

3

THE INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE SELF-LIBERATION MODEL OF *USTADH MAHMOUD MOHAMED TAHA*

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im

Being a Muslim is foundational for me, it informs and guides everything I do or say in every aspect of my life. It is therefore inconceivable to me that I can hold any philosophical or ideological position that is inconsistent with my being a Muslim by my understanding of Islam. I have said that frequently regarding human rights, for instance, and affirm it here regarding secularism. It is from this perspective that I support the secular state for the possibility of being a better Muslim, and not secularism as a life philosophy that diminishes the public role of religion. “In order to be a Muslim by conviction and free choice, which is the only way one can be a Muslim, I need a secular state. By a secular state I mean one that is neutral regarding religious doctrine, one that does not claim or pretend to enforce Sharia.”¹ As I will explain later, the neutrality of the state regarding religion does not mean the exclusion of religion from politics—the formulation and implementation of social and public policy outside the realm of the state. The challenge is how to maintain religious neutrality of the state without attempting to exclude religion from politics. I say “attempting to exclude,” because in my view it is not possible to do so in practice; the political behavior of believers will always be influenced by their religious beliefs, whether that is acknowledged or not.

It is also from this perspective that I am seeking the mediation of the paradox of the inappropriateness of conceptions of the secular defined

in terms of European Christianity for Muslims in general, on the one hand, and the entanglement of Muslims with the postcolonial state that is also premised on European Christian conceptions of the secular, on the other. As I will try to explain later, Muslims' comprehension and experience of the secular, in the sense of the material and this-worldly, are not only positive but also integral to the religious. To Muslims, the inherent consistency and complementarity between the secular and the religious precludes thinking of either independent of the other. Life is all at once religious and secular, spiritual and material, and Islam takes each aspect of the human experience, and all of them combined, equally seriously.

Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha (hereafter Taha) discusses the Islamic synthesis of the material and spiritual dimensions in terms of the dialectic of civilization and material progress. In his view:

Civilization may be defined as the ability to distinguish values and to observe these values in daily conduct. A civilized man does not confuse ends and means, and does not sacrifice ends for the sake of means. . . .

Material progress, on the other hand, means the enjoyment of certain comforts and benefits of an advanced standard of living. Thus, if a man owns a grand car, a beautiful house, and nice furniture, he enjoys material progress. If he obtained these means at the expense of his freedom, then he is not civilized, even though he is materially advanced. It is thus possible for a person to enjoy material progress without being civilized, or be civilized without enjoying the comfort of material progress. . . . We strive today to achieve both material progress and civilization at one and the same time.²

He also argues that “it is time for man to appreciate that the environment in which he lives is a spiritual environment with material manifestations. This conclusion, proved through recent developments in modern science, faces man with a clear challenge—to reconcile himself with both environments as a condition for survival.”³

The question I will briefly examine in this paper is how to “translate” Taha’s view into a practical approach to what might be called “civilized living” in the postcolonial context of Muslims in their communities.

Regarding the question of the secular outside of Latin Christendom in particular, which is the theme of this volume, I will discuss the relationship of sharia, as the normative system of Islam in general, to the postcolonial state.

There is an apparent paradox in the Islamic view of religious authority. On the one hand, being a Muslim is founded on the strict individual responsibility of each and every Muslim to know and comply with what is required of him or her by sharia. This fundamental principle of individual and personal responsibility that can never be abdicated or delegated is one of the recurring themes of the Qur'an, as can be seen in verses 5:105, 4:79–80, 41:46, and 53:36–42. On the other hand, Muslims have always tended to seek and rely on the advice of scholars and religious leaders they trust, which means that both the advisor and the advisee are responsible for the advisee's actions.

Since this is a private relationship based on personal choice, it cannot be institutionalized, except through the completely voluntary association of individual Muslims. But is the notion of institutionalization at all appropriate or coherent when individual Muslims will be free to affiliate with any organization or group or not and remain free to decide whether to seek advice or not in the first place, and when the advice they receive cannot be binding except to the extent believers themselves find it to be persuasive?

The lack of theological support for institutionalized religious authority in Islamic traditions may sometimes lead to problematic outcomes, as when extremist groups challenge the authority of established scholars and institutions of learning to propose a radical mandate for aggressive jihad. This risk is not only unavoidable in view of the nature of Islamic religious authority but is in my view preferable to institutionalizing that authority to certain designated persons or institutions, thereby forfeiting the right of other believers to disagree with their views. Legitimate Islamic religious authority cannot be monopolized or institutionalized, because it is premised on religious knowledge, piety, and interpersonal trust that cannot be quantified or verified to be vested in an institution.

The idea of a church-like hierarchical clerical institution is unknown to Muslims, though collective religious practice and communal

affiliation are encouraged. The notion of the unity of the *umma* (global community of Muslims) has always been invoked as an ideal but never realized in political terms or institutional structure. In any case, unlike the church as the representation of the body of Christian believers, there has never been any attempt to construct an institutional organization of the *umma*. This point is obvious for Sunni Muslims, but I believe it is true about Shia Muslims, too, who accept a hierarchy among their religious leaders (with titles like “Ayatollah”), who must earn their status among their followers. The decision to follow a particular religious scholar is made by individual members of a community of believers, not by a collective.

COMPLEXITIES OF COLONIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION

The question for this paper is how can Muslims affirm their own understanding of the secular in relation in their respective postcolonial context? Since the formative influence of inappropriate Christian European conceptions of the secular continues in postcolonial states, the mediation of the paradox noted earlier depends on a level of liberation of constitutional discourse and political practice beyond formal independence. It is about decolonization of the mind and self-perception of the colonial subject. This will cause the colonizer to retreat from claims of epistemological hegemony, which are associated with military conquest and economic exploitation in the colonial relationship. But the primary objective or motivation of the colonized subject should be to render the colonial and postcolonial relationship altogether redundant.

This is what I call indigenous self-liberation, which means *liberation of the self by the self* that transcends any external constraints or limitations. This level of liberation of the self has to be by the self for itself, because no human being can do that for any other human being, although all can cooperate in creating conditions wherein each person can achieve a profound and permanent degree or level of inner liberation. Based on the model experienced and presented by Taha, I believe that that quality or level of indigenous self-liberation can be

achieved by Muslims through an Islamic personal methodology for liberation within the inner sphere of moral consciousness, where freedom can be absolute. I also believe that Gandhi achieved indigenous self-liberation within the Hindu tradition; this goal is not limited to an Islamic methodology.

