

An Islamic view of spirituality

By

Dr. Hesham El-Essawy

Tears for Bosnia! Cries of pain and despair for a community torn, lives lost, women raped, houses razed, children burned alive, and a nation of great dignity turned into a nation of refugees!

Living, again, is the sense of shame brought upon us all, lovers of freedom, justice and compassion, by the nationalist bigots of Serbia and Croatia, spilling innocent blood to get few extra inches of dust!

Has history ever witnessed such horrors?

Answer: yes, and worse.

The city of Cordoba, Andalusia, Spain; where lived a mixed community of what God called the people of the book. Jews, Christians and Muslims, living under Muslim rule as a shining example of tolerance, justice, compassion, and, yes, great prosperity. All destroyed by the nationalist bigotry of Ferdinand and Isabella, whose murderous zeal stopped not at the Muslim's doorsteps, but exceeded them to those of the Jews, and, naturally, other Christians, with that infamous inquisition.

What I greatly lament and find discouraging is that, having spent my life working for the cause of tolerance, I saw a community in Bosnia turning against itself after having lived a life of extreme tolerance, where people of differing faiths wore no labels or identification marks. They lived together as slaves, human beings, sons of Adam, citizens of the world, brothers. A dream destroyed by the work of the gun and the blind heart of the gunners.

What future, I now ask, is tolerance? For what purpose is interfaith dialogue and understanding? Will other societies, now tolerant, of ethnic and religious mix, end up becoming 'a Bosnia'? What was it that failed in Bosnia, and how can we stop it from happening again?

I shall attempt here to answer my own questions.

When justice fails, all else falters, and life becomes of no avail. Justice is not an end, it is a beginning. Start there and you will go every where, start else where and you will go no where.

But whose responsibility is justice?

My definition of injustice is, violating the dignity of the innocent. It is for the preservation of the dignity of man that God sent prophets and messengers to humankind, starting with Noah, and ending with Muhammad. God sent not the messengers in order to divide the human race into warring factions driven by greed, lust for blood, and lust for dust.

Can interfaith dialogue help put a stop to that? Well, before Bosnia, I would have said, may be, but after Bosnia I would say no, not without putting into effect the old slogan of 'right becoming might not might becoming right'. This is not what the United Nations is here for?

I am not for an interfaith dialogue that aims to show you how right I am and how wrong you are, or vice versa. I am for one that emphasises our oneness despite our differences. I am for one that recognises that, agree or disagree, we still are brothers in Adam's family, and as such, we have rights upon each other that must be recognised and respected. As to the differences, leave them

to God to sort out. It is not our business to be the spiritual judge jury and jail keepers of each other.

I am for exchanging ideas and convictions vigorously, but politely, and with the utmost of respect for the right of the other to hold a different belief, and without violating his dignity as my brother by thinking of him as inferior to myself. You and I might hold different beliefs, but no matter how divergent our beliefs are, our mutual interests and rights as brothers in humanity must always converge.

This is not just what I want, this is what God wants. Or else, how can we understand “Love thy neighbours as thy self!”, or “Love thy enemy!”, or the great number of Qur’anic verses that make it an absolute injunction on the Muslims to accept these Ayahs, “I do not worship what you worship, and you not worship what I worship.... You have your religion and I have mine”, or “Whoever wants to believe, let him believe, and whoever wants to disbelieve, let him disbelieve!”, or, “Let there be no coercion in religion!”, or, “Argue not with the people of the book except in the way that is best!”, or the prophet Muhammad’s injunction upon his followers, “He who bothers a Christian or a Jew has bothered me personally”. It is in that spirit that I lived my childhood and early youth.

I was born and brought up in Egypt. My father was a Muslim scholar and preacher. The Coptic priest in my city was a frequent visitor to our house, where he and my father frequently exchanged jokes over sips of mint tea and home-made Egyptian pastry and cakes. Both of them were present side by side in weddings and also in the funerals of the dead of both religions.

Christian families habitually presented samples of their baked cookies in their religious festivals to their Muslim neighbours and friends. Muslims, in their feasts, did the same. It was, and still is, shameful not to do so. It was, and still is, a city of cookies, not bullets.

