Chapter 11

Panel Discussion

The final session of the conference was devoted to questions and answers and to an exchange among the speakers themselves, which included their responses to the events of September 11. Written questions had been submitted by members of the audience, and these were posed by the moderator, Professor Cutsinger. What follows is a somewhat modified version of that discussion.

James S. Cutsinger: Do Islam and Sufism believe in the sanctification of the human body as do Christianity and Hesychasm?

Seyyed Hossein Nasr: The answer is yes, absolutely yes. The Islamic rites involve the body and not only the mind; you have all seen the daily movement of prayers. In the practice of *tasawwuf*, the body has a very important role to play and is integrated, in the final analysis, into the heart's center, which in turn emanates throughout the body. So the sanctity, and sanctification, of the body play a very significant role in Islamic spirituality, and there is no dichotomy between body and soul, as developed in certain strands of Western Christianity, even in the general and traditional mainstream of Islamic thought and practice.

Cutsinger: How are *hesychia*, and Hesychasm in general, to be distinguished from quietism?

Bishop Kallistos Ware: Of course, the word *hesychia*, literally translated, means "quiet", and therefore "Hesychast" could be translated as "quietist". I deliberately and consistently avoid using that translation, however, because it seems to me that the seventeenth century quietist movement, associated with Michael of Molinos and Madame de Guyon and Fénelon, has its own specific character and is something distinct from Hesychasm. I am not an expert on quietism, but I understand that it contains two features which would not be characteristic of Hesychasm. First, in some quietist manuals, it is said that you can attain a state of sanctity which cannot thereafter be lost. Hesychasm does not teach that. Until the hour of our death, we are between hope and fear. It is always possible for us to

fall away. We depend on the grace of God, for we know that, as human beings, we are weak. The second point is that quietism, according to some accounts that I have read, suggests that you are to be entirely passive. I do not think, in Hesychasm, there is the same emphasis upon passivity. Now it may be that the accounts of quietism that I have read are not accurate, but if those two points are true of quietism, they would not be true in the same way of Hesychasm.

Cutsinger: Does Sufism have an idea comparable to that of the *Bodhisattva* in Buddhism?

Nasr: The idea of the *Bodhisattva*, with all of the particular characteristics that it has, is of course unique to Buddhism. It does not exist in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, or any other religion. However, there certainly exists, within Islam, all the mercy that flows from the Bodhisattvic nature. This is manifested in Islam in various ways, not only through the names of *Rahmân* and *Rahîm*, but also through the function of spiritual teachers, who must manifest that mercy and that grace within the community. It is also true that a deep concern for the whole of creation is a very basic Islamic teaching. Adam, when he was placed on earth as the *khalîfah t'Allah*, that is, the vicegerent of God on earth, was responsible for the whole of creation, and in fact the Quran addresses itself, not only to human beings, but also to the cosmos, to the world of nature. One third of the Quran concerns the non-human world; except for the *Tao Te Ching*, there is no sacred scripture which deals as much with God's creation as the Quran. This cosmic dimension of the Bodhisattvic nature, to which many contemporary Buddhist thinkers dealing with the environmental crisis are pointing, is certainly to be found in Islam. So I would say that the Bodhisattvic function exists in the Islamic universe, but all of the different aspects of a *Bodhisattva* are not united in a single person as they are in Buddhism.

Cutsinger: A Sufic text teaches that it is diabolical for the invoker to seek an identity outside of the invocation. Can Bishop Kallistos address this point in light of the Hesychast tradition?