Extraordinary human beings like Gandhi and Taha can inspire and guide us all by demonstrating the possibility of indigenous self-liberation at the individual level, but the rest of us need effective safeguards for our fundamental rights. Speaking for myself, I know I am unlikely to take the position of Taha, which I will touch upon later. But I am able to struggle to secure fundamental rights for all of us so we can each strive for collective indigenous self-liberation as a means for as much individual self-liberation as we can achieve. Such extraordinary people will not have a broader and enduring impact unless they also provide a vision and pragmatic means for spreading their model among different societies for others to achieve the same goal.

When Taha was criticized for presenting a utopian ideal, he used to respond that was not true, because he was presenting a practical and pragmatic approach to realizing the vision he was proposing for individual enlightenment and social transformation. I will briefly outline in the last section of this essay my understanding of how Taha's approach might work in the context of the postcolonial state. The formula I am proposing for realizing self-liberation in the postcolonial context involves a combination of moral choices, political action, and investment in normative and institutional resources of constitutionalism, citizenship, and human rights.⁴

Constitutionalism is a framework for the mediation of certain unavoidable conflicts in the political, economic, and social fabric of every human society. This proposition assumes that conflict is a normal and permanent feature of human societies and defines constitutionalism in terms of being a framework for mediation rather than permanent or final resolution of such conflicts. But since struggles over power and resources cannot be practically mediated by all members of any society, there has to be some form of delegation from those who, as a practical matter, cannot be part of the daily and detailed processes of administration and adjudication. At the same time, however, those

who have to delegate to others also need to ensure that their interests are served by this process by participating in the selection of delegates and ensuring that delegates act according to the terms of delegation. These pragmatic considerations underlie the basic constitutional principles of representative government, including bureaucratic aspects of democratic administration of public affairs, which is fully accountable to its citizens.⁵

For the appropriate processes of constitutional governance to work properly in each setting, the general population must be able and willing to effectively exercise its powers of delegation to and require accountability from public officials, whether elected or appointed. There are many aspects to such ability and willingness, some relating to the population side, while others pertain to the government and its organs or the conditions of the interaction between the two. On the first count, for instance, the population at large must be capable of exercising intelligent, well-informed, and independent judgment about the ability of its representatives and officials to act on its behalf, and to verify that they do in fact act in accordance with the best interests of the population. The public must also have the capacity to challenge and replace those who fail to implement its mandate.

To ensure and facilitate a wide range of operations and functions of democratic government, all citizens must enjoy certain individual and collective rights, like freedom of expression and association, access to information, and effective remedies against excess or abuse of power by official organs. But in the final analysis, the best principles and mechanisms of constitutional governance will not operate properly without sufficiently strong civic engagement by a critical mass of citizens.

The most critical aspect of constitutionalism, I believe, is civic engagement by a critical mass of citizens. This includes the motivation of citizens to keep themselves well-informed about public affairs and to organize themselves in nongovernmental organizations that can act on their behalf in effective and sustainable ways. People are unlikely to assert and pursue avenues of accountability and redress without the material and human resources and the psychological and cultural orientation to do so. Public officials and the agencies and institutions they operate must not only enjoy the confidence of local communities

but also be familiar, friendly, and responsive when approached. This is the practical and most foundational meaning of popular sovereignty, whereby a people can govern themselves through their own public officials and elected representatives. Constitutionalism is ultimately concerned with realizing and regulating this ideal in the most sustainable and dynamic manner possible, whereby the combination of theory and practice of this concept is capable of ensuring self-determination now and responding to changing circumstances in the future.⁶

Such strategies and structural safeguards are normally necessary but insufficient for enabling individuals to achieve indigenous self-liberation. Unfortunately, establishing these safeguards at home does not mean the justice or humanity of what polities may do abroad. Secularism in particular has been more associated with colonial domination and exploitation of other people than with striving to respect their dignity and human rights. There is “a plurality of secularisms in different national, cultural, and religious contexts, including non-Western secularisms. . . . [Although] the formations of the secular follow different historical trajectories and have different religious genealogies in different places . . . they are closely interconnected with hegemonic impositions of Western colonialism.”⁷

I use the term “colonialism” and its derivatives in this essay, partly because of their prevalence in current discourse, although colonization as displacement of local population by colonizing settlers did not happen to African and Asian Muslims. I also find these terms appropriate because European colonialism displaced the cultural and political self-perception and awareness of the colonized Muslims in Africa and Asia, without displacing the people physically. The indigenous self-liberation I am proposing must therefore seek to reimagine and retrieve the lost self *as if* colonialism never happened, without pretending that it did not happen.⁸

In my view, the notions of the secular and secularism among Muslims have been distorted by the cultural and political impact of European colonialism. To facilitate and perpetuate colonial relations, European powers subjected colonized peoples to the Euro-memory.⁹ By imposing European languages, colonial administrations and Christian missionaries simultaneously broke native memory and constructed a

new reality through which the colonized had to perceive the world. Colonial strategies also included the construction of an elite class who identified with European instead of African or Islamic heritage, thereby reinforcing the loss of memory and the dominance of European languages and cultures.¹⁰ Colonial education helped create the illusion that colonial subjects had no history or culture of their own and that nothing of their past was worth reclaiming or preserving, thereby conditioning them to see themselves through the hegemonic memory of the colonizer.¹¹

For our purposes here, whatever indigenous conception and experience African and Asian Muslim societies had of the secular is no longer accessible to them today, except through the filter of colonial experiences. The postcolonial consciousness of African and Asian Muslims remain conditioned by the colonial, even when they are resisting neocolonial domination. The irony is that “the postcolonial is always reworked by the history of colonialism, and is not available to us in any pristine form that can be neatly separated from the history of colonialism.”¹² In this light, I argue that formal decolonization is necessary but insufficient for sustainable cultural and political decolonization. The deeper and more profound level of decolonization I am evoking here can be realized through what I call indigenous self-liberation to break cultural and epistemological dependency on North Atlantic concepts and discourses.

Yet this process of a deeper level of decolonization still has to occur in the context of neocolonial power relations in an economically and politically integrated and interdependent postcolonial world. The European model of the so-called nation-state in its global systems of economic and security integration are part of the structural, normative, and institutional framework within which self-liberation is supposed to evolve. The possibilities and rationale of self-liberation today could not (and should not be expected to) rid us of European colonialism altogether. However, if we can reconceptualize European colonialism and its aftermath in terms of civilizational evolution of global humanity, that can be the framework for indigenous self-liberation for all human beings, colonized and colonizers alike. I say this because the colonizer is as much in need of self-liberation as the colonized.

