا (Surely, Allah is always watching over you) means, He watches all your deeds and sees your every circumstance. In another Ayah, Allah said; وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ (And Allah is Witness over all things.) [58:6]. An authentic Hadith states, اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ كَأَنَّ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ (Worship Allah as if you see Him, for even though you cannot see Him, He sees you.) This part of the Ayah encourages having a sense of certainty that Allah is always watching, in a complete and perfect manner. Allah mentioned that He has created mankind from a single father and a single mother, so that they feel compassion for each other and are kind to the weaker among them. In his Sahih, Muslim recorded that Jarir bin 'Abdullah Al-Bajali said that a delegation from Mudar came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and he saw their state, wearing striped woolen clothes due to poverty. After the Zuhr prayer, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood up and gave a speech in which he recited, يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ (O mankind! Have Taqwa of your Lord, Who created you from a single person,) until the end of the Ayah. He ﷺ also recited, يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ (O you who believe! Have Taqwa of Allah. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the tomorrow) [59:18]. He also encouraged them to give charity, saying, مَنْ صَاعَ بُرَّةٍ، مِنْ صَاعَ زَيْتٍ، مِنْ صَاعَ تَمْرٍ (A man gave Sadaqah from his Dinar, from his Dirham, from his Sa' of wheat, from his Sa' of dates) until the end of the Hadith. This narration was also collected by Ahmad and the Sunan compilers from Ibn Mas'ud.

^{xviii} Cf. the interpretation of Ibn Kathir: And We have sent down to you the Book (this Qur'an) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and Muhayminan over it (old Scriptures). So judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you. To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you; so compete in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to Allah; then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ (48) And so judge between them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires but beware of them lest they turn you far away from some of that which Allah has sent down to you. And if they turn away, then know that Allah's will is to punish them for some sins of theirs. And truly, most men are rebellious (49) Do they then seek the judgement of (the days of) ignorance And who is better in judgement than Allah for a people who have firm faith (50) Praising the Qur'an; the Command to Refer to the Qur'an for Judgment Allah mentioned the Tawrah that He sent down to His Prophet Musa, the one whom He spoke directly to, praising it, commanding that it should be implemented, before it was abrogated. Allah then mentioned the Injil, praised it and commanded its people to adhere to it and follow it, as we stated. He next mentioned the Glorious Qur'an that He sent down to His honorable servant and Messenger. Allah said, وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ (And We have sent down to you the Book in truth...) meaning, with the truth that, no doubt, is coming from Allah, مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ (confirming the Scripture that came before it) meaning, the Divinely Revealed Books that praised the Qur'an and mentioned that it would be sent down from Allah to His servant and Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. The

Qur'an was revealed as was foretold in the previous Scriptures. This fact increased faith in the previous Scriptures for the sincere who have knowledge of these Scriptures, those who adhered to Allah's commands and Laws and believed in His Messengers. Allah said, *قُلْ آمِنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَجْرُونَ لِلآذِقَانِ سُجَّدًا - وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولًا* (Say: "Believe in it or do not believe (in it). Verily, those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration." And they say: "Glory be to our Lord! Truly, the promise of our Lord must be fulfilled.") meaning that they say, the promise of our Lord, concerning the coming of Muhammad ﷺ by the words of His previous Messengers, will certainly be fulfilled. Allah's statement, *وَمُحَمَّدًا عَلَيْهِ* (and Muhayminan over it) means entrusted over it, according to Sufyan Ath-Thawri who narrated it from Abu Ishaq from At-Tamimi from Ibn 'Abbas. 'Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn 'Abbas said, "Muhaymin is, 'the Trustworthy'. Allah says that the Qur'an is trustworthy over every Divine Book that preceded it." This was reported from 'Ikrimah, Sa'id bin Jubayr, Mujahid, Muhammad bin Ka'b, 'Atiyyah, Al-Hasan, Qatadah, 'Ata' Al-Khurasani, As-Suddi and Ibn Zayd. Ibn Jarir said, "The Qur'an is trustworthy over the Books that preceded it. Therefore, whatever in these previous Books conforms to the Qur'an is true, and whatever disagrees with the Qur'an is false." Al-Walibi said that Ibn 'Abbas said that Muhayminan means, 'Witness'. Mujahid, Qatadah and As-Suddi said the same. Al-'Awfi said that Ibn 'Abbas said that Muhayminan means, 'dominant over the previous Scriptures'. These meanings are similar, as the word Muhaymin includes them all. Consequently, the Qur'an is trustworthy, a witness, and dominant over every Scripture that preceded it. This Glorious Book, which Allah revealed as the Last and Final Book, is the most encompassing, glorious and perfect Book of all times. The Qur'an includes all the good aspects of previous Scriptures and even more, which no previous Scripture ever contained. This is why Allah made it trustworthy, a witness and dominant over all Scriptures. Allah promised that He will protect the Qur'an and swore by His Most Honorable Self, *إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ* (Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr and surely, We will guard it (from corruption).) [15:9] Allah said, *فَاَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ* (So judge between them by what Allah has revealed.) The Ayah commands: O Muhammad! Rule between the people, Arabs and non-Arabs, lettered and unlettered, by what Allah has revealed to you in this Glorious Book and what it approves of for you from the Law of the previous Prophets, as Ibn Jarir said. Ibn Abi Hatim reported that Ibn 'Abbas said, "The Prophet had the choice to judge between them or to turn away from them and refer them to their own Law. Then this Ayah was revealed, *وَأَن اَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ* (So judge between them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires...) and he was commanded to judge between them by our Book". Allah's statement *وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ* (and follow not their vain desires...) This means the ideas they promote, because of which they turned away from what Allah revealed to His Messengers. This is why Allah said, *وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ* (And follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you.) The Ayah commands: Do not diverge from the truth that Allah has ordained for you, to the vain desires of these miserable, ignorant people. Allah's statement, *لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً* (To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way.) *لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً* (To each among you, We have prescribed a law) Shir'at meaning, a clear path, as Ibn Abi Hatim recorded from Ibn 'Abbas. *وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً* (If Allah willed, He would have made you one nation.) This is a general proclamation to all nations informing them of Allah's mighty ability. If Allah wills, He would make all mankind follow one religion and one Law, that would never be abrogated. Allah decided that every Prophet would have his own distinct law that is later abrogated partially or totally with the law of a latter Prophet. Later on, all previous laws were abrogated by the Law that Allah sent with Muhammad ﷺ, His servant and Messenger, whom Allah sent to the people of earth as the Final Prophet. Allah said, *وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ* (If Allah willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you.) This Ayah means, Allah has instituted different laws to test His servants' obedience to what He legislates for them, thus, He rewards or punishes them according to their actions and what they intend. 'Abdullah bin Kathir said that the Ayah, *فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ* (In what He has given you) means, of the Book. Next, Allah encouraged rushing to perform good deeds, *فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ* (so strive as in a race in good deeds) which are obedience to Allah, following His Law that abrogated the laws that came before it, and believing in His Book, the Qur'an, which is the Final Book that He revealed. Allah said next, *إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ* (The return of you (all) is to Allah;) Therefore, O people, your return and final destination is to Allah on the Day of Resurrection, *فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ* (then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ.) Allah will inform you about the truth in which you used to differ and will reward the sincere, as compensation for their sincerity, and will punish the disbelieving, rebellious people who rejected the truth and deviated from it to other paths, without proof or evidence to justify their actions. Rather, they have rejected the clear evidences, unequivocal proofs and established signs. Ad-Dahhak said that, *فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ* (So strive as in a race in good deeds) is directed at the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ, but the first view is more apparent. Allah's statement, *وَأَن اَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ* (And so judge between them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires,) emphasizes this command and forbids ignoring it. Allah said next, *وَاحْذَرُوا أَن يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ* (but beware of them lest they turn you far away from some of that which Allah has sent down to you) meaning; beware of the Jews, your enemies, lest they distort the truth for you in what they convey to you. Therefore, do not be deceived by them, for they are liars, treacherous and disbelievers. *فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا* (And if they turn away,) from the judgement that you pass in their disputes, and they defy Allah's Law, *فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَن يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ*

^{xx} Cf. the interpretation of Ibn Kathir: All of Mankind are the Children of Adam and Hawwa': Allah the Exalted declares to mankind that He has created them all from a single person, Adam, and from that person He created his mate, Hawwa'. From their offspring He made nations, comprised of tribe, which include subtribes of all sizes. It was also said that nations refers to non-Arabs, while tribes refers to Arabs. Various statements about this were collected in an individual introduction from the book, Al-Inbah, by Abu Amr Ibn Abdul-Barr, and from the book, Al-Qasad wal-Amam fi Ma'rifah Ansab Al-Arab wal-'Ajam. Therefore, all people are the descendants of Adam and Hawwa' and share this honor equally. The only difference between them is in the religion that revolves around their obedience to Allah the Exalted and their following of His Messenger. After He forbade backbiting and belittling other people, alerting mankind that they are all equal in their humanity. Allah said, **يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعْرِفُوا**

(O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another.) so that they get to know each other by their nation or tribe. Mujahid said that Allah's statement, **لِتَعْرِفُوا** (that you may know one another.) refers to one's saying, "So-and-so the son of so-and-so, from the tribe of so-and-so." Sufyan Ath-Thawri said, "The Himyar (who resided in Yemen) dealt with each other according to their provinces, while the Arabs in the Hijaz (Western Arabia) dealt with each other according to their tribes."