When the ball bounced from my prep school play ground onto the neighbouring building, which happened to be a Franciscan Nunnery, I was often chosen by repentant and fearful school mates to go and ask for it back. That feeling of sorrow that overwhelmed me as I approached did not come from any fear that the nuns might be wielding a big stick at anyone who dared to come near, for they did not. It came from the way we were brought up as Muslims, to treat Christians and Jews with the greatest of respect, even though we did not agree with their views of Jesus being God or the son of god. That respectful attitude was not our offering to the community out of a national duty; it was our religious duty to God. He told us that he expected nothing less. That is the only way people of differing beliefs and ethnicity can live together in peace.

I wondered often, in my university days, why it was that my best friend, who happened to be Christian, was using pretty much the same religious jargon as I was. He prayed in a Church, and I, in a Mosque, and, presumably, to the same God. Both he and I called God by his name; Allah. How could God, The One, make many religions?

It was with my Coptic Christian University friend that I encountered my first interfaith dialogue. He and I believed In Jesus, but, differently. At times he said that Jesus was God, and at others he said that he was the only Son of God. He told me that God is one yet he also told me that He is also three. I could not understand that, neither could he. He told me that it was a mystery that no one can understand, let alone adequately explain, and that, according to his priest, he should not think about it too much otherwise he will go mad. The priest told my friend that, because it is such a well hidden mystery, it must come from God and it must be true!

I thought at the time that, what my friend believed was what Jesus said in the bible. So, some years later, I bought my first bible to find out for myself what Jesus really said. It was an Arabic translation of a Greek copy that roughly corresponds to the king James’s Bible. Why not from the Aramaic that was the language that Jesus spoke?

I read the gospel with great interest. I vividly remember jumping out of my bed with joy, having discovered that, there was not one thing that Jesus said, which I as a Muslim conquered with or even failed to admire.

It became obvious to me that Christians have sharply misunderstood Jesus. I could only conclude from reading the gospels that Jesus never claimed to be God or the only begotten not made Son of God, let alone claiming to be The Almighty God himself.

Had he believed that he was God, or The Son of God, he would have demanded from his followers to worship him there and then, but he never did. Instead, the gospels record that Jesus himself was worshipping God in great humility and with tearful eyes. Two quotes will make my point. John 19:17 records what Jesus was saying to Mary Magdalene, "Go instead to my brothers and tell them, I am returning to my father and your father, to my God and your God" John 17:3 records Jesus' prayers to God "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent"

There is no contradiction between the religion that Jesus preached and the one that Muhammad preached; Islam. I cried with joy at the discovery, having just read the gospels. My Islamic belief that Jesus, the messiah, was a very great and honourable man messenger of God, born miraculously as a sign to the people of Israel, without a father, just as Adam was created without a father or mother. Jesus was a pious son of the pious Virgin Mary, a daughter of Adam, whose virginity was not just that of the flesh, but of the spirit too, was vindicated by the gospels themselves. Like Moses and Muhammad, what Jesus preached was the belief in One God, and that is Islam.

I know that some Christians would agree with my reading of the gospels, but many would read it differently. That is their concern, for they will have to answer to God, not to me or any one else. What people believe about God is their concern. It is also God's concern. It is not my concern beyond making my views known. No one has the right to ask anyone else account for his religious beliefs. That is what God said in the Qur'an.

It was tragic that the Christian Creed was formulated under Trinitarian political pressures of certain shape at the time of Constantine, centuries after the death of Jesus, and under the heavy weight of the then disbelieving emperor, Trinitarians overcame the Monotheistic followers of Jesus who believed in One God not three. I believe that that was the point where Christianity turned its back on Jesus and his teachings.

It is not often that one hears the messages of Jesus being taught in the churches nowadays. I regret that. Jesus taught his followers in parable. But, simple as it was, it often went above their heads. The gospels record how the disciples often wondered what Jesus meant.

It might come as a surprise to a Christian to realize that Muslims feel perfectly at home with the teachings of Jesus. Incidentally, had I not believed in Jesus the messenger of God, I would have failed the definition of being a Muslim.

My family name actually means, 'the follower of Jesus'. Many devout Muslims call their children Issa (Jesus), Mariam (Mary), as well as by the names of all the other messengers of God. There is nothing strange about that. For, to be a Muslim, one must believe in all of God's messengers. They all came with the same message, so how can one believe in one and not another. Believe in one and all, or believe in none at all.

Moses, Jesus and Muhammad carried the same message; God is One, repent your sins to earn God's forgiveness, do good and refrain from doing evil, so that you may attain to eternal life in the joyful paradise and avoid the eternal torments of hellfire. The rest are details.