My *pragmatically optimistic* view of this is to say, since European colonialism is now integral to the history and context of postcolonial societies in irreversible ways, why not just take it all into account as we move on with our own indigenous self-liberation? My focus on European colonialism is not because it invented the strategies and processes of imperialism for the first time in human history. There have been previous cycles of military conquest, political domination, and cultural hegemony within as well as across various regions of the world. That was true, for instance, for the initial Arab-Muslim military conquest from North Africa and southern Spain to northern India and Central Asia in the seventh and eighth centuries. Arab-Muslim colonization in the sense of cultural/religious displacement can also be seen from the perspective of preexisting cultures/religions of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia through trade, religious conversion, and enculturation of local populations into Islamic values and socioeconomic formations. It is perhaps relevant to our inquiry into the secular/religious dynamics to emphasize that the two were intertwined in what Ira Lapidus calls “the socioeconomic bases of empire.”¹³

However, European colonialism is probably different from earlier cycles of human evolution because of the speed and massive scale and intensity of its transformative impact on social, political, and economic structures and relations from the local to the global. European colonialism is also of particular concern for the subject of this chapter because of the paradox of the relativity of secularism, on the one hand, and enduring realities of European state formations for national politics and international relations, on the other. In terms of the argument I will try to develop in this essay, a conception of the secular that is relative to European Christianity is now being applied to other religions and regions of the world that have also been transformed by European colonialism in socioeconomic and political terms. The possibilities of self-liberation for those societies are inextricably embedded in the same colonial and postcolonial framework from which African and Asian Muslims are seeking liberation.

One caveat to speaking of European this or that seems to support the pragmatically optimistic approach I am proposing: “European-ness” is not uniform or monolithic. As Frederick Cooper explained, it is

problematic to assign general concepts of Enlightenment thinking like modernity and liberalism to Europe as a whole. By assigning these concepts to a generalized idea of Europe in the first place, postcolonial discourse is falling victim to the flawed tendency to flatten discourse and history. The post-Enlightenment ideas resulted from struggles within Europe and clashes of competing viewpoints concerning the exact meaning of notions like progress and rationality. To speak of European this or that only reinforces a universalistic notion of Europeanness that seems to concede the colonial logic that postcolonial discourse is supposed to overcome.¹⁴ Here, the point for me is not to take colonial concepts or frameworks for granted but to simply define the terms as I mean them for my own self-liberation project.

TAHA'S MODEL OF SELF-LIBERATION

Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha was one of the pioneers of the decolonization struggle in Sudan beginning in the 1930s. He was the author of an indigenous Islamic transformative discourse and leader of a “social movement” to promote that discourse until his public execution on political charges on January 18, 1985, and the subsequent suppression of his movement. Sudan was the context of the paradox in which Taha experienced and presented his model of deep decolonization, which sought to transcend the postcolonial mind-set. As noted earlier, the paradox I mean here is that indigenous self-liberation still has to operate through colonial geopolitical structures and institutions of the territorial so-called nation-state in its global economic and security networks.¹⁵

In the case of Sudan, Islam is both part of the problem and part of the solution. It became part of the problem through the first cycle of colonization of the country by Turco-Egyptian rule from 1821 to 1885. That colonial experience imposed on the country an Ottoman–Middle Eastern conception of a legalistic Islam, contrary to the preceding community-based Sufi Islam of sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁶ The brief, violent, chaotic, and divisive period of the Mahdist state of 1885–1898¹⁷ gave Sudan an early taste of a so-called “Islamic state.”¹⁸ Both varieties

of state—bureaucratic, legalistic Ottoman–Middle Eastern and Islamic Mahdist—continue to haunt Sudan and threaten many other Muslim-majority countries with a problematic relationship between Islam and the state. Islam should be part of the solution, because it is part of the problem, but that does not mean that it will be easy to agree upon or implement its inclusion. As I see it, the possibility of Islam being part of the solution is in Taha’s model of self-liberation, as I will explore later. But first, let me clarify the colonial and postcolonial situation in Sudan as the context of Taha’s experience.

European colonial rule came to Sudan in 1898 as the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, in which Britain helped Egypt recover its former African colony Sudan, at a time when Egypt itself was a “protectorate” of Britain (1882–1922). Anglo-Egyptian colonial rule, which lasted until 1956, not only reinforced legalistic Islam through Egyptian influence but also introduced European cultural dominance through British education and administration. The combination of these two types of influence (Middle Eastern Islam and a European territorial state model) thrust Sudan into a protracted period of political instability and multiple complex civil wars. In particular, the overnight imposition of so-called Islamic sharia as state law by unilateral decree of President Numeiri in September 1983 represented the most drastic break with the possibilities of a pluralistic, democratic state.

These were exactly the dangers that Taha devoted his life to combating, from his agitation against colonial rule in the 1940s to his opposition to the imposition of sharia and resumption of civil war in the south Sudan by the Numeiri regime in the early 1980s. His life and work can be seen in terms of two overlapping phases. The first phase was the establishment of the Republican Party in 1945 to agitate for the independence of Sudan as a republic. During this “political phase,” Taha and members of the Republican Party were apparently inspired by the model of the Indian Congress Party and the nonviolent but open and confrontational style of Gandhi in particular. The second phase was the Islamic transformative phase, which started when he came out of three years of self-imposed seclusion (following two years of imprisonment by the British). This “religious phase” extended from 1951 until his execution in 1985.¹⁹

I summarize here the fundamentally religious basis of Taha's life and work, of which the political was an incidental outcome: Taha called for the evolution of the understanding and practice of Islam by shifting emphasis from what he called the subsidiary level of revelation of the Qur'an in Medina to the primary level of the original universal message of Islam in Mecca. The distinction between parts of the Qur'an revealed to the Prophet in Mecca, his hometown, and parts revealed in Medina, where he took refuge from persecution, is commonly known and accepted among all Muslims. The profound insight of Taha is the significance of that shift in the content of the Qur'an, and not only in the location of revelation.