Honor is earned through Taqwa of Allah

Allah the Exalted said,

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَا

(Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqla.) meaning, 'you earn honor with Allah the Exalted on account of Taqla, not family lineage.' There are many Hadiths from the Prophet that support this meaning. Al-Bukhari narrated that Abu Hurayrah said, "Some people asked the Prophet, 'Who is the most honorable among people?' He replied,

«أَكْرَمُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ»

(The most honorable among them with Allah is the one who has the most Taqla.) They said, 'We did not ask you about this.' He said,

«فَأَكْرَمُ النَّاسِ يُوسُفُ بْنُ يَاسِينَ، ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ، ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ، ابْنُ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ، ابْنُ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ»

(Then the most honorable person is Yusuf, Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Khalil.) They said, 'We did not ask you about this.' He said,

«فَعَنْ مَعَادِنِ الْعَرَبِ سَمِئَلُوتِي»

(Then you want to ask me about the Arab lineage) They said, 'Yes.' He said,

«فَخَيْرُكُمْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ خَيْرُكُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ إِنْ أَفْقَهُوا»

(Those among you who were best in Jahiliyyah, are the best among you in Islam, if they attain religious understanding.)" Al-Bukhari collected this Hadith in several places of his Sahih, An-Nasa'i did as well in the Tafsir section of his Sunan. Muslim recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ»

(Verily, Allah does not look at your shapes or wealth, but he looks at your hearts and actions.) Ibn Majah also collected this Hadith. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that 'Abdullah bin 'Umar said, "On the day Makkah was conquered, the Messenger of Allah performed Tawaf around the Ka'bah while riding his camel, Al-Qaswa', and was touching the corners with a stick he had in his hand. He did not find a place in the Masjid where his camel could sit and had to dismount on men's hands. He led his camel to the bottom of the valley, where he had her sit down. The Messenger of Allah later gave a speech while riding Al-Qaswa' and said, after thanking Allah the Exalted and praising Him as He should be praised,

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَدْ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ عُبِّيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَتَعَطَّلَهَا بِأَتَانِهَا، فَالَّذِينَ رَجَلْنَ عَلَى نَفْسٍ كَرِيمٍ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَرَجُلٌ فَاجِرٌ شَقِيٌّ هُوَ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعْرِفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ»

(O people! Allah the Exalted has removed from you the slogans of Jahiliyyah and its tradition of honoring forefathers. Men are of two types, a man who is righteous, fearful of Allah and honorable to Allah, or a man who is vicious, miserable and little to Allah the Exalted. Verily, Allah the Exalted and Most Honored said, (O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqla. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.)) The Prophet said,

«أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ»

(I say this and invoke Allah for forgiveness for me and for you.)" This was recorded by 'Abd bin Humayd. Allah the Exalted said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

(Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.) means, 'He is All-Knowing of you and All-Aware of all of your affairs.' Allah guides whom He wills, misguides whom He wills, grants mercy to whom He wills, torments whom He wills, elevates whom He wills above whom He wills. He is the All-Wise, the All-Knowing, the All-Aware in all this. Several scholars relied on this honorable Ayah and the honorable Hadiths we mentioned as evidence that compatibility in marriage is not a condition of marriage

contracts. They said that the only condition required in this regard is the adherence to the religion, as in the statement of Allah, the Exalted,

إِنْ أَرَادْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ

^{xxi} Cf. the interpretation of Ibn Kathir: And indeed We know that they (polytheists and pagans) say: "It is only a human being who teaches him." The tongue of the man they refer to is foreign, while this (the Qur'an) is (in) a clear Arabic tongue (103). The Idolators' Claim that the Qur'an was taught by a Human, and the Refutation of their Claim Allah tells us about the idolators' lies, allegations, and slander when they claimed that this Qur'an which Muhammad ﷺ had recited for them, was actually taught to him by a human. They referred to a foreign (i.e., non-Arab) man who lived among them as the servant of some of the clans of Quraysh and who used to sell goods by As-Safa. Maybe the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to sit with him sometimes and talk to him a little, but he was a foreigner who did not know much Arabic, only enough simple phrases to answer questions when he had to. So in refutation of their claims of fabrication, Allah said: *لِسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ* (The tongue of the man they refer to is foreign, while this (the Qur'an) is a (in) clear Arabic tongue.) meaning, how could it be that this Qur'an with its eloquent style and perfect meanings, which is more perfect than any Book revealed to any previously sent Prophet, have been learnt from a foreigner who hardly speaks the language? No one with the slightest amount of common sense would say such a thing.

^{xxii} Selmani, Lirim. (2019). "Der Koran und die arabische Schrift: Der mündliche Prophet und seine schriftliche umma", in "Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft". 27. 239-267. 10.1515/zfr-2018-0025.

^{xxiii} Cf. Rampoldi M., *Deracialisation of slavery; Abdullah Hakim Quick and Ahmed Baba*, ProMosaik LAPH, Istanbul 2025, p. 62: „However, the association that may have existed on the American continent between the colour black and slavery never existed on Muslim lands. Moreover, at the beginning of Islam the majority of slaves were white. “

^{xxiv} Cf. Roy Mottahedeh: *The Shu'ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran*, in: International Journal of Middle East Studies, volume 7, number 2 (1976), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1976, pp. 161–182.

^{xxv} Cf. Clifford Edmund Bosworth, "The Tāhirids and the Šaffārids", in: *The Cambridge History of Iran, volume 4 – The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, published by R. N. Frye, Cambridge 1975.

^{xxvi} Cf. Clifford Edmund Bosworth, "The Tāhirids and the Šaffārids", in: *The Cambridge History of Iran, volume 4 – The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, published by R. N. Frye, Cambridge 1975, p. 162.

^{xxvii} Cf. Afsaruddin A., *Islam's anti-racist message from the 7th century still resonates today*, *The Conversation*, 6 July 2020, <https://theconversation.com/islams-anti-racist-message-from-the-7th-century-still-resonates-today-141575>

^{xxviii} The colonialist system Snouck Hurgronje actively belongs too is a system of shiftable division of a world which will not remain peaceful for a long time and is in practice generating the next war soon. So, the author understands that soon a next war (the Second World War) will come and change the colonial world he lives in during his epoch. So our concept of Western colonialism as for example defined in "Britannica" (cf. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Western-colonialism>) as Western colonialism, a political-economic phenomenon whereby various European nations explored, conquered, settled, and exploited large areas of the world should be integrated with the term of the division of the territories according to paradigms which have neither meaning nor objective/rational justification. The Latin concept of *divide et impera* is exactly based on the idea that the exploitation of differences and divisions can strengthen the power of the conqueror. The concept used by the Romans was then represented by Niccolo Machiavelli in *Il Principe* cf. Machiavelli N., *Il Principe*, Newton & Compton, Rome 2005). The same strategy was applied by the French colonial power in Mauritania. Cf. the following article to understand the complexity of territorial division in French West Africa: Acloque B., « L'idée de frontière en milieu nomade : héritage, appropriation et implications politiques actuelles (Mauritanie, Sahara occidental) », in: M. Villasante Cervello (dir.), *Colonisations et héritages actuels au Sahara et au Sahel ; Problèmes conceptuels, état des lieux et nouvelles perspectives de recherche*, volume 2, L'Harmattan, Paris 2007, pp. 353-382.

