

Editorial

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF HUMANITY?

If you asked them: **"Who created the cosmos - heavens and the earth?"** they say: **"Allah"**.^{▼¹}

They – humans – are the ones who were created by Allah, as well who has tasked them with taking care of themselves and their surroundings. He forbade them to kill each other because **"to kill one innocent man is the same as to kill all mankind"**.^{▼²}

They – humans – are the ones who, as Robert Jungk notes, want to take God's place, want to repeat God's work, want to recreate and organize the cosmos, which, supposedly, they "create" according to the law of their rampant reason. This was and remains the ambition of the progress of the twentieth century. The consequence of this ambition is the dehumanization of man, who in his greed for divine power, has forgotten human dignity.^{▼³}

The Italian philosopher and humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) was the first in Europe to speak about the meaning of "the dignity of man". He did not hide that he was inspired by the ancient writings of an Arab named Abdal Saracen, who, as Pico states, when asked what he found most wonderful in this world replied that "there is nothing more wonderful than man".^{▼⁴} Pico della Mirandola was rightly named "The Father of Humanism". He was writing a book on the dignity of man in the fifteenth century when in Europe the church-theological word was largely devoted to "the glory of God". This in itself was not controversial, but it was disputed that in the name of "glory to God" the dignity of man was trampled upon, which in itself is contrary to the "glory of God". Dressed in obscure scholasticism, medieval theology was not necessarily faith (trust) in God. For ultimately 'theology' is, like any other human enterprise, conditioned by the inner state of the human spirit and mind, which is limited by the context of time and place. Nevertheless, theology has always been expected to cope with new challenges and to expand the boundaries of its dogmas. Theology is not a science dedicated to collecting and organizing new scientific information. Nor is it the art of painting the world for mere wonder. Uniquely, theology is a completely different human activity, which seeks the truth about God rather than the truth about man.

^{▼¹} *Qur'an*, 39:38.

^{▼²} *Qur'an*, 5:32.

^{▼³} Jungk, Robert. *Tomorrow is Already Here*. Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1954.

^{▼⁴} It is probably 'Abdallah ibn Muqaffa' (718-775 AD), known for his Arabic translations of the Medo-Persian scriptures. See: Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*. Regnery Publishing, Washington, 1956, renewed 1984 by Robert Coponigi & Russel Kirk, p. 3rd.

It is difficult to determine the exact historical moment when man had truly understood that the truth about God is easiest and fastest to arrive at through man's knowledge of himself and his fellow man. But it can be said that spirit-gifted people—Sufis or mystics in all religions have always kept in mind that "he who knows the truth about himself, as a man, has come to know the truth about God" ("Man 'arafa nafsahu, faqad 'arafa rabbahu"). With this, it should be emphasized in particular, that the knowledge of oneself in the Sufi sense is not and must not be at the expense of "the glory of God". "Glory to man" must not be placed before or above "glory to God". This is where modern humanism has fallen into a trap by alienating itself from the Divine Spirit and authentic religious spirituality, by elevating "glory to man" above "glory to God" under the pretext of raising "human dignity". Consciously or unconsciously, man has lost orientation in the cosmos:

We, said Albert Schweitzer, are bereft of any theory of universe. Therefore, instead of being inspired by a profound and powerful spirit of affirmation of the world and of life, we allow ourselves, both as individuals and as nations, to be driven hither and thither by a type of such affirmation which is both confused and superficial. Instead of adopting a determined ethical attitude, we exist in an atmosphere of mere ethical phrases or declare ourselves ethical sceptics. ▼⁵

Man inadvertently recognized in the idea of humanism freedom from the shackles of religiously obscure dogmas, but he did not pay attention to the fact that freedom unrelated to truth is the greatest enemy of freedom. For if there is only your truth and mine alone so that neither of us recognizes a transcendent moral standard (let us call it an unquestionable "truth"), a standard by which to judge our differences, then the only way to resolve this issue is for you to physically impose your power on me, or for me to impose my power over you. Freedom unrelated to truth leads to chaos; chaos leads to anarchy; and since human beings cannot tolerate anarchy, tyranny in response to the human imperative for order is just around the corner. The false humanism of freedom of indifference leads first to the decay of freedom and then to the ruin of freedom. ▼⁶

When a man really is conscious of his freedom, said Karl Jaspers, he at the same time becomes convinced of the existence of God. Freedom and God are inseparable... If the consciousness of freedom contains the consciousness of God, then there exists connection between the denial of freedom and the denial of God. ▼⁷

The confusion and superficiality Albert Schweitzer spoke of arose as a result of a 'replacing belief' based on the premise that "the dignity of man", not "glory to God", should be the focus of human free thought. Of course, when religion or theological thought lost its natural and rational argumentation and became too unconvincing in terms of its 'mere ethical phrases or its real ethical sceptics', it had no choice but to undergo a kind of 'humanization', which in turn meant a kind of despiritualization, or rather, materialization. The pitfall of this move was in the fact that 'materialism' emphasizes what animals and humans have in common, while religion – *din* emphasizes what makes the difference between humans and animals. Darwin did not make

▼⁵ Schweitzer, Albert. *The Philosophy of Civilization*. Prometheus Books, New York, 1987, pp. xii, xiv, 4.