As Taha explained in his main book, *The Second Message of Islam* (first published in Arabic in 1967), and in other books and public lectures, the level of revelation and understanding based on the Medina phase was a concession to the historical context of humanity in the seventh century. Since humanity as a whole has significantly evolved since that time, he argued, it is now ready to receive, understand, and practice the universal message of Islam based on the revelations of the Mecca phase. The universal message of Islam, which he called the second message of Islam, proclaims equality between men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims. His view of Islam also calls for the repudiation of slavery and political violence (jihad) from an Islamic point of view.

From 1951 until his death in 1985, Taha advocated his views in open and peaceful ways and applied his views in the education and instruction of his students in his own small community. For instance, he called for equality of men and women and practiced that equality in all activities of his movement. He advocated constitutional democratic governance and opposed sectarian politics in Sudan but did not seek political power for himself or his movement. Yet his work was seen as deeply subversive by traditional political parties and Islamist groups, as well as by Numeiri's regime, which took the final drastic step of executing Taha and suppressing his movement.

An effort to try him for apostasy in 1968 failed, because the charge had no basis in the penal system enforced in Sudan at the time. By 1985, however, it was possible to try him under the same September

1983 laws he was criticizing. He was executed on January 18, 1985, for a combination of a political charge of treason under the Sudan penal code and the charge of apostasy; the death penalty was confirmed by a special court of appeal (although Taha did not appeal his conviction), and it was at this time that the charge of apostasy was added. That posttrial charge was the primary reason President Nuemiri gave for his approval of the death penalty.²⁰

In his impromptu statement in an specially convened trial court on Monday, January 7, 1985, Taha rejected the authority of any court of the state to try him for his beliefs. He also explained his reasons for opposing the enactment of sharia norms into what he called “the September Laws” of 1983, which he felt violated and grossly distorted sharia and Islam and drastically undermined the peace and unity of Sudan. He also challenged the competence and integrity of the judges applying those laws and concluded: “For all these reasons, I am not prepared to cooperate with any court that has betrayed the independence of the judiciary, and allowed itself to be a tool for humiliating the people, insulting free thought, and persecuting political opponents.”²¹

Through the way he lived and died, Taha vindicated his call for absolute individual freedom by living the values of democracy, socialism, and social justice that he had advocated since the 1940s.²² The twofold key to his model of indigenous self-liberation can be summarized as follows: constantly striving for total consistency between thoughts, speech, and action—to freely think as we wish, say what we are thinking, and act on what we say, as long as we are prepared to accept responsibility for what we say and do. This means living by the values we hold, immediately, here and now, regardless of what else is happening around us. Otherwise, one would not be observing total consistency between his or her thoughts, speech, and action.

In Taha’s view and lived experience, what others do, including state authorities, should not determine what one thinks, says, and does, though persuasion and cooperation remain desirable in social and political discourse. He also held that we are responsible only for where we stand and what we say and do. To him, the divinely ordained destiny of humanity is realized whenever we discharge our immediate obligation (*al-wajib al-mubashir*) to the best of our judgment. In his view,

however, identifying our immediate obligation and acting accordingly is the object and purpose of our religious worship and reflection, to be constantly refined and investigated, never judged to be self-evident or taken for granted.

This proposed approach draws on our ability to organize social and political life in ways that facilitate our individual pursuit of self-liberation, but this requires constant examination and correction of our view of the relationship of ends and means, the essential quality of a civilized person, as quoted at the beginning of this essay. Political, economic, and social equalities, constitutionalism, and the rule of law, are the collective means to preserve the environment and context within which each of us strives for her or his self-liberation. In the final analysis, as Taha showed through his trial and execution, self-liberation is indigenous to each and every human being, to be realized within, regardless of what others do or fail to do.

In Taha's model, self-liberation happens when a human being liberates herself or himself from fear, which in his view is the cause of all inhibition and source of all moral perversion and behavioral distortion.²³ In Taha's analysis, self-preservation is the universal motivation of all life, but the quality of our humanity depends on the purpose we seek to achieve out of immediate self-preservation. He clarifies this distinction through what he calls "the will to live," unrestrained self-preservation, and "the will to be free," self-preservation subject to normative limitations. "At the level of this interaction [of the two wills] which produces the mind, the will to live is called the memory, while the will to be free is the imagination."²⁴ Moral choice is therefore integral to the ends we seek to achieve. In terms of Taha's analysis discussed earlier, for instance, the moral choice we all have to make is whether self-preservation be unrestrained will to live regardless of any normative constraints, or should it be qualified by the will to be free?

As I understand it, Taha is saying that a humane and enlightened outcome of the interaction of the will to live and the will to be free is not a product of forgetting the sources of fear that caused our will to live to be obsessed with self-preservation. To be free is not to simply cease to be aware of or care for sources of danger to our self-preservation. Instead, Taha is saying that a humane and enlightened outcome should

be the result of the development of our imagination to see that subjecting our will to live to normative limitations in fact enhances rather than diminishes the extent and quality of our self-preservation.

Moreover, this imagination should not be a futile utopia but a realistic vision supported by empirical methods and experience of how normative constraints can in fact support rather than diminish self-preservation. In this process, belief and trust in God is absolutely essential as the ultimate source of guidance and assurance of humane and enlightened outcome for every single human being. A religious lifestyle and discipline are the necessary means to accessing and benefiting from God's guidance and assurance. That is why Taha rejects, and I agree with him, secularism as a life philosophy.

In his books and public lectures, Taha often criticized the lack of or inadequacy of moral or ethical underpinnings in contemporary materialism, what he called material progress without civilization, as quoted at the beginning of this chapter. In the last text in Arabic he wrote during his political detention without charge or trial in 1983–1984,²⁵ he criticized secularism by name, though the substance of what he said was similar to his earlier views on unethical materialism. In this limited space, it may be best to give an approximate translation of key points in this text:

- The difference between science (knowledge and insightful comprehension) and secularism is that secularism is based on incomplete or inadequate knowledge, as it is described in the Quran (30:6–7).²⁶
- The scientist coordinates between this lower life and the other higher life.
- The scientist is intelligent, while the secularist is clever, and the difference is that the intelligent person upholds the balance of values and applies a just balance, while the clever person is one who does not have this balance. The intelligent person distinguishes the means from the ends, and coordinates between the two.
- Western civilization, in both its socialist and capitalist dimensions, is a materialistic civilization where the value of the human person is diminished, and the value of material possessions is elevated. It is material progress and not civilization. It is the field

of tremendous technology and machinery, but the human being is not the master of machines.