^{xxix} The escalation Snouck Hurgronje sees includes the following three step of increase of the division-related conflict: division, more division, in the end resulting in the so-called collision of territories which are not split according to any justified principle whereby it does not make any difference if the division is religious, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, race-related or based on any other distinctive element like for example the level of development. As an example of a collision caused by ethnic division in the region, cf. Sauriol E., *Comprendre les conflits dits « ethniques » : Le conflit sénégal-mauritanie de 1989*, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, July 2007. In Mauritania the division and collision is a peripheral one because of the exploitation by the French power of the rich regions next to the Mauritanian desert remaining the peripheral territory of the empire. Cf. Lucas J., « À la périphérie de l'Empire: constructions et représentations de la Mauritanie sous administration coloniale française », *Revista de estudios internacionales mediterráneos*, 21 (2016), pp. 27-45.

^{xxx} Believing that the eternal struggle is the basis of human historical development is an idea based on the natural law school which starts from the assumption that there are universal principles determining human conduct. However, if starting from

a negative concept of anthropology like the one of Thomas Hobbes *homo homini lupus* (taken from the Roman comedian Plautus in his play entitled *Asinara* and developed in Hobbes T., *On the Citizen*, edited by Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, we see the human society - which can never live in harmony because the human being is not a social being - as a motor of eternal and constantly renewed conflicts. This eternal competition can only be solved by a contract based on the acceptance of force and justice from an authoritarian regime. This is the absolute opposite of the Qur'anic view of people who are indeed divided into groups, tribes, and peoples, but strive for the good and are in competition to achieve the good. In the Qur'anic vision the human being has been created in the best way (see Qur'an 95:4 saying: "We created man in the best design"), and diversity is the real motor for the promotion of ethical excellence (see Qur'an 49:13: "O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware." See also Qur'an 5:48 where it states: "... If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given each of you. So compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you of the truth regarding your differences").

^{xxxi} In Islam cultural and ethnic diversity is part of the unity of the ummah according to the principle of tawhid. The Islamic doctrine of pluralism stems from the following logical principle: Since in Islam Allah alone is One and Unique, everything other than Him (based on the principle of the total alterity of Allah as the total other), in other words His creation, is projected into multiplicity/diversity. However, the supreme divine mercy, which envelops all things, then again results in the principle according to which there is no conflict at all in Islam between the unity and the diversity. This is again the reason why Islam is a religion opposing racism and slavery and promoting and accentuating/preserving diversity as the mirror/expression of tawhid. Cf. Kamali M. H., "Diversity and Pluralism: A Qur'anic Perspective", *ICR Journal* 1 (1), 2020, p. 30: "He (Allah) alone is one, but His creation is moulded in inalienable pluralism, which is embedded in the inner make-up of the human person, and then the outer manifestations of how he relates to his fellow humans and the wider world around him. Humans are created in the image of multiplicity and pluralism ranging from their inner abilities and talents to the outer manifestations of race and religion, language and culture, tribe and nation, and so forth".

^{xxxii} In the Islamic view, there are two different categories of the so-called *ikhtilaf* (which in Arabic means disagreement and/or difference of opinion) opposed to the negative concept of *tafarruq* which means the destruction of the unity (see Qur'an 3:103: "And hold firmly together to the rope of Allah and do not be divided. Remember Allah's favour upon you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so you—by His grace—became brothers. And you were at the brink of a fiery pit, and He saved you from it. This is how Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so that you may be rightly guided" and Qur'an 3:105: "And do not be like those who split into sects and differed after clear proofs had come to them. It is they who will suffer a tremendous punishment") and connected with the concept of mutual understanding, called *tafahum*: one is the permissible disagreement in the context of juristic interpretation only opposed to the not-permissible agreement (which is related to clear textual evidence in Qur'an and Sunnah), see: Kamali M.H., *The scope of diversity and ikhtilaf (juristic disagreement) in the shari'ah*, in: *Islamic Studies* 37:3 (1998).

^{xxxiii} The pessimistic view of Snoukh Hurgronje can be explained by his epoch between one world war and a second world war to come and felt by the author. Hurgronje literally feels that Europe is divided, and that fascism is on the rise as international or transnational movement based on racial divisions which are escalating. As shown by the researcher Julia Gomez Reig in her interview entitled *Transnational fascism* (see: *Transnational fascism*, in: EUI, 18 March 2024): "By the time Mussolini and the fascists marched on Rome, their takeover was not as much of a cleavage as the consecution of a broader process: an Italian "revolution from the right." But the fascists gave name and entity to a form of political intervention that already existed in Barcelona, Madrid, or Munich. By doing so, they opened up a space of experimentation, rapidly attracting non-Italian actors from across Europe and the world."

^{xxxiv} Hurgronje tries to see the so-called "race science" as a positive instrument to classify ethnic diversity while understanding of course the negative applications of it. However, he affirms how racism cannot be opposed to without talking about the concept of race itself as a distinctive characteristic of human beings who are different because they have different ethnic features. Cf. the two positions I have mentioned above: see note 791, Kattmann U., „Die genetische Vielfalt der Menschen widerspricht der Einteilung der Menschen in „Rassen“, *Naturwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, 74th year, Heft 6, 2021 and note 792 Rivera A.M., *Sul razzismo è meglio capirsi*, in: <https://comuneinfo.net/sul-razzismo-e-meglio-capirsi/>, dated 20 January 2022.

^{xxxv} The idea the author starts from is an interdisciplinary approach to classify ethnic diversity in order to create a so-called map of ethnic diversity based on a consensus and of course not based on fascist ideas of superiority of one race over the others which was the idea of many researchers of his epoch as we will see in the next passages. However, as Haile Selassie said when he spoke at the United Nations on 6 October 1963, the following applies "... until the color of a man's skin is of no

more significance than the color of his eyes.” This is also the starting point of two essays of the German biologist writer Svenja Tidow, cf. Tidow S., *Rassismus und die richtigen Worte*, ProMosaik LAPH, Berlin 2020 and *Rassismus und urbaner Antiziganismus*, ProMosaik LAPH, Berlin 2020.

^{xxxvi} Colour was used by researchers in the field of natural sciences to explain diversity in a neutral manner. However, in history, colour and then the black colour of the skin was connotated negatively as opposed to the superiority of the white race. See the abstract to Jablonski N.G., *Skin color and race*, in: *Am J Phy Anthropol.*, 175 (2), 2021, pp.437–447, where about the so-called development of colourism into racism and race-based discrimination the author states: “Skin color is the primary physical criterion by which people have been classified into groups in the Western scientific tradition. From the earliest classifications of Linnaeus, skin color labels were not neutral descriptors, but connotated meanings that influenced the perceptions of described groups. In this article, the history of the use of skin color is reviewed to show how the imprint of history in connection with a single trait influenced subsequent thinking about human diversity. Skin color was the keystone trait to which other physical, behavioral, and culture characteristics were linked. To most naturalists and philosophers of the European Enlightenment, skin color was influenced by the external environment and expressed an inner state of being. It was both the effect and the cause. Early investigations of skin color and human diversity focused on understanding the central polarity between “white” Europeans and non-white others, with most attention devoted to explaining the origin and meaning of the blackness of Africans. Consistently negative associations with black and darkness influenced philosophers David Hume and Immanuel Kant to consider Africans as less than fully human and lacking in personal agency. Hume and Kant's views on skin color, the integrity of separate races, and the lower status of Africans provided support to diverse political, economic, and religious constituencies in Europe and the Americas interested in maintaining the transatlantic slave trade and upholding chattel slavery. The mental constructs and stereotypes of color-based races remained, more strongly in some places than others, after the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery. The concept of color-based hierarchies of people arranged from the superior light-colored people to inferior dark-colored ones hardened during the late seventeenth century and have been reinforced by diverse forces ever since. These ideas manifest themselves as racism, colorism, and in the development of implicit bias. Current knowledge of the evolution of skin color and of the historical development of color-based race concepts should inform all levels of formal and informal education. Awareness of the influence of color memes and race ideation in general on human behavior and the conduct of science is important.”

