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PEGASUS

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CAUX ROUND TABLE FOR MORAL CAPITALISM
NETWORK LOOKING AT BUSINESS ABOVE THE CLUTTER AND CONFETTI



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Introduction

This issue of *Pegasus* comes at the end of the year as measured by the Julian calendar. Christians adopted December 25th as the birthday of Jesus Christ. For many pre-Christian Europeans, this time of year was the winter solstice. In the Asian Lunar calendar, Tuesday, February 1st will be the end of this year and the beginning of a new one.

Endings and beginnings. What should we make of them?

Beginnings often start after something ends. Ends may not be absolutely final, but presage something new starting up.

A few years ago, I was in the country home of one our most wise Caux Round Table friends and advisors. I commented on what seemed, to me, to be a slow atrophy of strong, decisive and courageous leaders in many countries. He said “Yes, people sense we are at the end of an era. No one knows what is coming next, so they do today what they did yesterday.”

In any case, it seems to me that in endings and beginnings, it is timely to think of what is important.

In this issue, we bring you some reflections of Michael Hartoonian on the wisdom of first graders in our schools here in St. Paul, Minnesota. They are grateful for love, for relationships, for values which sustain us at any age, in our beginnings and at our endings.

We couple that with reflections from Professor Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Founder and CEO of the International Institute for Advanced Islamic Studies in Kuala Lumpur. Prof. Kamali shares with us a universalism of caring for others in the Islamic tradition, moral sentiments parallel to the appreciation of the St. Paul first graders.

Lastly, we include a letter from one of our fellows, Stephen Jordan, as he looks at the signs of our times. We plan to include in issues of *Pegasus* letters to the editor, so please consider sharing with us your reflections and concerns.

Stephen B. Young
Global Executive Director
Caux Round Table for Moral Capitalism

The Moral Sense of First Graders

Michael Hartoonian

On the 21st of November, the St. Paul Pioneer Press [ran a wonderful article on first graders and their sense of gratitude during our Thanksgiving holiday](#). The Pioneer Press survey asked local 7-year-olds what they were thankful for. The results were wonderful, expected and heartwarming.

Looking at the comments from the first graders, it was and is clear that these young people have a great deal to teach us. They demonstrated that we, all of us, do have a moral sense and it is ours to keep or to lose.

One important fact from the survey said: “The most used words in showing their gratitude were, in descending order: family, mom, love, friends, God, dad, school, play and food.”

These are the most human of moral sentiments. They all express a sense of relationship, tied together by meaning and love. The note of sharing is encrypted in all of the children’s responses. To me, this means that we have an innate capacity for relationships and gratitude. This may be altogether true, since we know from research on human evolution that the vigor in natural selection is provided by acts of cooperation. We survive through relations of love and gratitude. It is interesting that even food, which was on the children’s thankful list, was illustrated by several children’s drawings as a communion, a sharing of food, ideas and meaning.