- This world is the means to the otherworld, and should be organized intelligently, in a scientific manner, so that it leads to that desired end. Secularists do not have this ability, but scientists do.
- Technology has expanded wealth to fantastic degree, but due to the lack of value, there is no justice in the distribution of wealth, whereby the rich are distracted from their humanity by their wealth and the poor are distracted from their humanity by their poverty. The human being is lost in materialistic civilization.
- Science cannot do without secularism, but it puts it in its right place, which is that of the means to the end.
- The present secular and materialistic civilization is a giant, without a spirit, so it needs a new civilization to infuse it with spirit and redirect it to make it the vehicle of the human being for realizing his or her humanity and perfection.

Accordingly, Taha insists that we must organize social and political affairs in ways that are most conducive to enabling each and every human being to liberate herself or himself from fear. As he explains:

To restore unity to one's being is for an individual to think as he wishes, speak what he thinks, and act according to his speech. This is the objective of Islam: "Oh believers, why do you say what you do not do? It is most hateful to God that you say what you do not do" [61:2-3 of the Qur'an]. This superior state [of being] can only be reached through a two-fold method: first, the good society, and secondly, the scientific educational method to be adopted by the individual in order to liberate himself from inherited fear.²⁷

His reference to the good society in this age of intensive and expansive globalization applies at all levels: local, national, and global; by scientific educational method he meant the religious methodology of trial and error in the process of self-transformation.²⁸

In this light, I will argue that addressing external causes of fear through the rule of law and protection of human rights is necessary for

enabling people to strive to liberate themselves from other forms and sources of fear. Conversely, if we remain moored only to the memory of mutual violent hostility, we remain mired in the fear that enabled and perpetuates the aggression and domination of imperialism. The challenge is to exercise our moral choice to reach out to the liberating vision of peaceful cooperation, while striving to be as persuasive as we can for others to join us in that vision and the struggle for its realization.

In Taha's fundamentally Islamic vision and experience, liberation of the human person from any form of political and social oppression and the satisfaction of her or his material needs is integral to surrender to God to receive and benefit from guidance and assurance of our individual humane and enlightened self-preservation. For example, Taha explains:

Human dignity is so dear to God that individual freedom is not subject to any [human] guardianship, not even that of the Prophet, irrespective of his impeccable morality . . . God says [in the Qur'an]: "Then remind them, as you are only a reminder. You have no dominion over them" (88:21-22) . . . This indicated that no man is perfect enough to be entrusted with the freedom of others, and that the price of freedom is continuous individual vigilance in safeguarding such freedom.²⁹

As I understand it, Taha's vision is that submission to the transcendental, supreme sovereignty of God (*twhid*) is inconsistent with subjugation to oppressive human authority. In other words, it is a form of idolatry (*shirk*) to submit to the oppressive will of other human beings. As noted earlier, extraordinary human beings, like Gandhi and Taha, may be able to repudiate such oppression on their own regardless of the apparently harsh consequences, but the rest of us cannot be expected to resist subjugation on our own. The Gandhis and Tahas of humanity inspire all of us, but they also create pragmatic frameworks for protecting our freedoms and safeguarding our material well-being to enable us to strive for our self-liberation to the extent we can. I will return to this theme in the last part of this chapter. For now, I want to highlight the paradox indicated earlier, within which self-liberation must be realized.

RELATIVITY OF SECULARISM AND PARADOX OF SELF-LIBERATION

Our human tendency to perceive, reflect, and articulate values and concepts in terms of our own historical and cultural context seems to be so deeply ingrained that even our effort to transcend it remains defined by the parameters of our own perspectives. It is therefore to be expected that human beings understand concepts like the secular from our own perspectives. What is problematic is attempting to impose our relativistic understandings and experiences on other human beings as if those concepts *as we know and experience them* are already the universal norm. This is paradoxical when the concept like the secular is admittedly relative yet seems to be unavoidable for non-Western societies that continue to live with the reality of European models of the state in the postcolonial context.

As noted earlier, there is significant controversy surrounding the definition of the term “secular” in the Western context, but the term is often interpreted simply as “nonreligious” or “lacking a religious component”³⁰ or as “distinct from or separate from religion.”³¹ However, it is misleading to contrast the religious and secular in binary terms, because they are in fact mutually interdependent, if only in the sense of one signifying the absence of the other.³² Another approach that also relies on a binary defines the term “secular” as “the assumption that everything material or abstract derives from human endeavor.”³³ While this view may be comprehensible to Christians, it seems to me that it may not apply to nonmonotheistic or so-called traditional or indigenous religions. It is also not helpful in understanding the relationship between what is secular and what is religious.

What qualifies as “religious” is a subject of even greater debate. For instance, religion has been defined as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.”³⁴ But that is an almost exclusively Christian view of religion that demonstrates the relativity of the religious and secular, how what is considered secular depends on the religion against which it is posed. For example, the

meaning of what is secular with regard to Christianity is not necessarily the same as the meaning of secular with regard to Islam or Hinduism. In addition, the secular depends on the cultural and territorial context.³⁵

The relativity of the secular and the difficulty of escaping it are reflected in problems of the language we use and epistemology we apply to understanding the issues. The secular is often discussed in terms of the etymology of the term in European languages, which immediately forces our analysis into a local or regional paradigm of looking for the etymology of terms in that language and limits our analysis to the historical framework of where the concept indicated by the term prevailed. T. N. Madan, a leading Indian scholar in the field, discussed the word “secularization” in terms of its having been first used in 1648, at the end of the Thirty Years’ War in Europe, to refer to the transfer of church properties to the exclusive control of princes. He continued, “When George Jacob Holyoake coined the term ‘secularism’ in 1851 and led a rationalist movement of protest in England secularization was built into the ideology of progress.”³⁶ Similarly, Himanshu Roy said:

In ecclesiastical Latin, the word “saecularis” meant the world, the profane, the base, the lowly in opposition to the church that symbolised lofty ideals, the godly, the sacred, the otherworldly and selflessness . . . The struggle of classical liberalism against church and critique of religion facilitated the growth of civil society, religious tolerance and secularism, a development that was intertwined with the emergence and expansion of capitalism that created the space for and assisted the growth of individual freedom.³⁷

So, here we have it all in the language and its associations. By limiting our discussion to the term in one language in relation to the institutionalized religion of a specific place, we tend to link the concept to other ideas like capitalism and individual freedom, as conceived and practiced in that place within the time frame identified for us by the location of our discourse. For our purposes, several problematic implications seem to follow from this scenario. To begin with, the secular is related to the profane, the base, the lowly *in opposition to* the godly and

the sacred. This represents one major hurdle for Muslims to overcome if they are to accept or work with the secular in this sense (which they do not accept).