It is the Christian Creed, not the teachings of Jesus, which stand between Christians and Muslims today. I could only understand from reading the gospels that Jesus was a Monotheist, not a Trinitarian.

In another encounter of inter faith dialogue, this time with Clifford Longley of The Times newspaper, I asked him what he thought Jesus' message was. He said that he did not think that Jesus was here to 'do' as much as to 'be'.

It pains me to note that Jesus' magnificent teachings were ignored, and emphasis was placed almost exclusively on something that, at least in Muslim eyes, he never said and never was.

As a Muslim, with strictly monotheistic view of God, I think that, it demeans Jesus to think of him as a sacrificial lamb, and it demeans God to think of him as requiring what is essentially the pagan practice of human sacrifice in order to be satisfied to the degree of mercy and compassion.

It is abhorrent to the concept of justice, be it human or divine, to take one person's life for the sins of another. Yet, these rather confused and ungodly concepts are exactly what the Church promoted for many centuries. With education and critical appraisal there came the inevitable consequences; the Church has gradually lost its followers to other religions, mainly atheism.

What the Church desperately needs is to go back to Jesus and his gospel teachings. It is still here and waiting. Out must go Paul, and in must come Jesus, for in truth you can either follow one or the other. When Jesus comes back into Christianity, Muhammad and all the other prophets will be there too, by his side.

It was a church without Jesus that vilified Islam for many centuries. Jesus could have never sanctioned the crusades for instance, and he certainly would have been extremely angry at what is now happening in Bosnia.

Having said that, however, and despite the lines of division following religious lines, I must say that Muslims do not see the conflict in Bosnia as one of Christianity versus Islam, and in truth, it is not. The greatest support for the Bosnian Muslims, be it material or moral, has indeed come from Christians and Jews. Support also came in drove from atheists. We can all be proud of at least that.

In contrast to today's vacant leaders of the veto waving western world, the might of the media, which Muslims have often accused of anti-Muslim bias, has come very strongly on the side of the Muslims. With their devotion to factual reporting, a great many media nobles have identified the Muslims, especially European Muslims, not just in Bosnia, but in high democracies such as Germany and France among others, as the threatened rather than the threat.

Like many Muslims, I am as much surprised as I am grateful for that massive shift in position by the media, which seems to have become the living conscience of the western world in recent years. Some good can come from something so bad. It is amazing how beautiful flowers can sometimes grow in rotten beds.

The warring factions in Bosnia would not have fought each other if they did not suddenly see each other as "different" and in such a villainous manner. How different can human beings become without jumping at each other's throats?

The reason I said what I said about the differences in belief between Christians and Muslims is that, I want to make my point, which is that both religions as preached by their respective messengers, are in fact ONE. If the difference is seen for what it is, religion, or the difference thereof, would, I hope, cease to become a cause of war. For, to God, there are only two religions; belief and unbelief.

God calls the Jews, Christians and the Muslims, the people of the book, not the people of the books. The book of God is one. The people of God are one. To God, the religion of a true Jew or Christian is Islam. It was the prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) who gave it its name, not the prophet Muhammad. When asked, 'which is the best religion?' the prophet Muhammad replied, 'tolerant Monotheism'.

Islam is, by definition, the acknowledgement of the Oneness of God. All of God's messengers acknowledge that God is One. That is why they are all Muslims. Islam is the name of the religion that God said was theirs, even though their followers called it by different names.

To God, there are only two religions; belief and unbelief. It will help the believers of all camps to call themselves by their real and appropriate name; believers. Only then will they stop fighting each other. Only then will they recognise their oneness as sons of Adam, with rights upon each others. Only then will they start to climb the all important, and thoroughly enjoyable, spiritual ladder.

The first step on that spiritual ladder is the acknowledgement of the Oneness of God. It is the foundation of the faith that qualifies one for the name 'Muslim'. But, a Muslim may recognise the truth, but may not always act in accordance to it.