Ware: I know of no Hesychast text which uses the word "diabolical' in this context. It is of course our aim, when we invoke the name of Jesus, that we should be gathered and concentrated, as far as pos-

sible, in the sense of the presence of Jesus Christ. The whole purpose of the discipline of repetition is to gather us together. We are fragmented, and we are scattered; this is part of our fallen condition. So indeed, the aim of the Jesus Prayer is to unify, and if a person was deliberately attempting to think about other things than the person of the Lord Jesus, that would defeat the aim of the prayer. However, we cannot, by a simple act of will, instantaneously overcome our condition of fragmentation. Our mind wanders. We continually suffer distracting thoughts. No spiritual teacher in Hesychasm would be particularly fierce with his disciples because their minds wandered. He would urge them simply to faithful patience and to persistence. When your mind wanders, you continue with the invocation; you bring it back to the center, back to the name of Jesus, which means to the person of Jesus. But your mind wanders again, and again you bring it back, without inner anger—inner violence will destroy the spirit of prayer—but patiently and faithfully. For this is our human condition, that we are continually distracted. I have heard someone define a saint as a person who is conscious of God all the time. My answer to that would be that not very many of us are saints.

Cutsinger: Ibn Arabi, it has been mentioned, speaks of "tasting" the Word. This sounds similar to the Christian Eucharist, the vehicle through which all Orthodox Christians participate in the communal life of Christ and the Church. Is there anything similar in Sufism?

Nasr: Whoever wrote this question, I think it is a very profound question. The Word is of course tasted and eaten in the Eucharist, within the Christian context. In the Sufi practice of invocation, and in Muslim prayer in general, as well as in the recitation of the Quran, which is the word of God, it is also "eaten" in a sense, because we always pronounce with our mouth, and this same organ of the body participates in both activities. It was Frithjof Schuon who wrote so beautifully that there are two fundamental functions for the mouth, to speak and to eat, and spiritually the two are closely related in various traditions. So there are certainly corollaries and parallels. As Professor Chittick pointed out, the word for "taste" in Arabic, *dhawq*, corresponds in a certain sense to the Latin word *sapiens*, which is derived in turn from the verb *sapere*, meaning "to taste", and it refers to the "tasting" of the wisdom contained in

the word of God. When you invoke the Name of God, it does not mean that you are tasting to see whether that Name is sour or salty, but you are "tasting" the truth contained therein through direct experience. Tasting here means direct experience, and when the Sufis speak about tasted knowledge, it means precisely the kind of knowledge that we get when we taste, let us say, a spoonful of honey, which is very different from the description of honey that we read about in books, or the chemical analysis in chemistry texts. It is a direct form of knowledge to which they allude, and in the sacramental rites of Islam, which always concern the Word of God as contained in the Quran and thus the Names of God found in the Quranic revelation, there is that tasting, and in that sense it is very similar to the Eucharist in Christianity.

Cutsinger: Dr Shah-Kazemi, citing Kashani's *tafsîr* of the Quran, distinguished between the universal religion of "Islam" and Islam in the communal sense. According to the *religio perennis* as expressed in Islam, the gates of Paradise are open to all, Christians and Muslims alike, so long as they have faith in the spiritual foundation of Reality and embody that Reality through virtue. Is the Christian view of salvation for Muslims equally charitable?

Reza Shah-Kazemi: If the Christian speakers will pardon me, I have one small point on this question—small in the sense that it takes a very short time to express, but it is great in its magnitude. A good friend, after my talk, came to me and said that he found a tremendous similarity between certain Quranic verses that I had cited and a passage from the Acts of the Apostles. According to the Quran, "Those who believe, those who are Christians, those who are Jews, those who are Sabeans, and whosoever believes in God and the Day of Judgment and acts virtuously will get his reward from his Lord, no fear or grief shall be upon him". Similarly, in Acts 10:34-35, we find the following: "Then Peter addressed them: 'Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.'" This is a remarkable parallel, and I thank the person very much who came to give me that. I do not want to take up time from the Christian response; I just wanted to let that be said.

Ware: Another text we should keep in mind is from the Prologue to the Gospel of John. John 1:9, speaking of the Divine *Logos* who is

Jesus Christ, describes Him as "the true light which illumines everyone who comes into the world." We believe, as Christians, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole world, but we also believe that the light of Christ shines in the hearts of every human person. And if those who are not Christians live by the best that they know in their own tradition, I am fully confident that God will receive them, as I hope He will receive us Christians in His mercy.