▼⁶ See, *John Paul II and the Crisis of Humanism*. Available January 6, 2024. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewim4pm63siDAXG2AIHHSOMBx8QFnoECA8QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.catholiceducation.org%2Fen%2Fculture%2Fculture%2Fcatholic-contributions%2Fjohn-paul-ii-and-the-crisis-of-humanism.html&usg=AOvVaw1iQeW-gnkhsQc3pXeBZCmEF&opi=89978449>

▼⁷ Jaspers, Karl, *Introduction to Philosophy* ("Uvod u filozofiju"). Prosveta, Beograd, 1967, p. 158.

man an animal, but he did make him aware about his animal origins. From this "consciousness" the others continued to draw "appropriate conclusions", both moral and political: human society is a herd in a civilized form, and civilization is a human awakening that is realized by rejecting prohibitions and mastering nature and living with the bodily senses instead of the sense of spirit. ▼⁸

Obviously, Pico's benevolent humanization of religion has gone too far in glorifying the dignity of man in terms of his materialistic egoism, so that man has forgotten the roots of his spirituality. Consequently, 'humanism' today needs faith or divine spiritual touch just as much as religion or theology needed Pic's touch of reasonable 'humanism'. Indeed, today it is necessary to enrich 'humanism' with true faith in God in the same way that it was necessary to enrich 'religion' with rational 'humanism' at a time when 'religion' was in crisis as 'humanism' is in crisis today. Albert Camus said, "The purpose of a writer is to prevent civilization from being destroyed". The same could be said today at a time of the current acute crisis of humanism.

World wars have necessitated the establishment of the United Nations, which has, for humanistic reasons, become tasked with caring for the peace and security of humanity regardless of religion, nation, race and origin. Unfortunately, the UN is unable to effectively carry out its duties precisely because, as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says:

The nightmare in Gaza is more than a humanitarian crisis. It is a crisis of humanity. Gaza is becoming a graveyard for children. Hundreds of girls and boys are reportedly being killed or injured every day. ▼⁹

Indeed, this continuing trend of violence and disregard for international humanitarian law and human life has enveloped today's unprecedented world.

According to UNICEF, at least 120,000 children have been killed or maimed in wars since 2005. On average, that is nearly 20 lives lost every day. Furthermore, in her address to the UN Security Council on October 30, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell pointed out that "... More than 420 children are killed or wounded in Gaza every day – a number that should shake each of us to our core". ▼¹⁰

As you read this short editorial, children in Gaza are dying of a bomb attacks on schools or hospitals.

Children are not born with hatred and violence in their hearts. Either they are directly taught to hate, or they become victims of hatred and violence.

It is clear that 'violence breeds violence' and that children exposed to violence at an early age will grow up to be more violent adults. Secondly, supported 'resilience' against violence means violence must be stopped and better living conditions in peace ensured.

The overlap between "human rights" and "freedom of religion" is like an overlap of 'morality' and 'spirituality'. 'Morality' or 'ethics', as we know it, means respect (*al-iḥtirām*) for another: "Wish to another what you wish for yourself", and generosity (*al-sakhā'*): "Give and expect nothing in return". There is no 'morality', religious or otherwise, that advocates hatred and violence.

▼⁸ See: Boisard, Marcel A. *Humanism in Islam*. American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, 1988, p. xi.

▼⁹ *Press Conference by Secretary-General António Guterres at United Nations Headquarters*. United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, SM/SM/2202, 6.11.2023. Available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm22021.doc.htm>. Visited on 01/06/2024.

▼¹⁰ *Gaza has become a 'graveyard' for children amid Israeli attacks: UN*. Al Jazeera, 31.10.2023. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/31/gaza-has-become-a-graveyard-for-thousands-of-children-un>. Visited on 01/06/2024.

'Spirituality' (*al-rūḥiyyat*), on the other hand, is equal to the idea of "existentiality" (*al-wujūdiyyat*), where one seeks not only morally and politically guaranteed respect and generosity for the sake of social peace and security, but also for a happy life, which can overcome the sadness of a fleeting life despite morality and goodness. People are sad because they inevitably die whether morally good or bad. But some people are not sad because they are spiritually happy to have lived their lives according to the freedom of their moral conscience.