The next step on the spiritual ladder is that of being 'Mou'men' or a believer, and to qualify for that, one's deeds must largely correspond with one's words. A 'Mou'men' is a person who trusts God as his guide and leader, and will stand for what God stands for. He would feed the poor, care for the needy and the orphaned, free the slaves, balance the scales, acts and speaks in truth and justice, and bears true witness for the sake of the Lord against any errant, even if that errant was his nearest and dearest. A 'Mou'men' would rise against aggression and injustice and would defend the innocent of any creed or none, and would defend the earth from the threat of corruption. He would be, meanwhile, forgiving and compassionate, for compassion is the Godly force that irons out the creases of any system of justice and can correct its built-in fallibility.

To demonstrate this point, imagine a main road in a rush hour, adjoined by a small road with a long queue of cars waiting at the give way sign. The law, or justice, demands that cars on the adjoining small road should wait till there is no oncoming traffic. Compassion comes in to iron out this 'fault' in justice; some of those who have the right of way will voluntarily relent to those who are stuck in a side road. Those who exercised their compassion in that way will have experienced the uplifting feeling when compassion overrides justice.

To qualify for the next step on the spiritual ladder, that of a 'Taqi', one must have enough fear of the Lord to avoid all forms of disobedience, big or small. A 'Taqi' is one who refrains from doing deeds that incur God's wrath. Only the God-conscious will find it wise to do so.

A 'Taqi' would not be unjust in the least, for he knows that an injustice to others is nothing other than an injustice to himself, for he will have to account for it on the day he stands before His Lord. A 'Taqi' poses no threats to his neighbours or his co-citizens.

Imagine a life in a city where every one is a 'Taqi' and you will be imagining a city where the crime rate is zero; a feat not achievable by any other means.

The next step is that of the 'Khashi'a', or the person who enjoys greater awareness and appreciation of the awesomeness and the might of The Lord, so much so that the mere mention of the Lord's name is enough to make his heart tremble and skin cringe. We get that feeling when we happen to face, say, an animal of exceeding ferocity; our mind's eye visualises the awesomeness of the situation, hence the trembling of the heart and the cringing of the skin.

Because God is unseen, the faithful, let alone he who has no faith at all, may not be aware of the awesomeness of The Lord. A person so knowledgeable about the might of The Lord, and whose

knowledge has come without seeing such a person, is unlikely to commit any sins no matter how small, whether openly or secretly. My 'Khoshu' is indeed your best insurance policy.

The ultimate step on the spiritual ladder, achieved only by climbing through the rest, is that of 'Al-Muhib' or he who loves God. To understand a little more what loving God actually means, think of your love to a human being. The Egyptian proverb puts what I want to say clearly and succinctly, "Darb el habib zay akl el zebeeb" When my beloved beats me, it feels as if I am eating sultanas! The bites of your beloved do not invoke in you the same response as when love is removed.

Loving God means that, no matter how severe the test that God puts you through in this life, no matter how severe your affliction is, you will still feel as if you are 'eating sultanas'. That is because you will be able to totally rise above it and see the whole picture, and see that you might suffer for a moment but you will have joy for eternity.

The person who fears God would be sad but patient in the face of adversity, praying to God to remove the affliction from him. The person who loves God, on the other hand, would turn to God when adversity befalls him, with a joyful face and would say to Him, "If that is Your will, give me more!"

Adversity matters not to he who loves God.

It does not invoke in him the same feelings of desperation that it evokes in another. He has indeed defeated adversity, he who loves God.

To reach that stage of spirituality would mean that, you have arrived.

On the 'down' side of that, imagine that you have fallen in love with a person who has everything, lacks for nothing, and is perfect in every way. How would ordinary fault ridden persons and objects look to you then!

I will tell you. Life itself will look then as it really is; incidental, insignificant, a means to an end and not the end itself. And as your gaze becomes focused on the one you love, you will become oblivious to all else.

That is what some Sufis (of whom I am not one) call 'Zuhd'; or a strong desire for nothing of this world. This is not, however, the will of God, for He wants us to enjoy the world in truth, justice and compassion. He wants us to enjoy our portion of this life as well as that of the hereafter. If you have a guest eating at your table, obviously enjoying his meal, it will give you satisfaction, would it not? It is the same with God.

We are told in the Qur'an that we are here on earth for a brief period of test, during which we are employed as God's deputies, servants, vicegerents. We have a job to do here, and we must do it in accordance to God's laws, all for justice and compassion, and not to dislocate ourselves from our existence, our responsibilities.

True Islamic spirituality is deeply rooted in the material world we live in. we are on earth to do a particular job, and that is to make the earth a good place in which to live and to protect it from evil.