^{xxxvii} Charles Richet in his lecture entitled *La sélection humaine*, held on 28 January 1921 in the Grand Auditorium of the University. Here Hurgonje mentions a very dangerous development of the so-called study of ethnic differences to eugenics and justification of the superiority of “elite” races over others. In this work entitled *La sélection humaine* the French physiologist who even won the Nobel Prize for his achievements expresses his absolutely eugenicist idea according to which a racial elite can be achieved by selection. The final result would be a higher human nature, as he called it. Cf. La Vergata A., *In the name of science: the conceptual and ideological background of Charles Richet's eugenics*, in: *Hist. Cienc. Saude Manguinhos*, August 2018, 25 (suppl 1), pp. 125-144. The original of Charles Richet was published by Librairie Felix Alcan in Paris in 1919. As pointed out by Hurgonje, simplification is one of the main elements producing such pseudo-scientific research.

^{xxxviii} Another result of simplification is the work of Lothrop Stoddard entitled “*The rising tide of color against white world-supremacy*”, published by Charles Scribner's sons in New York in 1921. Stoddard must be called by his name: he was a white supremacist. Like Richet he was eugenicist and affirmed the separation of the “primary races” by warning against the mixing of these higher white races with the inferior colours, a very dangerous ideological book comparable to that of Madison Grant, praised by Adolf Hitler, see note 793 above.

^{xxxix} Madison Grant is the author of the work *The passing of the great race*, published in 1916 in New York by the same publishing house which will publish Lothrop Stoddard five years later. As mentioned by Aliya R. Hoff in the article about Madison Grant published by the Arizona State University on 20 June 2021 (cf. the online version on the website <https://embryo.asu.edu/pages/madison-grant-1865-1937>): “Grant promoted the ideals of the eugenics movement in the US throughout the early twentieth century. The eugenics movement aimed to increase reproduction among people eugenicists claimed were superior and prevent the reproduction of those they considered inferior, often through sterilization. The eugenics movement is based on the long-discredited claim that humans can be grouped into distinct, pure, races and ranked in terms of alleged biological superiority.”

^{xl} After having touched the highest levels of racism, Hurgonje says that instead of looking at such a foul future, we should look back to history to find an alternative to the racial division based on colour and simplification resulting in the affirmation of white supremacy and in the support of total division and prohibition of mixing races. And he finds his alternative in Islam. And he calls his paradigm the “Islamic system” and/or “System Islam”.

^{xli} According to Hurgonje, Islam found a way to solve the race problem while this cannot be said about Western culture which is dominated by racist and white-supremacist views and ideologies. What was historical fascism at the time of

Hurgronje is today the so-called right-wing populist ideology and the so-called right-wing politics Hurgronje seems to describe as a constant in Western politics opposed to the system Islam which in a way – even if not completely – overcame tribal supremacy in the Arabic Peninsula first, and then ideologies based on racism and ethnic discrimination when Islam became a world religion expanding outside the lands of the Arabs. Islam affirms the primacy of religion and does not categorise people according to ethnic and race-related characteristics but according to their faith and ethical behaviour. The new community of the Muslims according to Qur'an 2:142 ("And it is thus that We appointed you to be the community of the middle way so that you might be witnesses to all mankind and the Messenger might be a witness to you. We appointed the direction which you formerly observed so that We might distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels. For it was indeed burdensome except for those whom Allah guided. And Allah will never leave your faith to waste. Allah is full of gentleness and mercy to mankind") substitutes and overcomes tribal supremacy, which was typical in pre-Islamic Arabia, and after that, with the expansion of Islam, the categorisation of people based on ethnic and race-related features of any kind. However, If Islamic theology and law were colour-blind, Muslims were not, and so Arab supremacy was in issue in Muslim history. As we will see later on in Hurgronje's conference, a social and literary movement opposing to this Arab ethnocentric view was the Iranian *shuubiyya* movement. About race and slavery, see: Lewis B., *Race and slavery in the Middle East*, Oxford University Press, New York 1990.

^{xlii} In this context, Hurgronje probably makes reference to the Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope using a lantern he held to the faces of the citizens of Athen to find, among them, an honest man. See about this Greek philosopher: Diogenes, *Light from the lantern of Diogenes*, Legare Street Press, Ireland 2022. However, consider my note 15 where I state the following: The known analogy between the eye and the lantern actually goes back to the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles and not to the philosopher Democritus. Cf. O'Brien D. The Effect of A Simile: Empedocles' Theories of Seeing and Breathing. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*. 1970;90:140-179. doi:10.2307/629759

^{xliii} Cf. in particular "Muhammedanische Studien", part 1, Halle a. S. 1889; ZDMG, Volume LIII, pp. 601–620, etc. Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921) was a famous Jewish orientalist from Hungary. Together with the German scholar Theodor Nöldeke and Snoukh Hurgronje, Ignaz Goldziher is considered one of the main founders of European Islamic studies. See Tamas Turan, *Ignaz Goldziher as a Jewish Orientalist, Traditional Learning, Critical Scholarship, and Personal Piety*, in: *Europäisch-jüdisches Studien*, volume 55, published by De Gruyter, Oldenburg 2023.

^{xliv} Here Hurgronje, based on the metaphor of the tree which generally speaking stands for life, and is a symbol of growth, resilience and interconnectedness, makes reference to the 3 first centuries of Islam between 622 (the year of the death of the Prophet Muhammad) and the beginning of the 10th century in order to show how during this epoch what he calls "System Islam" was developed. However, the traditional term of "Islamic Golden Age" extensively used by historian refers to the epoch starting in the 8th century (during the time of the Abbasid caliphate whose peak is seen during the reign of Harun al-Rashid from to the 13th century, during which much of the historically Islamic world was ruled by various caliphates and science, economic development, and cultural works flourished. One important event during this Gold Age was the inauguration of the House of Wisdom (*bayt al-hikma*) in Baghdad, where scholars from various parts of the world with different cultural backgrounds were mandated to gather and translate all of the world's classical knowledge into the Arabic language (see: Gutas D., *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)*. Routledge, London, New York 1998. Jim Al-Khalili, *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance*, Penguin Publishing Group, New York 2011. Chandio A.R., "The house of wisdom (Bait al-Hikmah): A sign of glorious period of Abbasids caliphate and development of science", in: *International Journal of Engineering and Information Systems*, January 2021.

^{xlv} In this context, Hurgronje makes reference to the so-called forgery or invention of *ahadith* which started from the beginning of Islam. Sects and groups started the invention of *ahadith* by wrongly relating them to the Prophet, and the first three generations of Muslims, so to persuade people to support a certain sect. This was the beginning of the so-called *tafarruq*, the division/disunity of the umma opposing to the tawhid concept. Kamali, M.H., *A Textbook of Hadith Studies: Authenticity, Compilation, Classification and Criticism of Hadith*, Islamic Foundation, London 2002. Al-Qari, A.M., *Encyclopaedia of Hadith forgeries*, Beacon Books and Media, Boston 2013.

^{xlvi} Here the author makes reference to the so-called method of "Qur'anism" affirming that the Qur'an can be interpreted by itself according to the principle *tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Qur'an* without using any *ahadith* because the Qur'an explains itself and is consequently the only valid source for Muslims. The Qur'anists base their idea on the Prophet himself who according to them prohibited the writing of hadiths. This means that Qur'anists use the Qur'an only to interpret the Qur'an, see Ayoub M., *Contemporary Approaches to the Qur'an and Sunnah*, International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), London 2012, p. 27, where it says: "[A] literal and holistic analysis of the text from a contemporary perspective and applying the exegetical principle of *tafsir al-qur'an bi al-qur'an* (explaining the Qur'an with the Qur'an) and the jurisprudential principle *al-asl fi al-kalam al-haqiqah* (the fundamental rule of speech is literalness), without refracting that Qur'anic usage through the lens of

history and tradition.” In our context, this would mean the elimination of all fabricated *ahadith* on slavery and race-related superiority.