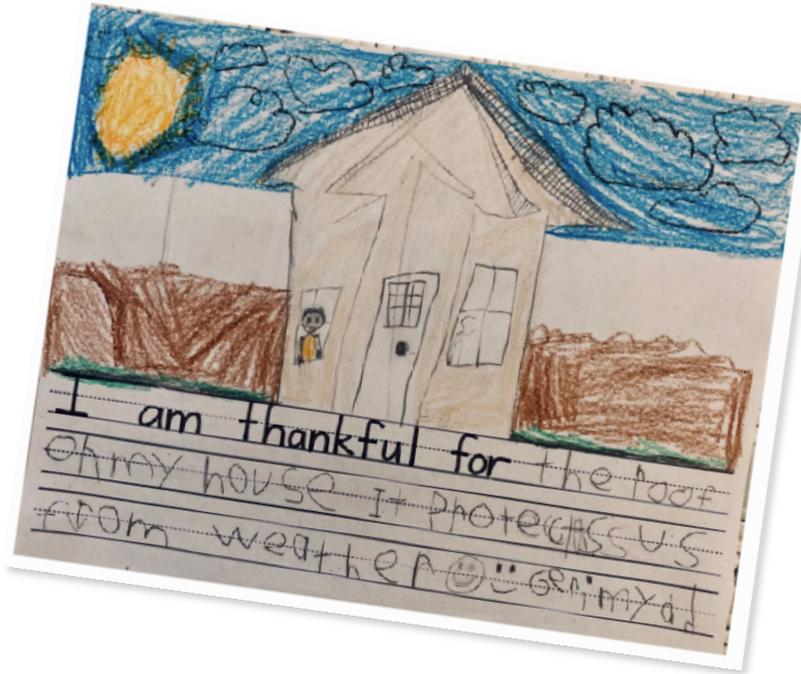


We also know, for example, that children across our nation are, as a demographic concept, poorly cared for. Consider: who are the poorest among us? Children! Who have the poorest diets? Children! Who have the worst healthcare? Children! Who have the most inadequate education? Children! Who are the most abused? Children! This is what the numbers from our own government tell us. Isn't it ironic that we put our children in such a situation, when they are brimming with love and gratitude?

Why, in spite of ourselves, would children seem to innately have this moral sense?

The answer may be as simple and as complex as the human psyche. People (must) protect their culture and family integrity. To survive, humans must continually ask three questions: what of our culture do we need to keep, what do we need to throw away and what do we need to build anew?

The first question is most fundamental because it is (must be) guided by historical, religious and ethical perspectives and helps all of us evaluate our very sustainability, not only as individuals, families and a nation, but as a species. It helps us see each other with sensitive eyes that behold the fullness of what it means to be human and to respect one another for simply that reason. Love is always kept and it is kept through relationships and reciprocal gratitude. This is the crucible in which individuals, families and communities thrive. It's interesting that these children are telling us that moral sentiments are part of the human DNA, nurtured by developing manors, civility and an understanding that the individual is in need of others and grateful for human connections. From the children, we learn that family and love are paramount in their panorama of the best of what the world has to offer. This is what the wise have always known and what we should understand as the paramount truth.



Without reciprocal gratitude, our identity is flat and obscure, with no way of building meaning. Morality is simply purposeful relationships with others. These “thank you” statements of children should provide us with great optimism.

Michael Hartoonian is Associate Editor of Pegasus.

What Do We Owe to Our Fellow Humans?

Mohammad Hashim Kamali

Many of Islam's leading principles are premised on the idea of responsibility, individual or collective, of the faithful to be a useful member of society and be good to his fellow humans, which is also why Islam places greater emphasis on the notion of obligation (*wajib*), as compared to right (*haq*). The primacy of *wajib* over *haq* in Islam has led some Orientalists to conclude that Islam hardly recognizes any rights for the individual. The primacy of *wajib* over *haq* is premised on the notion of what one owes to others, rather than one's own claims or rights over them. I shall presently elaborate on this, while also looking at the related concepts of *ihsan* (benevolence), *jiwar* (neighbourliness), *khayr* (good) and also *tasawwuf* (mysticism). A parallel concept to *wajib*, in the shariah terminology, is *fard*. When an obligation is founded all on decisive evidence, it is *fard*, but when its supportive evidence is not free of all doubt, it is designated as *wajib*.