Apart from our own personal satisfaction in a job well done, continuous assessment is taking place, and success or failure will depend on how we do our job. No one on earth is unemployed. By success or failure here I mean paradise or hell.

Many do not believe in life after death, but I have no difficulty believing in it. Having manufactured cars today, a car company can manufacture cars tomorrow; one might be inclined to think.

Likewise, I have no difficulty believing that The Mighty One Who created this vast and immense universe is able to do it all over again.

How can I not believe in life after death when my present life is in, itself, a life after death!

I have no difficulty believing in hell, for I know that it exists, and there, under our feet. The thin skin of the earth that we live on obscures the fact that earth is such a massive fire ball. It is so wonderfully miraculous that we are able to live on its very thin skin at all.

Having tasted the delights of this world, I have no difficulty believing in God's heavenly paradise. Like in science, the proof for the unseen can be derived from what is seen. That is an answer through reason, but faith and reason go hand in hand in Islam.

In Islam, there is no schism between what is material and what is spiritual.

The material in itself is not bad at all and should not be shunned. The material is not the opposite of the spiritual.

Two men each of them were paying out one pound, one of them was giving it to the poor and the other one was paying it as a bribe to gain what is not normally his. Are these two pounds the same? Two men; each of them gives a poor person one pound. But one of the givers is poor while the other one is rich. Was the one pound given by one exactly the same as the one pound given by the other?

Spiritually is a value that is strongly attached to a 'material' deed. That is why there is no schism between what is spiritual and what material in Islam.

Spirituality that has no foundation in the material world falls down at the first philosophical huff.

To understand one's love for God; The Immortal, I have taken the hypothetical example of loving a mortal. But, I tell you, there is a very significant difference here. I might fall in love with the ugliest woman on earth, yet, to my eyes, she will seem to be the most beautiful. My loving eyes will tell me lies. Loving a mortal is often tinged with a bewildering array of other experiences that, in hindsight, we might find unreal, false, exaggerated, oppressive, and tormenting with a coarse pulling force.

Loving mortals is driven by tiny molecules that we cannot see, called hormones. Loving God, on the other hand, is not controlled by hormones. It is controlled by the intellect reaching out for the ultimate in understanding and appreciation of God's infinite mercy, compassion, majesty, perfection, and, yes, God's beauty.

Loving God is an experience that cannot be described to the one who never experienced it, just as you cannot describe the colour blue to a person who was born blind or the taste of honey to someone who never tasted it.

I love God. I knew it when my beloved little baby daughter fell down the stairs in a way that made me suspected the worst, and on the day all of my money was stolen when I was abroad, and left penniless in a strange land. In both situations of adversity I felt no fear, no worry, no panic, only peace. I felt then that, whatever comes from Allah is beautiful. Nothing, I feel, can come from The Beautiful One except that that is beautiful. I felt that I would gladly accept whatever He wills for me. If that is Your will, Your test, I accept it.

When I went through these little crises without feeling in any way shaken by them, I knew then that I love God.

I love him for what He is, and I love him for what He does for me.

He feeds me, clothes me, shelters me, and gives me the air that I breathe. He does not want anything from me in return except the kind of behaviour that qualifies me to receive more of his bounty and His blessings. Allah, meaning The God, is more faithful to me than I am to him. I feel completely safe in his hands.

He calls me 'His servant', yet He expects me to wash no cloths of His, prepare no food and polish no shoes (not that He has any need for any of these). There is nothing that he wants me, the servant, to do for Him. But, there is everything that He wants to do for me!

He counts my good deeds in multiples, and He wipes out off my record any bad deeds as soon as I turn to Him and say, sorry!

He is not envious or jealous of me, He holds no grudge against me, and will never stab me in the back. He stays faithful to me even in the moments when I am not faithful to Him. How could I not love him!

"By your majesty, I shall temp them for as long as I am here with them", said Satan to God. "By My Majesty, I shall forgive them for as long as they ask me to forgive them", responded Allah.

Calling God father is a metaphor, not an actuality. Perhaps it helps to understand that it is He who puts food on our tables, just as the father of the family does. And just as a father's affection always leans towards the sickest of his children, so does God's. Like a father, His affection and His compassion would go first to the neediest, the weakest, the sickest, and the oppressed. And Like a father, He is pleased beyond measure when a son, having erred, comes back to him and says; sorry! Like a father He is always thankful when a son turns to him and says; thank you!