^{xlvii} The concept of disagreement (*ikhtilaf*) is an important and very complex concept affirming diversity in pluralism among Muslim scholars and inside the *ummah* itself. However, the Prophet’s saying according to which diversity among the Muslims is a blessing (*ikhtilafu ummati rahma*) has its restrictions as the basic principles of Islam are not to be refused or criticised. As a consequence, *ikhtilaf* is related to details of legal practise only, since as stated in the Qur’an all what goes beyond deviations in details is not a good disagreement anymore but disunity (*tafarruq*). See Qur’an 11:118 where it says: “Had your Lord so willed, He would have certainly made humanity one single community of believers, but they will always choose to differ” and Qur’an 30:31-32: “[Adhere to it], turning in repentance to Him, and fear Him and establish prayer and do not be of those who associate others with Allah [Or] of those who have divided their religion and become sects, every faction rejoicing in what it has.” As affirmed by Kamali, cf. Kamali M. H., “Diversity and Pluralism: A Qur’anic Perspective”, *ICR Journal* 1 (1), 2020, p. 30: “In response it may be said that *ikhtilāf* (difference, disagreement), is an entrenched feature of Islam. Of the two main varieties of *ikhtilāf*, namely *ikhtilāf al-tanawwu’* (disagreement that implies diversity), and *ikhtilāf al-taḍādd* (disagreement verging on contradiction), the former is not only accepted but considered praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*). The blameworthy (*madhmūm*) variety of *ikhtilāf* is that which violates the spirit of unity and should be avoided.”

^{xlviii} Already one century ago, Hurgonje understood the important contribution Islam and the Muslims as united multicultural *ummah* can make to the today’s multicultural society by integrating their Islamic perspective into the world community of today. Among others, see Watt, W. M., *Islam and the Integration of Society*, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1961. Today Islam and Muslims can be a force for change struggling against violence, slavery, and disunity, by affirming values of justice and peace. We are far away from this utopia, but the affirmation of multiculturalism in the Qur’an are showing us the way.

^{xlix} The Prophet of Islam was definitively an Arab Prophet whose first mission was the conversion to monotheism of the Arabic tribes of the *jahiliyya*. From a historical point of view, the message of the Prophet was addressed to the Arabs as the first receivers of the *wahy* which was revealed in their language so that they could understand it (see Qur’an 14 :4: “We have not sent any Messenger except with the language of his people so he can make things clear to them. Allah misguides anyone He wills and guides anyone He wills. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise.” This is absolutely true. However, Islam is a universal/eternal message (above and beyond Arabian history and society) addressed to the entire humanity as unity according to tawhid-based anthropology and sociology even if it is written in a “clear Arabic language”. Nonetheless, according to the theory of *I’jaz* (see Larkin M., “The Inimitability of the Qur’an: Two Perspectives”, in: *Religion & Literature*, 20 (1): 1988, pp. 31–47), the Qur’an is a linguistic miracle written in Arabic which cannot be imitated (see Fück J., *Arabiya: Untersuchungen zur arabischen Sprach-und Stilgeschichte*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1950) as expressed in the following rhetoric question stated in Qur’an 11:13: “Say, Bring you then ten chapters like unto it, and call whomsoever you can, other than God, if you speak the truth!”

ⁱ Cf. Qur’an 41:44: “Had We made it a non-*Arabic* Qur’ān, they would have said, “Why are its verses not clearly explained? Is it a non-*Arabic* (book) and an *Arab* (messenger)?” Say, “For those who believe, it is guidance and cure. As for those who do not believe, there is deafness in their ears, and for them it is blindness. Such people are being called from a distant place.” Also see Qur’an 16:103: “We know well that they say, “There is a man who teaches him.” The language of the one they refer to is non-*Arabic* while this is clear *Arabic* language.” Qur’an 26:195: “in a clear *Arabic* tongue”. Qur’an 43:3: “Certainly, We have made it a Qur’an in *Arabic* so perhaps you will understand.” Qur’an 12:2: “Indeed, We have sent it down as an *Arabic* Qur’ān that you might understand.” Qur’an 39:28: “[It is] an *Arabic* Qur’ān, without any deviance that they might become righteous.” Qur’an 46:12: “And before this, was the Book of Moses as a guide and a mercy: And this Book confirms (it) in the *Arabic* tongue; to admonish the unjust, and as Glad Tidings to those who do right.” Qur’an 2:113: “And so We have sent it down as an *Arabic* Qur’an and varied the warnings in it, so perhaps they will shun evil or it may cause them to be mindful.” Qur’an 26:199: “who would then recite it to the deniers ‘in fluent *Arabic*’, still they would not have believed in it!” Qur’an 13:37: “Thus have We revealed it, a decisive utterance in *Arabic*; and if thou shouldst follow their desires after that which hath come unto thee of knowledge, then truly wouldst thou have from Allah no protecting friend nor defender.” Qur’an 19:97: “So, [O Muḥammad], We have only made it [i.e., the Qur’ān] easy in your tongue [i.e., the *Arabic* language] that you may give good tidings thereby to the righteous and warn thereby a hostile people.” In addition, in the following, addressing to the Prophet, in Qur’an 19:97 it says: “So, [O Muḥammad], We have only made it [i.e., the Qur’ān] easy in your tongue [i.e., the *Arabic* language] that you may give good tidings thereby to the righteous and warn thereby a hostile people.”

ⁱⁱ Cf. Qur’an 5:48: “We have revealed to you “O Prophet” this Book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a supreme authority on them. So, judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires over

the truth that has come to you. To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given “each of” you. So, compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you “of the truth” regarding your differences.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Qur'an 78:8: “and created you in *pairs*”; Qur'an 53:45: “That He did create in *pairs*, male and female”; and then He made of him a *pair*, male and female? And of everything We have created *pairs*: That ye may receive instruction.” This creation in pairs, however, is not restricted to the creation of man and woman but is extended to nature (cf. Qur'an 55:52: “In both these is a *pair* of every fruit”) and animals (Cf. Qur'an 6:143: “[God gave you] eight animals, in [four] *pairs*: a *pair* of sheep and a *pair* of goats- ask them [Prophet], Has He forbidden the two males, the two females, or the young in the wombs of the two females? Tell me based on knowledge if you are telling the truth.”

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Qur'an 30:21: “And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.”

^{liv} In this context, the author shows us an important characteristic of discrimination in pre-Islamic Arabia. It was not based on the colour of the skin, but on the belonging to a certain tribe. So, we can speak about tribalism more than of racism based on ethnic distinctive features/race-related characteristics. What Muhammed created in the beginning of Muslim history was not a theocracy but sociologically speaking a tribal confederation unifying the pre-Islamic tribes into a religious-based society and political system by overcoming division among tribes and tribe-based supremacy thoughts and behaviours. Cf. Robin C., « Esquisse d'une histoire de l'organisation tribale en Arabie du Sud Antique » in: *La péninsule arabe aujourd'hui*, volume II, edited by Paul Bonnenfant, Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans, 1982.

^{lv} Cf. Qur'an 49:10-13: “The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers. And be mindful of Allah so you may be shown mercy. O believers! Do not let some men ridicule others, they may be better than them, nor let some women ridicule other women, they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the true wrongdoers. O believers! Avoid many suspicions, for indeed, some suspicions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is the Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful. O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.”

^{lvi} The three negative behaviours of mockery, malice and suspicion were three behaviours which were common in the society of Medina at the time of the Prophet. In this context, as affirmed by Hurgronje, the *asbab al-nuzul* are of an essential importance to understand these verses of the Qur'an starting from the historical circumstances of their revelation by understand the target group of the message and their sociological and cultural environment. This should be the starting point of Qur'anic hermeneutics then reaching the universal meaning by not excluding the historical reality of the revelation. The most important works of *asbab al-nuzul* were written by al-Wahidi and al-Suyuti. Cf. Rippin A., “The Exegetical Genre “*asbab al-nuzul*”, A Bibliographical and Terminological Survey”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 48 (1): 1985, pp. 1–15.

^{lvii} For this reason, our main task as Muslim scholars and sociologists today is to implement a couple of fundamental steps in the exegetics and hermeneutics of these verses: a) study of the tribal society of the epoch of the Prophet to understand the division among tribes and their negative ethical behaviours to be overcome by the unifying force of change of the system Islam; b) the universal message of the Qur'an affirming the unity of mankind and the superiority of ethical behaviour and the absence of any kind of tribal, ethnic, or race-related superiority of one person over another; c) the application of b) to our contemporaneous multicultural society which is very different from the tribe-based society of the Prophet's epoch. Pluralism, inclusion, anti-racism, anti-slavery are concepts which are universal but have to be implemented in a certain society in history, at that time as well as today.