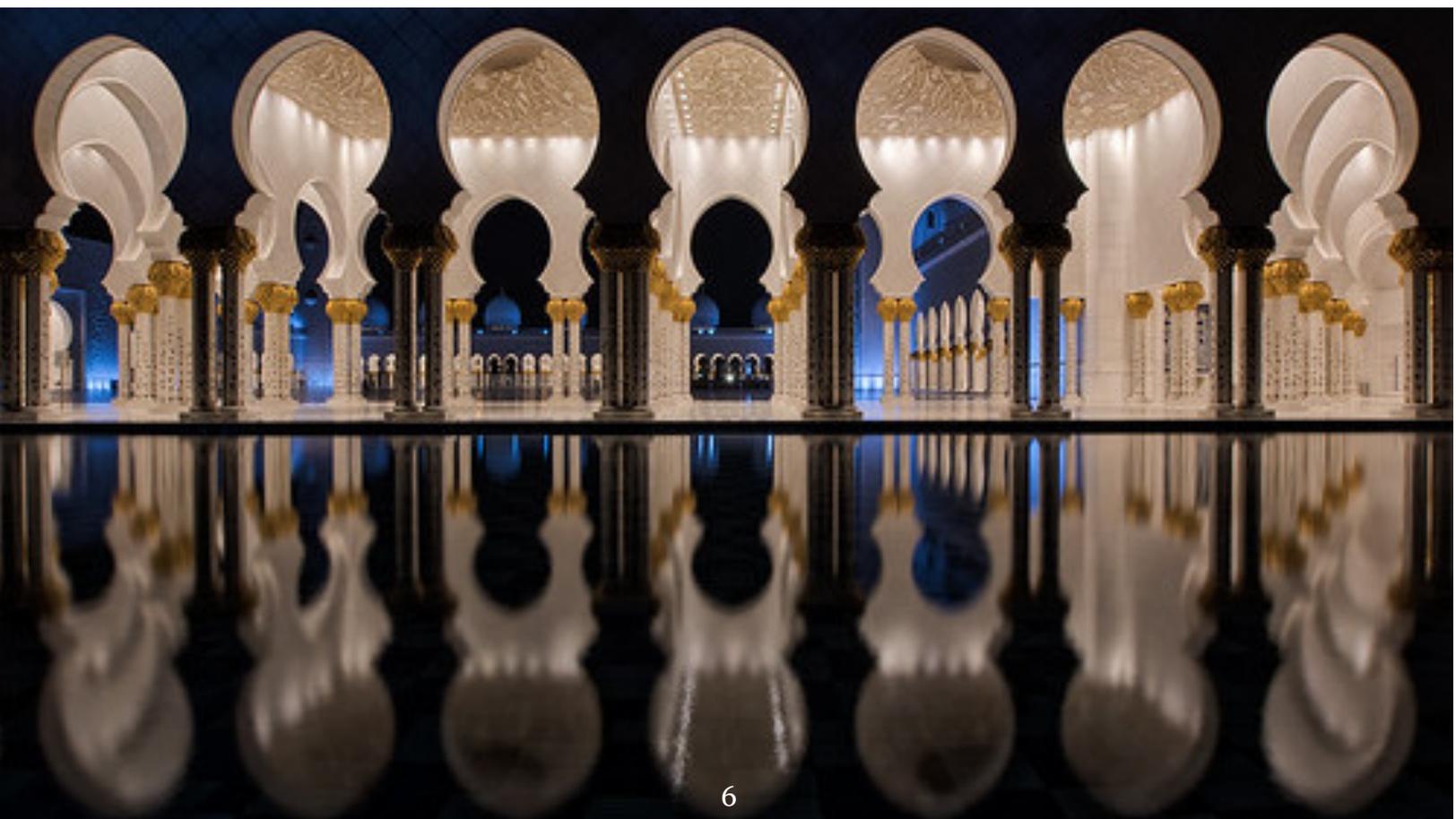
There are two types of *fard*: personal (*fard 'ain*) and collective obligation (*fard kifa'i*). The former consists mainly of worship matters (*'ibadat*), whereas the latter consists of collective duties that fall on the community as a whole.