Moreover, a conception of the secular that is opposed to the religious is not only presented as essential for emergence of constitutional and human rights values but also linked to capitalism. In view of the prevalence of colonial power relations, it is not surprising for these associations to be presented to the Muslim colonial subject in Africa and Asia as causal relationships among these concepts and systems, whereby it is necessary to have one in order to have the other. Thus, to be secular is to be antireligious, and to be democratic is to be capitalist.

The relativity of the term to a particular religion in its specific context is also reflected in the definition of the term “secularization” as implying that “what was previously regarded as religious is now ceasing to be such, and it also implies a process of differentiation which results in the various aspects of society, economic, political, legal and moral, becoming increasingly discrete in relation to each other.’ In other words, secularization leads to changes in (a) the beliefs and practices of individuals, and (b) the nature of institutions and their mutual relations.”³⁸

What was regarded as religious of course depends on the religion in question and its understanding and practice in a specific place and time. Processes of differentiation vary from one society to another under certain political and economic conditions. The beliefs and practices of individuals vary within the same religious tradition (Catholic and Protestant Christians; Sunni and Shia Muslims), let alone from one religion to another. Whether or not there are religious institutions at all, and their nature and relations to other institutions, is again not uniform within the same religion in different places or over time or between different religions like, for example, Buddhism and Islam. But when Islam is represented as having religious institutions, the phenomenon becomes an approximation of equivalence to Christianity. In what can be called “Christianization” of Islam, for instance, the German state is urging Muslims to organize like the Catholic and Protestant churches so that the state can deal with an identifiable “representative” of the Muslim community.³⁹

Despite such factors, which I would consider obvious, the reality of colonial and postcolonial discourse continues to be founded on the assumption that European conceptions of secularism are the norm for the rest of the world and a marker of modernity.⁴⁰ The colonial and postcolonial doctrine is bound by its own logic of moral superiority of the colonizer over the colonized to relegate Islamic societies to a permanently lower scale of humanity to justify their domination and exploitation.⁴¹ As that mode of power relations continued in the postcolonial world, European conceptions of secularism became the marker of the relationship of religion and the state in “civilized nations.”⁴² That imperial calculus will not change except through self-liberation by the subjects of colonization.⁴³

Yet the fact that Muslims tend to judge the secular and secularism as these concepts have been understood and experienced by Europeans in relation to Christianity indicate how they have internalized a colonial state of mind that requires what I call deep decolonization through indigenous self-liberation beyond formal political self-determination. The issue is not that Europeans seek to perpetuate colonial relations, which is probably true about some of them, but that Muslims are conceding that ambition.⁴⁴ The Algerian public intellectual Malek Bennabi (1905–1973) initiated a concept that might be translated as “coloniability” to refer to an inner susceptibility to being colonized. In his view, colonialism is the consequence of the inner moral decline of Muslims, not its cause.⁴⁵

The preceding narrative of the justification of colonialism and the internalization of that rationalization by the colonized is familiar and commonly accepted. The question I wish to raise here is: What is new about the colonial ideology and postcolonial dependency that we can still observe around the world? What is new, I argue, is the growing ability of the postcolonial subject to realize a level or degree of indigenous self-liberation that can transcend the postcolonial mind-set that still persists among both colonizer and colonized. However, the paradox here is in the fact that self-liberation is supposed to materialize and develop in postcolonial situations where the application of European notions of the secular as the universal norm seems to be necessary for working with European models of the nation-state.

This paradox can be mediated because there is some relative progress on both sides—among the subjects of empire as well as the citizens of imperial power—in comparison with previous generations. More subjects of empire are more forcefully refusing to submit than used to be the case, and more citizens of imperial powers are more apologetic about the domination and exploitation of other human beings.⁴⁶ I now find it more plausible than used to be the case that human enlightenment can be achieved by individual persons, everywhere, in their own cultural and religious contexts. It is from this perspective that Muslims can now achieve their own enlightenment and sustain its values on their own terms more than they were able to do during the colonial and postcolonial period.⁴⁷

It is not possible to discuss here all the reservations and concerns one may have about the paradox of the postcolonial context in which postcolonial societies must seek self-liberation. Still, I would close the preceding overview by emphasizing the practical value of the secular in this context. One important purpose of the secular is to give everyone a sort of “common ground” from which to begin discussion. Charles Taylor explains the purpose of the secular as a common ground and why it is important:

Secular reason is a language that everyone speaks, and can argue and be convinced in. Religious languages operate outside of this discourse, by introducing extraneous premises which only believers can accept. So let's all talk the common language.

What underpins this notion is something like an epistemic distinction. There is secular reason, which everyone can use and reach conclusions by—conclusions that is, with which everyone can agree. Then there are special languages, which introduce extra assumptions, which might even contradict those of ordinary secular reason. These are much more epistemically fragile; in fact, you won't be convinced by them unless you already hold them. So religious reason either comes to the same conclusions as secular reason, but then it is superfluous; or it comes to contrary conclusions, and then it is dangerous and disruptive. This is why it needs to be sidelined.⁴⁸

The possibility of what Taylor calls “secular reason” is what underpins the frequently noted and obviously true purpose of secularism as a political doctrine; namely, to avoid discord among believers in different religions and to allow citizens to practice their own faiths freely. By not making any one religion “official,” the state avoids isolating members of other faiths. “No one religion can pretend to speak for the rest.”⁴⁹

Contrary to an apparent consensus among Muslims and non-Muslims alike, I believe that it should not be difficult for Muslims to accept a secular state in the sense of one that is neutral regarding all religions, provided the connectedness of Islam and politics is acknowledged. A religiously neutral state is fully compatible with Muslim acceptance of the inherent consistency and complementarity between the secular and the religious noted at the beginning of this essay. At the same time, the connectedness of Islam and politics addresses concerns about secularism as a life philosophy, like those raised by Taha that I summarized earlier.

TAHA AND THE SECULAR STATE: AN INTERPRETATION

I am calling my proposal of a secular state an “interpretation” of Taha’s views to make it clear that I am speaking here on my own personal responsibility and not on behalf of Taha or any of the members of his movement in general. I do believe that my proposal is consistent with Taha’s views, although he did not advance what I am proposing as such. I also believe that his objections to secularism as a life philosophy noted in the preceding section do not apply to what I am proposing. In particular, I believe that what I am proposing is an appropriate approach to the social and political organization Taha advocated as necessary for self-liberation by Muslims in the present realities of the postcolonial state in its global context.