Allah is beauty in the absolute.

Window shopping one day, my eyes fell upon what I thought was the most beautiful pair of shoes. I found myself crying, 'Allah'. Surprised at my reaction of invoking the name of the deity just because I saw a beautiful pair of shoes, I realised for the first time that my mental image of God is that of absolute beauty. That is how I see The Invisible One. It is the beauty that comes from His perfection.

We are told that, when all matters are settled, Allah will ask the people of paradise, "O My servants, ask Me!" And they will say, "What can we ask you when You have given us every thing. There is nothing more that we can ask for!" God will then order His veil to be removed, and will shine with the beauty of his face upon the people of paradise. Their gaze will then become transfixed on God's beauty to the extent that, all other pleasures will pale by comparison, and they will subsequently and eternally live in the joy that came from seeing the beauty of the face of God. It is that particular moment that I aspire for. My life is a journey, and that moment is the destination.

I know that, I can only get there by ensuring that my deeds are done according to the will of God. Obedience is the key to the kingdom of heaven. Like a beloved saying to his beloved, if you love me you would do what I want you to do, it the same with God.

Some strands of Sufism aside, Islamic spirituality has nothing to do with mystic experiences or any exercises in escapism. It has nothing to do with flights of fancy or sitting on mountains of words that support not one's weight. It has nothing to do with the treading of imaginary routes or routes of the imagination, helped at times by some trance-induced hypnotic ritual.

True spirituality must be based on truth.

Far from being a servant of the world, the spiritualist uses this world in the service of the eternal. He realises that the world is temporary, and is therefore useless for the purpose of taking it as a purpose. He makes, or tries to make the world run according to the system designed by The Creator. He does not use religion for political gain, as is now happening in Bosnia, and has happened before all over the world, for he realises that, even if he gains ten times as much in gold as the weight of the whole earth, he will one day leave it all behind. For what purpose then did the gatherers gather, I wonder!

I wonder, would the Serb gunman who took aim at a hospital or a block of flats, or a bus loaded with fleeing refugees, have done what he has done, had he realised that, what dust he will gain, he will surely leave again? Will he still practice ethnic cleansing and strategic rape if he knew the true Might of The Lord that he is offending against, or His awesome powers?

It is not the truly compassionate Christian religious beliefs that led the Serb aggressors to their aggression; it is the failure of that person to open the darkest recesses of his heart to them.

The Serb or Croat gunman might be responsible for his deeds, but we are also responsible for ours. Whose responsibility is justice, I asked. It is ours, all of us. We are told in the Qur'an that, if you sit idly by and do nothing to stop the aggressors, the entire earth will be taken over by evil and evil doers. Indeed, all that is needed for the fire of aggression to devour the entire earth is that, we do nothing.

Believers are enjoined in the Qur'an that, if they see two groups fighting, they must try and make peace between them. But if one group oppresses the other, then we must all fight the aggressor till he desists from his aggression, then try and make peace between them. That is the way of The Lord. UN, please take note. Aggression will never cease from the face of the earth unless the aggressor is made to lose, not gain, by his aggression. Aggression will never cease from the earth unless the aggressors are made sure that they will be fighting the world if they start on their aggressive roads. If self-interest is the drive for aggression, self-interest must be made to be the drive against it. Aggressors will never desist unless they realise that it is not in their interest to engage in aggression.

When all the talking is done, and interfaith dialogue has been completed, the true spiritualist, be it a faithful Jew, a Christian or a Muslim, must realise that he has some urgent work that needs to be done.

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The Islamic Society for Religious Tolerance.
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Hesham El-Essawy is the founder and chairman of the Islamic Society for the promotion of Religious Tolerance. He is a writer and broadcaster. He is also a dental surgeon practising in Harley Street, London. He is currently working on a translation and the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an into modern plain English.

p.s. This article was written before the powers of the western world were unleashed, and for no material or political gain, in order to save the innocent from the slaughter that was Bosnia. I salute here the efforts made by President Clinton of the USA and Prime Minister Tony Blair as well as all of the other presidents and peoples who took part in putting a stop to Ethnic Cleansing as it became known then. I salute the world media, especially that of the western world for their great role in that war and the subsequent and similar one at Kosovo when humanity truly enacted God's will of standing as one person for justice and for defeating aggression.