A prime example of *fard kifa'i* that occurs in several places in the Qur'an (3:104; 3:110; 16:90; 32:70) is that of "bidding good and forbidding evil" (*amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa nahya 'an al-munkar*), also known as *hisbah*, for short, which falls mainly on the Muslim community. Being a *fard kifa'i*, *hisbah* is discharged if practiced by only some members of the Muslim community, if not all. As for the question of whether *hisbah* is what Muslims must do among themselves or should also include all human beings, the correct answer is the latter, as is inferred from the Qur'an (3:110), where the *umma* is mentioned, side by side, with humankind. Muslims must, therefore, accomplish the call to all that is good and to forbid all that is wrong, not only among themselves, but in reference to all fellow humans, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This is because the principal guideline elsewhere given for Muslims specifically is to be "good and fair" (*tabarru wa-tuqsitu ilayhim*) to non-Muslims who have not been aggressive toward them (*al-Mumtahanah*, 60:8). There is also a consensus of Muslim scholars to the effect that enjoining good and forbidding wrong should be carried out by all societies, for the Qur'an refers to the scope of this duty as "for the whole of humankind," which includes both the *umma* and all other communities (cf. 3:110).

Furthermore, as a religion (*deen*), Islam consists of three parts: faith (*iman*), practice (*Islam*) and benevolence (*ihsan*). *Ihsan* literally means "excellence" and "beauty" in one's character and one's spiritual state. *Ihsan* and its derivatives occur 190 times in the Qur'an, often in reference to God Most High, who loves beauty and also expects the faithful to be a *muhsin* or one who persists in *ihsan*. Over time, Islam became manifest through the shariah, whereas

iman became institutionalized through the kalam theology and other forms of doctrinal teachings and ihsan manifested its presence through mysticism (Sufism). Mysticism nurtures gratitude to God, abstinence from evil, freedom from egoism and, ultimately, eternal salvation. The perfect man is he who beautifies not only his outer, but also his inner self. The faith and practice of Islam should, in other words, be beautiful. In a hadith, it is stated that “God has prescribed ihsan in all things.” It is for the faithful, in other words, to discover it and practice it. Ihsan can also be understood to mean that Muslims owe their fellow humans to be good to them and act toward them in beautiful ways. Ihsan, as such, is not even confined to religion and applies to all activities a Muslim does. It is certainly important for present-day Muslims to practice ihsan in their interaction with fellow humans, with both Muslims and non-Muslims in all countries as neighbours, compatriots and fellow humans that need to work together to address common challenges they all face, such as climate change, environmental issues and the Covid pandemic. In another hadith, the Prophet Muhammad addressed the faithful, saying: “Among the signs of a good Muslim, one is to say something good or else to remain silent.”

The focus of traditional *taşawwuf* is to attain *ihsan* through the purification of the heart and personal character, so as to achieve holistic purity (*tazkiyah*, *zuhd*, purity and piety, respectively). The master Sufi, Rumi, conveyed the message of love for all humans, beyond the boundaries of race and religion. Ihsan may also consist of material help, some of which is obligatory, such as the *zakah* charity and others supererogatory (*sadaqah*) and charitable endowment (*waqf*). *Waqf* is supererogatory to begin with, but once it is made, the endower (*waqif*) is bound by it and loses all control over the endowed assets. Muslims have, through history, used *waqf* for welfare activities, such as building mosques, bridges, hospitals etc., that benefited both Muslims and non-Muslims and they continue to do so throughout the Muslim world.



As for the question of whether charities, be it zakah or sadaqah, are to be given to Muslims only or may also be given to non-Muslims, the correct answer is the latter, for religion is not a bar to charity. This is because the Qur'an does not specify the recipient's religion as a condition to charity. There is also the precedent of the fourth caliph, Umar al-Khattab (d.23/644). When passing through the market of Medina, the caliph saw an elderly Jew begging. He assigned him a share in the bayt al-mal (public treasury of zakah), saying that it was unfair that he contributed to the bayt al-mal during his youth. Records also show that the Prophet sent some sacrificial meat to a Jewish household of Medina in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the scriptural sources of Islam recognize two levels of fraternity: al-ikha'al-dini (fraternity in faith) and al-ikha'al-insani (human fraternity). Hence, religion is not a bar to giving charity and extending ihsan to non-Muslims.