Dear readers,

The intention of our/your magazine "**illuminatio/Lighthouse/Almanar**" is to provide you with at least a little spiritual air in today's crisis of meaning and humanism so that you may feel happy and satisfied. In this eighth issue, Academician Akšamija takes us/you anew to his *ḍulistan* – rose garden, where we are offered a unique fragrance for the soul, where our mind opens with the desire through Islamic *al-ṣinā'ah* – art in knowing the smallest details– unity and diversity of aestheticized action/*ṣinā'at* of recognitive omen (ornamental forms). If you were to look for an example of the spiritualization of humanism, following the previous elaboration on today's crisis of humanism, then you would surely find it in a series of Akšamija's artistic gardens, which refresh the soul and heart and in which the idea of spirituality (*al-rūḥiyyat*) permeates in a subtle way, as an unambiguous value with existentialism (*al-wujūdiyyat*). Therefore, enter Akšamija's *ḍulistan*, rest your soul with the scent of roses and choose the best one, which will arouse in you a sense of humanity.

In his inspired article, Dr. Ramon Harvey devoted his time and intellectual effort to presenting to us the "Philosopher from Samarkand", none other than Abū Maṣṣūr al-Maturīdī himself, who is much more known as the founder of the Sunni theological school, which we inherit in Bosnia – at least officially. In every line of his article, Harvey shows great respect for al-Maturīdī, as an original tenth-century Muslim thinker in Samarkand, where he developed not only his theological ideas but also sound philosophical premises. In theological circles, it is known that the question of God's attributes is one of the most sensitive issues, due to which there was a significant rift among theologians historically. Harvey has undertaken the arduous task of explaining al-Maturīdī's orthodoxy, originality, and ingenuity in treating God's attributes in the way of tropes, labelling him as "an early trope theorist". Due to this, but also because of the indisputable contribution of al-Maturīdī to philosophical-theological thought, Harvey suggests that his corpus and views be included in school textbooks. I am sure that anyone who has a soul, heart, and inquisitive mind will find in Harvey's article answers to many theological questions regarding God's attributes, including questions that have to do with understanding God's being, which is the most important subject in faith.

In this issue, an overdue debt to one man has been tackled, one who has greatly indebted our people. Namely, Kemal Cerić chose the topic of the life and work of Dr. Ahmed Smajlović for his thesis at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Sarajevo, Department of Oriental Philology, study group Arabic Language and Literature, with reference to Dr. Smajlović's attitude towards Orientalism. Kemal has kindly accepted that his thesis, which was rated highly, be published in this issue of our magazine. Editor – Art Director Dr. Mehmed Akšamija, included illustrations, which best depict one man and one time, which is of us, and yet so close and so melancholy. The value of Kemal's work is in bringing forth new insights about the

life of Dr. Smajlović as well as his profound assessment of the attitude of Western Orientalists towards Islam and Muslims; in particular, his analysis of Arab thinkers towards Orientalism, from those who are extremely negative to those who are moderately positive. We are convinced that everyone who knew Dr. Smajlović, especially his numerous students and associates, will be grateful that our magazine found room for a man who has made a great contribution to our faith and nation.

Our faithful English language editor from New Zealand, Abdullah Drury, honoured us with his exhaustive insight into the life and work of Bayram Murati (1930–2013), an Albanian immigrant to New Zealand. At first glance, it may seem that the biography of an unusual Albanian Muslim in New Zealand has nothing to do with the concept of our magazine, but when one carefully reads Drury's article about him, which we publish in this and the next issue, one will see that his story has a meaningful lesson and message about the fate of Muslims from the Balkans, especially Albanians and Bosniaks. Murati is, indeed, a paradigm of Muslim emigrants from the Balkans and a desolate immigrant to the country, where he has no kin and no root. But it did not take long for the skilled Murati to get by as a hardworking businessman in New Zealand. The wealth he acquired and the influence he exerted with this wealth has not distanced him from his religious or national identity. In fact, Murati did not care so much about his position in the New Zealand society as he cared about his reputation and position in the Albanian-Muslim community. Murati had a great desire to make his Albanian community an example for the reputation of Islam within the secular society of Anglo-European Christian heritage. Drury in his article contextualizes the cultural and social environment of Murati's life in the best way, emphasizing both his business interests and his religious principles in an environment where religious principles were not adhered to very much. I am convinced that patient and inquisitive readers about the fate of Muslim emigrants from the Balkans around the world will learn in this article a lot that they did not know or that had never occurred to them, most notably that it is possible to achieve success in another's world in wealth and dignity.