^{lviii} Hurgronje extends disunity, discrimination, division, and if we want racism, to something going far beyond colours and ethnic characteristics. Disunity means *shirk* and the opposition to tawhid in the most extended meaning of the word. As a consequence, racism itself is de-racialised and extended to disunity and anti-inclusive behaviours in general which must not but can be based on race-based/skin-colour-based distinctions. Racism and colourism are two different things. Cf. Hall E.R., *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Colorism*, Routledge, New York 2022.

^{lix} The author's conclusion is the system Islam builds up an inclusive, pluralist, anti-racist society in which the only discrimination point is godliness which then results in a Muslim society distinguishing Muslims from non-Muslims of two main categories (monotheists and pagans) as Hurgronje is explaining in the next section of his conference. However, in this context, we must again look at the socio-religious situation of the Arabia of the epoch of the Prophet where the following religions were practised: Arabian polytheism, Christianity, Judaism, Mazdeism and Zoroastrianism. Looking at the world of

today, however, the scenario would be pretty different in particular because we have to consider atheism which is widespread in the Western world.

^{lx} Cf. Qur'an 3 :19: "Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allāh is Islām. And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the verses of Allāh, then indeed, Allāh is swift in [taking] account."

^{lxi} The pagans in the Qur'an are the ones worshipping idols and as a consequence committing shirk by associating idols to the one God they refuse. This is a fundamental historical information as the world where Islam began was not a world characterised by atheism as our contemporaneous but a world full of idols. Cf. the following Qur'an verses: 37:161: "Surely you pagans and whatever idols you worship". 36:75 "They cannot help the pagans, even though they serve the idols as dedicated guards." 53:19: "Have you then considered Al-Lât, and Al-'Uzzâ (two idols of the *pagan* Arabs)".

^{lxii} Here Hurgonje makes reference to war (*jihad*) slavery of prisoners of war in Islam without putting the whole thing into the main frame of the abolitionist principle according to Qur'an 90:12-13 where it says: And what will make you realize what attempting the challenging path is? It is to free a slave."

^{lxiii} The Parsis are a subgroup of the Zoroastrians and migrated to India during their persecution by Muslims in today's Iran during the 7th century. The relationship between Zoroastrians and Muslims in history is characterised by an extremely strong dialectic between inclusion and exclusion as concluded by Andrew Magnusson in his research entitled *Zoroastrians in Early Islamic History, Accommodation and Memory*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2023. One of the interesting issues that comes up in the study of Zoroastrianism is to what extent Zoroastrianism is a monotheistic religion because the issue is so complex that they seem to support dualism (if we analyse the opposition between Ahura Amzda and Ahriman) and at the same time seem monotheistic or even polytheistic. The book *Zend Avesta* is considered as a book within the meaning of the Qur'anic concept of *ahl al-kitab* only by some Muslims. The Zoroastrians are mentioned only once throughout the entire Qur'an directly and in five verses indirectly. In 22:17 they are called "Majus" which means Magi (Magus). But the interpretation of 22:17 for me personally results in the following picture: The six religious groups mentioned here are the ones existing at the time of the Prophet in Arabia at the beginning of Islam: Muslims, Jews, Sabaeans, Christians, Zoroastrians and polytheists (pagans of Makkah). The Jews owed allegiance to Moses. Similarly, the Sabaeans owed allegiance to John (Yahya), the Christians to Jesus, the Zoroastrians to Zoroaster and the polytheists of Makkah to Abraham. All these communities were initially believers in and worshippers of the one God. But, later on, they distorted their religion while Islam preserved the book without alternations of any kind. So, there is a form a pre-Islamic universal *tawhid* (monotheism). However, it is not up to us to judge these religions because Allah is given the judgement on them, and in addition the main principle of the Qur'an affirms total freedom of religion (see 2:256: "There is no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood").

^{lxiv} I think that in this case the author is wrong because he apparently wants to show the fabrication of universal anti-racism in Islam. However, this sentence is part of the so-called farewell speech, the last speech hold by the Prophet of Islam before his death. In Qur'an 49:13 we see that on one hand it is referring to the Arabic tribes and their mutual discrimination but the general vocative in the beginning of the verse does not say Oh, Arabs, but Oh, mankind by showing in a clear manner the universal anti-racist message the Prophet reconfirms in this sentence pronounced during his farewell speech, a sermon delivered on the 9th day of the month Dhul Hijjah of the 10th year of Hijra in the Uranah Valley of Mount Arafat. Let us put the sentence quoted by Hurgonje into its context of the sermon to get the whole picture: "You know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white – except by piety and good action."

^{lxv} The Arab conquests were from my point of view a more complex phenomenon determined and characterised by tolerance and coercion at the same time, see Friedmann Y., *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003 because on one hand the conquered peoples maintained their identity and tradition, while on the other hand there were cases of forced conversions.

^{lxvi} However, if we look at historical dynamics occurring between Arabs conquering the country and the conquered population of non-Muslims/non-Arabs, as concluded by Yaacov Lev "on both fronts (Islamization and acculturation) the caliph was fighting a lost cause. Eventually Islamization would create multi-ethnic Muslim society in which Arabic would hold prominent place. Acculturation, meaning the ability of non-Muslims to function in Muslim society and to take part in the affairs of the state, had many manifestations. This integration would never be smooth, sometimes revoked, and its boundaries would have to be repeatedly renegotiated", cf.: Yaacov L., *Islamization and Acculturation at the Time of 'Umar II (717-720)*, in: "Al-Qanṭara", XLII 1 (2021), p. 18.

^{lxvii} Cf. Chejne Anwar G., *The Arabic Language: Its Role in History*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1969.

^{lxviii} In this context, the author shows us the risk of racialisation of religion and language by the Arabization at the same time of Islam as well as of the converts.

^{lxix} It is true that Arabic became a world language after the Arab conquests. However, it remained the global language of learning in the religious field without replacing the spoken local languages of the conquered countries. See: Versteegh K., *An empire of learning: Arabic as a global language*, who compares the Arabic of learning to the Latin of the empire of learning by concluding that in the end it was a language without real speakers. The same can be said for Greek and Sanskrit. Languages like those are adopted for reasons of image and prestige. One important aspect pointed out by Versteegh is the following: "... foreign languages are not always imposed by an external dominant group. They may also be self-imposed by a cultural and intellectual elite..." Cf. also on p. 49: "In Islamic countries outside the Arab world, Arabic never developed into a language of daily communication or into a commercial lingua franca, but it did serve as a major tool for learning".

^{lxx} Here Hurgronje speaks about the phenomenon of diglossia which is fundamental to understand the relationship between Arabic dialects and the standard Arabic in the Arabic societies. The term dialect is not the appropriate one to use because there is a real diglossia in the society which is a coexistence of two different languages: one is the spoken Arabic while the other is the classic Arabic of the Qur'an and the modern standard Arabic of media and educational institutions. As theorised by the American linguist C. A. Ferguson in its article entitled "Diglossia" in 1959, diglossia is the following socio-linguistic situation (p. 232): "In many speech communities two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions..." The classical Arabic (*al-fusha*), called H (high) by Ferguson, and the popular Arabic (*al-'ammiyyah*), called L (low) by Ferguson, are used according to their functions they have in different communication contexts. So to speak, diglossia is a kind of dual system of language. Similar systems are found by Ferguson in German Switzerland, Haiti, and in modern Greece. The first linguist using the term (in French *diglossie*) was the French Jean Psichari who studied the linguistic situation in Greece in 1885.

^{lxxi} An example is William Willcocks (1852-1932), a British engineer, in 1893 asked for the abandonment of the standard Arabic in favour of the Egyptian dialect. In 1901 Willcocks wrote the book *The Spoken Arabic of Egypt* where he also proposed to write Arabic by using the Roman alphabet (see Lian Chaoqun Lian, *Language, Ideology, and Sociopolitical Change in the Arabic-speaking World*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2020), see also her article *Syria, Egypt, North Africa and Malta speak Punic, not Arabic*, in: *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, 8 (1925), pp. 99-115. These positions are seen by Muslims as an attack against the unity of Muslim peoples by Orientalism linked with Colonialism. Among others, see Said E., *Orientalism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul and Henley, London 1978. However, the argument of Willcocks sounds correct to some Arabs as well when he says (cf. *Syria, Egypt, North Africa and Malta speak Punic, not Arabic*, in: *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, 8 (1925), p. 100): "When I say Egyptian language I mean the natural, spoken language.... When I say literary language I mean the artificial written language with its artificial pronunciation, which has to be learned in the Near East like a foreign language in order to be able to learn at all out of the printed books."