Islamic teachings are also strong on good neighbourliness, which is not confined to the physical aspect of the neighbourhood, as to the adjacent household, but also includes joint ownership of land; partnership in business; one's co-traveller; one who is sitting next to one; one's relatives and so forth. All are neighbours. Physical neighbourhoods also extends, according to a hadith, to 40 houses on all sides, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and juristic details abound on what may or may not disrupt neighbourhood. The hadith specification of 40 houses entitle all neighbours to respectful treatment, avoidance of harm and annoyance, happy encounters, giving salam and gift-giving. The Qur'an (al-Nisa', 4:36) entitle to ihsan one's parents and relatives, neighbours who are relatives and those that are non-relatives. In one hadith, the Prophet said that "The Archangel Gibriel stressed so much on me about the neighbour's rights that I almost thought he was going to make it into an heir." In another hadith, the Prophet spoke about the neighbour in these terms: "By God, he has no faith, by God, he has no faith, by God, he has no faith." And the companions asked: "Who is this, O Messenger of God?" The Prophet replied: "One from whose evil his neighbour does not feel safe." Neighbour may be anyone: Muslim, non-Muslim; pious or sinner; urbanite or bedouin; benevolent or malicious; relative or stranger; high class or low; distant or near – all are entitled to safety and ihsan. On the rights of neighbours, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d.505/1111) wrote that one should greet his neighbour with salam; visit him when ill; console him when afflicted with calamity; felicitate him and share his happiness when happy; ignore his minor failings; avoid staring at one's female neighbours; protect his house when traveling or absent; be kind to his children; and guide him if he is ignorant, be it in religion or other practical matters.



Globalisation, with its vastly improved and efficient electronic communication networks, digitization and big data, etc., are bound to change the traditional concepts of neighbourhood. It seems that all people are now neighbours in cyberspace, social media and other modes of contact. We are all affected by major events in any part of the world and are neighbours virtually, if not in person and from the Islamic perspective, owe one another the treatment that al-Ghazali articulated.

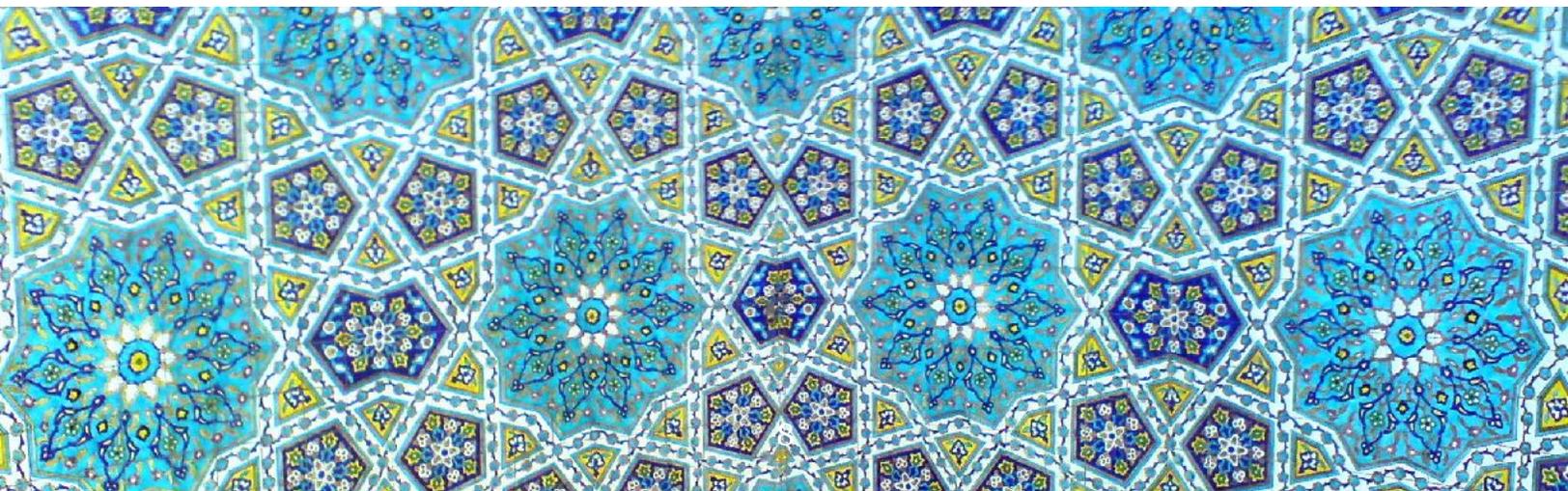
It is especially pertinent to remind ourselves of these Islamic teachings during this time of affliction and disease that claims lives in vast numbers and in all parts of the world, regardless of race and religion and for people to be helpful and protective of one another in the true spirit of fraternity and ihsan.