I call for a secular state in order for believers to be good Muslims in society. The secular state is one that does not take a position on any matter of religion and strives to be as neutral as possible regarding various religions. The key quality of the state I intend is that it does

not discriminate among the religious beliefs of its citizens—it does not favor one view or disfavor another view of religion. Society, on the other hand, reflects the religious beliefs and practices of its members, who can be of any faith. To me, society is a community of believers not a “believing community,” because a collective entity is a metaphor and cannot believe, think, or feel like an individual person.

For Muslims, there is no possibility of new or additional texts, because the prophet Muhammad is believed to be the final prophet and the Qur’an is the conclusive divine revelation, but there is nothing to prevent or invalidate the formation of a new consensus around techniques of interpretation or innovative interpretations of the Qur’an and Sunna. New interpretations would thereby become part of sharia in the same way that existing techniques or principles came to be part of it in the first place.

The separation of Islam from the state and the regulation of its political role through constitutionalism and the protection of human rights that I propose are necessary to ensure freedom and security for Muslims to participate in proposing and debating fresh interpretations of those foundational sources. This is religiously necessary because any understanding of sharia is always the product of juridical reasoning in the general sense of reasoning and reflection by human beings. “Although the law is of divine provenance, the actual construction of the law is a human activity, and its results represent the law of God as *humanly understood*. Since the law does not descend from heaven ready-made, it is the human understanding of the law—the human *fiqh* [lit.: understanding] that must be normative for society.”⁵⁰

To briefly explain, since determinations about whether or not any text of the Qur’an or Sunna applies to an issue, and whether or not it is categorical, who can exercise juridical reasoning (*ijtihad*) and how are all matters that can only be decided by human beings, imposing prior censorship on such efforts violates the premise of how sharia principles can be derived from the Qur’an and Sunna. It is illogical to say that *ijtihad* cannot be exercised regarding a specific issue or question because that determination itself is the product of human reasoning and reflection. It is also dangerous to limit the ability to exercise *ijtihad* to a restricted group of Muslims who are supposed to have specific

qualifications because that will depend in practice on those human beings who will set and apply the criteria of selecting who is qualified as one who can exercise *ijtihad*. To grant this authority to any institution or organ, whether believed to be official or private, is dangerous because that power will certainly be manipulated for political or other reasons.

Since knowing and upholding sharia is the permanent and inescapable responsibility of every Muslim, no person or institution should control this process for Muslims. Since the power to decide who is qualified to exercise *ijtihad* and how it is to be practiced affects matters of religious belief and obligation for every Muslim, there should not be any censorship of or control over this process. In other words, any restriction of free debate by entrusting human beings or institutions with the authority to decide which views are to be allowed or suppressed is inconsistent with the religious nature of sharia itself.

The objective for me is to protect individual believers' genuine piety in beliefs and practice by controlling the risk of coercion by the state or society. A neutral state and tolerant society is the means to that end. By organizing and regulating social life, keeping the peace, and delivering essential services without discrimination, regardless of religious belief or lack of it, the state encourages society to be tolerant of religious pluralism. The legal neutrality of the state and social tolerance of diversity and dissent enable individual believers to be more honest in their effort to bring their behavior into conformity with their religious beliefs. Coercion by the state or society encourages hypocrisy, while freedom of religion and belief and social tolerance promotes genuine piety in beliefs and practice. As Gandhi argued:

While it was the obligation of the state to ensure that every religion was free to develop according to its own genius, no religion which depended on state support deserves to survive. In other words, the inseparability of religion and politics in the Indian [Islamic from my perspective] context, and generally, was for Gandhi fundamentally a distinct issue from the separation of the state from the church in Christendom. When he did advocate that "religion and state should be separate," he clarified that this was to limit the role of the state to

“secular welfare” and to allow it no admittance into the religious life of the people.⁵¹

I make a distinction between the state and politics, to argue that the state should not claim or pretend to enforce or apply sharia as sharia, though sharia principles can influence state policies through politics. This is what I mean by “negotiating” the influence of sharia, as various political forces struggle to present and defend policies through what I call “civic reason.” In this way, political actors should try to explain and support their policy choices by giving reasons that all citizens can debate freely and accept or reject without reference to religious beliefs.

For example, if I want to propose prohibition of charging interest on loans (*riba*), I should present economic and social reasons in support of what I am proposing, instead of simply asserting that the state should prohibit charging interest on loans because that is *haram*. At the same time, Muslims should avoid *riba* in their personal dealings, because it is *haram*. This is the religious behavior for which a believer is either rewarded or punished, depending on his action and intention (*niya*). What the state is doing, whether influenced by sharia principles or not, is politics, and what believers do on their own personal responsible is religious.

In practically every society, religious groups are an important policy constituency on fundamental matters of social life, from education to taxation and from issues of public and private morality to charitable social functions. When I speak of negotiations between religions and the state with regard to these issues, I mean arrangements whereby religious groups are acknowledged as an important political constituency that is neither taken over by the state nor allowed to take over the state itself or any of its institutions. The religious neutrality of the state as the principle of separation of state and religion helps achieve this delicate balance by providing a framework for securing the legitimacy of the state among religious communities while regulating how their concerns are reflected in public policy with due regard to the concerns and interests of other communities and citizens at large.

Since citizens who are not religious or do not organize to lobby the state as religious communities are entitled to equal respect for their

views and interests, the state and its organs must not fall under the control of one religious community, however large its numbers may be. In fact, the neutrality of the state regarding all religious and nonreligious perspectives is more important in relation to dominant groups, because the risks of state bias in their favor is greater than in the case of minorities.

It should also be noted that perception in such matters can be as important as reality, because the appearance of bias tends to undermine public confidence in the neutrality of the state even where bias does not exist. The religious neutrality of the state provides a basic structure whereby the state is neither partial nor perceived to be partial to any one religious or nonreligious perspective, while giving due regard to all relevant and legitimate perspectives in the formulation and implementation of public policy.

Moreover, the imperatives of certainty, uniformity, and neutrality in national legislation are now stronger than they used to be in the pre-colonial era. This is not only due to the growing complexity of the role of the state at the domestic or national level but also because of the global interdependence of all peoples and their states. Regardless of the relative weakness or strength of some states in relation to others, the realities of national and global political, economic, security, and other relations remain firmly embedded in the existence of sovereign states that have exclusive jurisdiction over their citizens and territories.