^{lxxii} In this context, Snouck Hurgronje refers to the 16th International Congress of Orientalists held in Athens in 1912. The material is held at the Royal Asiatic Society Archives and is available online (cf. <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/030fcc43-5779-3cfc-9213-9b84c3fef24b?component=8dae7442-ae6d-3ac5-8af1-280965f0a1a2>)

^{lxxiii} The conclusion Hurgronje gains is that the Arabic language is a vehicle of union among Muslims of different ethnic origin and is the expression of similarity in the way of life supported and promoted by the access to the language of the Qur'an. The Arabic language is so a force of change and of unification of the Arabic world because it is the language of Islam. Cf. Haleem, Muhammad A. S. Abdel, "46. Arabic as the Language of Islam", in: *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, edited by Stefan Weninger, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin-Boston 2012, pp. 811-817. This means that the promotion of dialects would mean fragmentation and nationalism while the system of diglossia maintains the function of the Qur'anic Arabic as the language of Islamic studies and opposes racist views by paradoxically de-racialising the Arabic language itself which is primarily spoken by non-Arabs who are the majority of Muslims in the *ummah* where Arabs are just a minority.

^{lxxiv} Now Hurgronje shows us the other side of the medal consisting in the discrimination of Non-Arabs by Arabs in Muslim history, in particular during the so-called "Arabic" Empires of the first centuries of Islam where Arabic supremacy was not the exception. Among others, see the following article: Dangor, S. E., "Islam's attitude to Race", in: *Religion in Southern Africa*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1987), pp. 37-41.

^{lxxv} This historical development opposed to Qur'anic egalitarianism and transforms the incentive addressed to this Meccan tribe in Qur'an 106, to serve Allah alone because of the privileges they have received from Allah into a political Arab power of this tribe over the converts. Hurgronje here shows us the development in the Muslim societies during the first centuries of establishment of the system Islam where Quraysh are granted a privilege which is not Qur'anic but historical. And this

Arabic supremacy is then the starting point of the shuubiyya reaction. See Ghasem Gharib, Javad Abbasi, Jalal Rajaei, "The Intellectual foundations of the anti-Shu'ubiyya movement in early Islamic Iran based on Ibn Qutaybah's thoughts", in: *History of Islam*, 20 April 2023 (online on the following website: https://hiq.bou.ac.ir/article_72553.html?lang=en) where it says in the abstract: "After the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate, the two currents of Shu'ubiyya and anti-Shu'ubiyya movements in the Islamic world came into conflict with each other. The Shu'ubiyya referred to the historical background and ancient civilization of Iran and sought to promote their political and social status in the new regime. the anti-Shu'ubiyya movement, which was considered an extension of Umayyad thought, sought to instil the idea of Arab supremacy over non-Arabs by losing its former political and social status. This research seeks to reconstruct the intellectual foundations of the anti-Shu'ubiyya movement in early Islamic Iran based on the views of Ibn Qutaybah, The serious supporter of this idea. The reason for choosing Ibn Qutaybah as the representative of the anti-Shu'ubiyya movement is the persistence of his book of *Fazl al-Arab*, which contains a complete formulation of the principles that movement. Al-Jahiz is also one of the greatest thinkers of the anti-Shu'ubiyya movement, but his related major books have not survived. The results show that the intellectual foundations of the anti-Shu'ubiyya movement based on Ibn Qutaybah's views, have two central axes: proving the superiority of the Arab people over other ethnic groups and proving the low social, political and historical position of Iranians, each based on several principles."

^{lxvii} To deracialise the social dynamics, the *shuubiyya* movement paradoxically starts from the term "race" used in the Qur'an to affirm that ethnic diversity corresponds to Allah's will. The next paradox is the de-racialisation of the two struggling parties. So, the one affirming Arab hegemony was not necessarily an Arab while the one struggling for a performance-based approach was not necessarily a Non-Arab. The complexity of this movement continues today, cf. Ferida Jawad, "The Triumph of Arabism: The Shu'ūbiyyah Controversy and the National Identity of Modern Iraq," in: *Jusūr* 13 (1997): pp. 53-87. On the resuscitation of the *Shu'ūbiyya* movement in modern times, see also Sami Hana and George Gardner, "Al-Shu'ūbiyyah Up-dated: A Study of the 20th Century Revival of an Eighth Century Concept," in: *Middle East Journal* 20, 3 (1966), pp. 335-352.

^{lxviii} In the Qur'an, there is the Surah 106 named according to the tribe of the Quraysh: The exclamation "*Ilaf*" in the beginning of its first verse refers to the treaties and accustomed security that facilitated the Quraysh's caravans, which travelled in winter to Yemen and in summer to Syria. These verses remind the Quraysh of Allah's favours, providing them with food and security. In gratitude, they are urged to worship only Allah, the protector and sustainer who made their prosperity possible. So, the Qur'an calls the Quraysh to become monotheists by abandoning polytheism. Also the Surah of the Elephant (105) talking about the attack to the Kaaba affirms the protection of Allah granted to the protectors of the Kaaba which were the people of the Meccan tribe of the Quraysh. The superiority is not affirmed anywhere in the Qur'an. What is affirmed in the Qur'an is the particular responsibility of the Quraysh as force of social and religious change/transition in early Islam from polytheism to monotheism. What is clearly shown in the Qur'an is the opposition between Islam and tribe when depicting Quraysh disbelievers who were afraid to lose their economic and political "tribal" power due to the new religion of Islam opposing to tribalism and tribe-based discrimination. Cf. Donner F.M., *The Early Islamic Conquests*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1981, p. 24: "[By the end of the 6th century,] Meccan commerce was flourishing as never before, and the leaders in this trade [the Quraysh] had developed from mere merchants into true financiers. They were no longer interested in "buying cheap and selling dear", but also with organizing money and men to realize their commercial objectives. There was emerging, in short, a class of men with well-developed managerial and organizational skills. It was a development unheralded, and almost unique, in central Arabia." The first period was so characterized by wars and heavy opposition between the Quraysh tribe and the Prophet, reduced only by the Treaty of al-Hudaybiya concluded in 628. Cf. Ali F.B., "Al-Hudaybiya: An Alternative Version", in: *The Muslim World*, 71:1 (1981), pp. 47-62 and Hawting G.R., "*Al-Hudaybiyya and the Conquest of Mecca: A Reconsideration of the Tradition about the Muslim Takeover of the Sanctuary*", in: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 8 (1986), pp. 1-24.

^{lxviii} The endogamic system of the Quraysh is also not Islamic as in Islam the restrictions on marriage are never related to ethnic origin or race but exclusively to the belonging to a certain religious community. The fact that "the degree of endogamy exhibited by the pre-Islamic Quraysh correlates remarkably well with some more recent studies on Arab marriage patterns" clearly shows how Islam and Muslim social behaviours differ in history. See Robinson M., *Marriage in the tribe of Muhammed*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2020, p. 162. I think that up to our time, endogamy is an expression of ethnocentrism and discrimination/racism within the Muslim *ummah*, which opposes to Islamic egalitarianism.

^{lxix} The affirmation of any kind of nobility based on the belonging to a tribe, to a certain social group, or based on the colour of the skin or the geographic/social origin is not accepted in Islam because the Qur'an clearly defines nobility as the expression of *taqwa*, see Muzammil H. Siddiqi, "The Criteria of Nobility in Islam", in: *Salaam*, 4 September 2019 (online: <https://salaam.co.uk/the-criteria-of-nobility-in-islam/>). In addition, the Qur'an in 4:1 affirms the human progeny from one man which means the absolute affirmation of human brotherhood, as stated by the author: "We all trace our ancestry back

to the one and the same father. The Qur'an, however, does not deny that there are differences in human beings regarding their colour, language, race, and country. It, in fact, affirms and recognises these differences. But in the Qur'an these differences say something of the greatness of God rather than of the greatness or superiority of one colour, or language, or race, or nation over the other."

^{lxxx} All the arguments trying to affirm any superiority of the people descending from the Prophet of Islam are to be opposed to by Qur'anic egalitarianism and by the absence of lineage or blood-related superiority in Islam where all people are the same and coming from one ancestor. Affirming the superiority of the Prophet himself is also not Islamic because it opposes to what Allah puts in the mouth of the Prophet in Qur'an 41:6: "Say, O [Muhammad], "I am only a man like you to whom it has been revealed that your god is but one God; so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness." And woe to those who associate others with Allah." The same reason why slavery is *shirk*, see my note 730.