When the Prophet migrated to Medina, there were Jewish tribes in Medina and also two other major tribes of Aws and Khazraj that soon embraced Islam and became known as the Ansar (helpers) and also the Muhajirun (emigrants), who migrated from Mecca to Medina. Within the first year of his arrival, the Prophet drew up a treaty that became known as the *Dustur al-Medina* (constitution of Medina) that regulated Muslim/non-Muslim relations. This 47-clause document granted to Jews and Christians freedom of religion and went so far as to declare them as part of the newly formed *Umma*. The Jews also retained their *Bait al-Midrash* (a synagogue and educational institute). To the Christians of Najran (Yemen), the constitution guaranteed not only the security of person and property, but also expressly left the nomination of bishops and priests to themselves to decide.

During the fourth caliph's (Umar al-Khattab) time, a group of Muslims had usurped a piece of land belonging to a Jew and had constructed a mosque on the site. Learning of the incident, the caliph ordered demolition of the mosque and restoration of the land to the Jew. In a similar incident, an Umayyad ruler had occupied a church to enlarge the mosque. Later, when the case was brought before Caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, he ordered part of the mosque demolished and the church restored.

It thus appears that the theoretical guidelines and actual history of Islam are consistent on extending fairness and *ihsan* to non-Muslims and maintenance of good relations with them, so long as they are not oppressive to Muslims.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali is the Founder and CEO of the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Reader Reflection on Morals

Stephen Jordan

The modern Western liberal, materialistic, individualist, subjective order dates back to Descartes, Bacon and Hobbes and marks a sharp break from the medieval synthesis that contextualized individual behavior in a fabric of theological, feudal and familial norms. Both socialism and capitalism are outgrowths of Enlightenment thought, different strategies to achieve material well-being. Because this is so pervasive, it has influenced how many companies approach morals. They are often uncomfortable with any single religious or transcendent basis for morality and have come up with strategies to manage religious and non-religious moral codes.

There are drawbacks to basing morality on materialism, individualism and subjectivism, however. When care of the self is the dominant form of thinking, the idea of asking “what/who would you die for?” becomes almost revolutionary. However, as the point was made, people do sacrifice themselves for others. They elevate faith, country, family and other ideals over self all the time. Material well-being, political power or sensual pleasure aren’t the only things people live for and what has emerged over the past few years is an increasingly sharp clash between norms - call it red state v. blue state, nationalists v. globalists, religious v. secular - the divisiveness seems to be growing deeper all the time.

This is why many of us feel like Western society is at a profound crossroads: do we stand by while the liberal order decays, do we develop constructs to bridge different ethical perspectives, even if they are wildly at odds with each other or do we seek to find a new synthesis that situates the individual/decision-maker in the context of a larger social order?

This is the kind of abstract question that makes many business managers tear their hair out. Businesses, particularly global businesses, have tried to address these issues with non-discrimination clauses, diversity, equity and inclusion programs, “purpose” statements and the like, but the contradictions and the conflicts may be getting too deep for these strategies to work well. Modern liberalism is an ethical choice, just like any religion and as societies become more illiberal, companies may find the ethical land mines growing in intensity, complexity and difficulty.

Stephen Jordan is CEO of the Institute for Sustainable Development and a Fellow with the Caux Round Table.



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Steve Young
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