I will now close with a brief reflection on the religious neutrality of the state within the framework of what I call “civic reason,” which refers to the means for facilitating and regulating the relationships between state, politics, and religion. My view is that the state should be institutionally separate from Islam while recognizing and regulating the unavoidable connectedness of Islam with politics. Despite their obvious and permanent connections, I take the state to be the more settled, operational side of self-governance, while politics is the dynamic process of making choices among competing policy options.

The state and politics may be seen as two sides of the same coin, but they cannot and should not be completely fused. It is necessary to ensure that the state is not simply a complete reflection of the politics of the day, because it must be able to mediate and adjudicate among

competing views of policy, which require it to remain relatively independent from different political forces in society. Yet the complete independence of the state from politics is not possible, because officials of the state will always act politically in implementing their own agenda and maintaining the allegiance of those who support them. This reality of connectedness makes it necessary to strive for the separation of the state from politics, so that those excluded by the political processes of the day can still resort to state institutions for protection against excesses and abuses of power by state officials.

NOTES

1. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1.
2. Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, *The Second Message of Islam* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 51–52.
3. *Ibid.*, 78–79.
4. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, "Transcending Imperialism: Human Values and Global Citizenship," in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol. 30, ed. Suzan Young (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2012), 71–144.
5. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *African Constitutionalism and the Role of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 3–6.
6. An-Na'im, *African Constitutionalism*, 6.
7. Nilüfer Göle, "Manifestations of Religious-Secular Divide: Self, State, and the Public Sphere," in *Comparative Secularisms in a Global Age*, ed. Linell E. Cady and Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 41.
8. An-Na'im, *African Constitutionalism*, 16–30.
9. As Thiong'o argued, by effacing native memory of place through the renaming of geographic locations, like Lake Victoria in Central Africa and Victoria Falls in southern Africa, thereby altering the identity of the thing and forcing local populations to relate to their own geography on the colonizer's terms. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* (New York: Basic Civitas, 2009), 7, 9.
10. *Ibid.*, 23, 25–26.
11. *Ibid.*, 108.
12. Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 21.
13. Ira Lapidus, *Islamic Societies to the Nineteenth Century: A Global History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 55–58.

14. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 19–21
15. The following review is based on my personal experience as a member of Taha's movement and a daily participant in its activities for seventeen years (1968–1984). I am also drawing on his published and unpublished books, manuscripts, lectures, and seminars. All these sources are now available in Arabic at www.alfikra.org.
16. J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in the Sudan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949); and Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971).
17. P. M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881–1989* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958).
18. I say so-called Islamic state because, as I have argued in *Islam and the Secular State* (9–20), this notion is conceptually incoherent, historically unprecedented, and practically untenable. But I will not discuss this issue in this essay.
19. For an overview, see translator's introduction of Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*, trans. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 1–30.
20. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, "The Islamic Law of Apostasy and Its Modern Applicability: A Case from the Sudan," *Religion* 16 (1986): 197–223.
21. Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*, 14.
22. For his view of what he called the three equalities (democracy, socialism, and social justice) see Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*, 152–164.
23. *Ibid.*, 84.
24. *Ibid.*, 83.
25. He called this unpublished text *Dibajah*, which means "preamble," presumably for his much earlier book *Foundations of the Constitution of Sudan*, first published in 1955, just before the country's independence from Anglo-Egyptian rule on January 1, 1956.
26. I use the term "science and insightful comprehension" (reduced to "science" in these points for shorthand) and derivatives like "scientist" for the Arabic term *al-ilm* with much hesitation here, but I am unable to think of a better English term. Perhaps this difficulty in translation is an indication of the relativity of knowledge and understanding that is bound to produce relativist notions of the secular.
27. Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*, 152–153.
28. *Ibid.*, 152–164.
29. *Ibid.*, 160.
30. Emmet Kennedy, *Secularism and Its Opponents from Augustine to Solzhenitsyn* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1.
31. Iain T. Benson, "The Secular: Hidden and Express Meaning," *Sacred Web* 9 (2002), accessed July 10, 2012, www.sacredweb.com/online_articles/sw9_benson.html.

32. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, "Islam and Secularism," in Cady and Shakman Hurd, *Comparative Secularisms in a Global Age*, 218.
33. Lilly Weissbrod, "Religion as National Identity in a Secular Society," *Review of Religious Research* 24, no. 3 (1983): 189.
34. William H. Swatos Jr., "Differentiating Experiences: The Virtue of Substantive Definitions," in *Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries Between the Sacred and Secular*, ed. Arthur L. Greil and David G. Bromley (Oxford: Elsevier Science, 2003), 40.
35. Ibid.
36. T. N. Madan, "Secularism in Its Place," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (November 1987): 748.
37. Himanshu Roy, "Western Secularism and Colonial Legacy in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 2 (January 2006): 158.
38. Srinivas, M. N. (1966), *Social Change in Modern India*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 119), quoted by Andre Beteille, "Secularism and Intellectuals," *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 10 (March 1994): 561.
39. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, "Sharia and the Secular State in the Middle East and Europe," the Third Carl Heinrich Becker Lecture, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Germany, (May 19, 2009).
40. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 124–126, 174–176. For a postcolonial critique of this view of modernity, see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 44.
41. Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review, 1972), 41, 54–66.
42. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
43. Ilan Kapoor, "Capitalism, Culture, Agency: Dependency Theory Versus Postcolonial Theory," *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2002): 652.
44. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 11.
45. Bennabi's publications are in French and Arabic. In English, see, for example, his *Islam in History and Society* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1999).
46. It is remarkable, for instance, that coordinated protests by millions around the world were launched on February 15, 2003, in some eighty cities, including London and New York, before the invasion of Iraq by the United States and United Kingdom and their allies began on March 19, 2003. "February 15, 2003, Anti-War Protest," *Wikipedia*, last modified 2 June 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_15,_2003_anti-war_protest.
47. Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*, 62–79.
48. Charles Taylor, "Secularism and Critique," *The Immanent Frame* (blog), April 24, 2008, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2008/04/24/secularism-and-critique>.

49. Emmet Kennedy, *Secularism and Its Opponents from Augustine to Solzhenitsyn* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.
50. Bernard Weiss, *The Spirit of Islamic Law* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 116.
51. T. N. Madan, "Secularism in Its Place," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (November 1987): 752.