^{lxxxi} The most famous slave dynasty in Egypt was the one of the Mamluks (1250-1517), see Clot A., *L'Égypte des Mamelouks : L'empire des esclaves, 1250–1517*, Librairie Académique Perrin, Paris 1996. Northrup L., *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678–689 A.H./1279–1290 A.D.)*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 1998.

^{lxxxii} See Inalcik H., *Essays in Ottoman History*, Eren, Istanbul 1998.

^{lxxxiii} In the Islam theology there is a closed link between equality and meritocracy (in connection with equity). The result of this strong relationship between egalitarianism and meritocracy based on *taqwa* is the success of the state characterised by mobility, inclusion, emancipation of lower classes and equal opportunities given to all, a state where a slave can become caliph. See Malik Ahmad Jalal, "Meritocracy: The Secret Ingredient of Successful States", 21 November 2017 (online on the following website: <https://malikahmadjalal.medium.com/meritocracy-the-secret-ingredient-of-successful-states-2f75a3003a84>) "All successful self-sustaining states of the past and the present have one thing in common; they have, at their core, a strong element of meritocracy and upward socio-economic mobility of wealth and power. The early Islamic States of Medina and Mecca are an example of a meritocratic system which empowered women, slaves and immigrants alike. Islam is a religion, whose very basis is a just and meritocratic society, and the Prophet's (PBUH) message called for equality and accountability of All before God. Taqwa is a fundamental principle of Islam and is mentioned over 100 times in the Qur'an. It implies God consciousness in avoiding misdeeds that earn His displeasure. It is stated that a believer who practices Taqwa is one closest to God. Hidden within the most fundamental principle of Taqwa, is concept of meritocracy and equality of all — good deeds alone will determine closeness to God, and that is accessible to all. Therefore, Islam propagates that every individual is created equal and has an equal opportunity to rise in the eyes of God through his/her deeds only. Our religion laid the foundation of equality and upward social mobility of the ordinary, elevating their social, political, and economic position, irrespective of their color or creed. It is no coincidence that the first adherents of Islam were a woman, a boy and a slave — all marginalized underclass of the society at that time. They were emancipated by Islam."

^{lxxxiv} So, the main conclusion of Hurgonje is positive even if in history the system Islam was not able to entirely implement egalitarianism and the struggle against racial privileges. For Mauritania today this means that looking at Islam and its egalitarian dogma as Hurgonje calls it above is the main way/method to overcome racial Beydan discrimination and slavery in the country.

^{lxxxv} In this context, Hurgonje makes reference to the *Epistle to the Colossians*, included in the New Testament and attributed to Paul by some scholars while others oppose to Paul's authorship where in 3:11 it says: "In this new man of God's design there is no distinction between Greek and Hebrew, Jew or Gentile, foreigner or savage, slave or free man. Christ is all that matters for Christ lives in them all." The conclusion of the author is that Christianity bases anti-racism on a new anthropology based on Christology while Islam bases it on the common origin of all mankind, on radical egalitarianism, and on a meritocracy based on *taqwa* promoting social mobility and change as a result of equal opportunities.

^{lxxxvi} Compared to Western societies, the Muslim societies — even if they have not been capable of eradicating racism and racial discrimination totally — would never create Apartheid systems like the South African one based on the total exclusion/violent marginalisation of the black population from politics, education, and society by creating a wall between communities based on their skin colour.

^{lxxxvii} In this context, Hurgonje, relates to the example of a "maula mosque" dating from the 2nd century of the Hijra, mentioned by Goldziher in *Muhamm. Stud.* I:120 where in the prayer house not only maulâs were accepted.... That mosque was founded by maulâs or in a district mainly inhabited by maulâs; but the masjids named after certain Arab tribes were also open to all believers without any distinction.

^{lxxxviii} In my opinion, there is a break in Hurgonje's train of thought at this point. On the one hand, he opposes the racial theory that he cited at the beginning of his conference. On the other hand, however, he doubts the applicability of the system Islam and its basic ideas in today's world and finds no possibility of linking the anti-racist anthropology of Franz Boas he is introducing here as the positive example of a scholar studying the issue of race and the acceptance of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity in the Qur'an.

^{booxix} Hurgronje quotes Franz Boas, "*Kultur und Rasse*", published by Veit & Co. in Leipzig, Germany in 1914. See Boas Fr., *Kultur, Sprache, Rasse, Wegen einer antirassistischen Anthropologie*, edited by Friedrich Pöhl and Bernhar Tilg, LIT, Münster 2011. Franz Boas (1858-1942) is the founder of cultural anthropology established as an academic discipline in the USA. Born and raised in a Jewish merchant family in Minden, Westphalia, Boas studied physics, maths and geography in Heidelberg, Kiel and Bonn.

Then he emigrated to the USA where from 1899 until his retirement in 1936 he held the position as a full professor of anthropology at the Columbia University in New York. The liberal-democratic and pacifist ideals of his family would accompany Boas throughout his life. Boas spoke out against all kind of racial discrimination. He struggled for the rights of Native Americans, African Americans, and not least for the rights of European immigrants. Influenced by the ideas of Humboldt and the Enlightenment in general, Boas developed his scientific and philosophical perspectives and methods. He was the first to speak of cultures in the plural and to refuse any essentialist views about culture. Above all, however, Boas anticipated the affinity between (scientific) racism and evolutionism and refused the evolutionary paradigm of progress based on the general and scientifically incomprehensible idea of race which denied individuality. Even in old age, Boas opposed scientific racism and the associated racial mania of the National Socialists in Germany and was ashamed of being a "German".

^{xc} The question arising today is then the following: Why is the paradigm of race-based discussion still so important today and why have we not overcome the discussion about race because we have still to use the term "race" to struggle against racism? In Mauritania, as well as in the rest of the world. See Plümecke T., *Rasse in der Ära der Genetik. Die Ordnung des Menschen in den Lebenswissenschaften*, Transcript, Bielefeld 2012.

^{xc} Here Hurgronje touches are fundamental point of racist as well as anti-racist theories which both use the term of "race". This is also the case of the positive theories focussing on the unity of equal "races". So the question between the line is how to de-racialize sociology and theology? The question is whether this is even possible if we really want to struggle against racism. And if the unity of the human race as Hurgronje says is the axiom of all, racists and non-racists if we consider that the difference is not in the acceptance of unity but in the difference of the pieces making this unity?

^{xcii} The provocative question of Hurgronje about what is more real, races or nations, should be the starting point about a discussion on race/nation in Mauritania today. If nations are constructs, and races are less constructed than nations, should we not go back to the idea of race in the system Islam to overcome slavery as expression of racism in today's Mauritania talking about itself as an Islamic Republic? However, the final problem of all these race-related discussions is how to guarantee peace among peoples, groups, and communities which are different one from another without splitting them into higher and lower groups but by a meritocratic system based on *taqwa*? So to speak, the solution the system Islam should achieve is to keep the term discrimination within the meaning of a discrimination by *taqwa*. If we do not delete the concepts of race and discrimination from our dictionaries, we will be able to struggle for the only kind of discrimination which is worth to be kept: the ethnical one based on the Qur'anic *taqwa* concept which promotes social change and mobility, access to knowledge, and moral courage.

^{xciii} Hurgronje is still part of the colonialist system as he is a representative of it. However, at this point he seems to see the end of it by the emancipation of the colonised people from inside, in particular by education.

^{xciv} The Professor Hurgronje mentions here is Prof. Dr. Johan Hendrik Caspar Kern (1833-1917), an expert of India and the Eastern world, university professor at the University of Leiden. Cf. Chisholm Hugh, "Kern, Jan Hendrik", in: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, volume 15, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1911, p. 757.

^{xcv} Here the author refers to the Dutch linguist of the 19th century (1820-1892) who taught at the universities of Groningen and Leiden. He is also one of the authors of the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (*Dictionary of the Dutch Language*), using the De Vries orthography, as it was named after them later on. See Hewett, W. T., et al. "Matthias de Vries and His Contributions to Netherland Philology", in: *PMLA*, vol. 9, 1894, pp. vii-xix.