In the continuation of this issue, before the reader is a look at the prospect of Islamic civilization in the context of (hiero)history, in terms of continuity and change in life and history. Namely, the author tries to unfold the merits of Islamic civilization in promoting the progress of humanity and the causes of the fall and withdrawal of Islamic civilization from the global cultural and political scene. The basic idea is that neither weak nor aggressive civilizations have ever ruled the world, but the world has always been ruled by cooperative civilizations, of which Islamic civilization can serve as a proven historical example of civilizational cooperation. Therefore, the recovery of Islamic civilization is neither in isolation nor in assimilation, but in the affirmation of civilizational values, which are common to all mankind.

In a time of disturbed religious and moral values, one must be courageous to think of the possibility of the existence of a "Perfect Man" ("*al-insān al-kāmil*"). Thanks be to Allah, such a brave servant to of *dīn* and *īmān* was found among us. As a Sufi himself – a Dervish, Dr. Mensur Valjevac made an effort to demonstrate the richness of Sufi thought of the "Perfect Man" from Ibni 'Arabi to his Sheikh Mustafa ef. Čolić. Not wanting to burden us with his opinions and attitudes, Dr. Valjevac presents the Sufi sheikh's definition of "*al-insān al-kāmil*" in such a way that it provokes in the reader the desire to be at least a semblance of an imaginary

"Perfect Man", who in the absence of a prophet is a sign and a signpost to the faithful. Particularly important is Dr. Valjevac's love and respect for Sheikh Mustafa ef. Čolić, who left behind recognizable traces of Sufi tradition in our country. The fact that the idea of the "Perfect Man" was alive in our Bosnia as well speaks of the breadth and depth of Bosnian Sufi/Dervish spirituality, which is still cherished today, as evidenced by Dr. Valjevac, who dedicated his work to this important topic. I am convinced that the readers of this article will find peace in the soul through these wise Sufi messages.

Finally, as usual, we have a book review, in this case it is the "Systemic Earthquake and Struggle for World Order" by Ahmet Davutoglu, former Prime Minister of Turkey, a review made by Emir Hadžikadunić. It can be said that the world has never been without earthquakes one way or another, but it seems that there have never been such bloody earthquakes in history as there are today, especially in the Holy Land, in Gaza – Palestine. Therefore, we appreciate that the depiction of this book is important because it was written by a man who had been in the midst of strong political and military earthquakes both in Turkey and in the surrounding area.

Certainly, it is worth saying that academician Mehmed Akšamija, Editor – Art Director, this time again tried to make this eighth issue of our magazine attractive, informative and above all a unique example of a magazine, which attracts the respect of every objective reader who understands the value of exceptional illustrations, which accompany the text.

We have not said this before, but now we have the need to say that many in the homeland and the world have given recognition for a unique creativity and innovation in illustrations and bilingual equipment of our magazine.

We are very grateful to our devoted readers in country and around the world.

Dr. Mustafa CERIĆ, Editor-in-chief

illuminatio/svjetionik/almanar

NEW IDEAS ON FAITH, MORALITY, ART, NATION, SOCIETY AND STATE

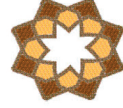


Emir Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Džaber al-Sabah (1937.-2023.) - © Beta/AP/ Nasser Waggi

Emir Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah (1937-2023) - © Beta/AP/ Nasser Waggi



المشيخة الإسلامية في البوسنة والهرسك مركز الوسطية الحوار



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إلى سعادة السفير ظاهر الخرينج
سفارة دولة الكويت
لدى البوسنة والهرسك

تعزية اليوم القلبية
إلى أهل الكويت الكرام

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد:

إننا لله وإنا إليه راجعون. نعزيكم بوفاه فقيدكم، وفقيد الامه العربية، والاسلامية، أمير دولة الكويت، الشيخ / نواف الاحمد الجابر الصباح.

اللهم اغفر له، وارحمه رحمه واسعه. اللهم اكرم نذله. اللهم اوسع مدخله. اللهم اغسله بالماء والثلج والبرد. اللهم نقه من الخطايا كما ينقى الثوب الابيض من الدنس. اللهم برحمتك اسكنه جنتك بالفردوس الاعلى بصحبه الانبياء والصديقين. عظم الله اجرکم، واحسن الله عزاکم، ويمن عليكم بالصبر والسلوان. ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله.

د. مصطفى تسيريتش

رئيس مجلس الإدارة

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ILLUSTRATION ~ One of the facilities of the Kuwait National Museum, which was founded in 1983. The museum consists of five connected buildings set around a central garden. (Archive of Akšamija)



ILUSTRACIJA ~ *Portret učenog čovjeka od nepoznatog autora. Indija, 16. stoljeće.* © Aga Khan Museum AKM906.
ILLUSTRATION ~ *Portrait of a learned man by an unknown author. India 16th century.* © Aga Khan Museum AKM906.