Cutsinger: Must a Muslim transcend the exclusive emphasis on the Unity of God, adopting a somewhat Trinitarian view, in order to account of how the Nameless One, who is without qualification, can be seen talking with Adam?

Nasr: No. First of all, the Nameless One *qua* the "Nameless" would never speak to Adam. To have spoken to Adam means that the Nameless must have chosen a Name; in other words, It must have become involved in speech, and so there is already a paradox, a metaphysical paradox, in what is stated. But the point that I think the question is trying to bring out is whether Islam has to give up its absolute view of the Absolute, that is, the oneness of God as the center and axis of all of its belief, in order to understand the Christian perspective on God, man, and the universe. And my answer is no. I would apply in reverse what Vincent Rossi, my old friend, has said from the other side, from the Christian side. There are many people in the Christian world today who think that in order to have a deep dialogue with Judaism and Islam, the Christians have to put aside the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Trinity. I have been involved in religious dialogue for over forty years, and this has often happened. And I have asked what good this understanding does if the person I am talking to no longer represents traditional Christianity? The reverse also holds true for Islam. It would be really senseless for the sake of human understanding to undo God's message. I am totally opposed to any kind of ecumenism that is based on the reduction of the Divine forms and ways in which God has revealed Himself. The premise of this entire conference has been that Christians should accept the Trinitarian doctrine in a serious fashion while Muslims must cling to the doctrine of *tawhîd* or Unity, and that they then should try to understand each other on the spiritual plane. This is very different from a diluting on either side. In any case, the Muslim mind has no possibility of moving towards a Trinitarian doctrine. It is easier for the Christian mind, in which

there is already the element of unity, although it is not much emphasized, to move towards a doctrine of Unity than for a Muslim to move towards the doctrine of a Trinity, which is incomprehensible to it on a popular or exoteric plane. On the metaphysical plane, of course, this has all been explained in the writings of the traditionalists, especially Frithjof Schuon. The doctrine of the Trinity, on a metaphysical plane, is in perfect accord with the doctrine of *tawhîd*, of Unity, and I for one have no qualm or difficulty about that whatsoever. But this agreement does not involve a change of perspective on the theological level, as this question seems to imply.

Cutsinger: The Quran implicitly recognizes Christ's uniqueness by calling Him, Him alone among all of the Prophets, the "Spirit of God" and in saying that He and His mother alone were born perfect and that He will come again at the end of time. Is this understanding of uniqueness, the uniqueness of Christ, sufficient for Christians who wish also to emphasize Christ's uniqueness?

Ware: The uniqueness of Christ, for me as a Christian, consists in the fact that He is the only begotten Son of God. Therefore the uniqueness refers first of all and fundamentally to the incarnation. Only once, according to Christian belief—only once in all the history of the human race—has God become man, in the sense that the second person of the Trinity was born according to the flesh from the Virgin Mary. That is a unique event, so the uniqueness of Christ refers first of all to the fact of the incarnation. Of course, there is another sense in which the word of God may be born in the soul of every believer, but this does not diminish the uniqueness of the event of Christ's birth in Bethlehem. Only once has God been born from a woman. So there, to me, is the uniqueness of Christ.

Cutsinger: Your Grace, this next question comes directly for you, and it is related to what you were just saying. Although, as Christians, we are always in the presence of the reality of the Trinity, must not an apophatic approach be applied to our formulations of the doctrine of this ever present reality? And, if so, will this apophatic approach not have some bearing on our interpretation of the Islamic insistence on the precedence of the Divine Unity?

Ware: On our Christian understanding, the dogmas of the faith, as defined by the seven Ecumenical Councils, are indeed true, but of

course the eternal Truth of the transcendent God cannot be expressed in verbal formulae in an exhaustive fashion. The word "definition" means setting limits and is linked with the Latin word *finis*, meaning a limit or frontier, and the Greek term for a definition is *horos*, which is linked with our word "horizon", the limit beyond which you cannot see. So the definitions of the Church exclude certain false ways of thinking about God or Christ. They set a boundary in the sense of saying, Do not wander outside this fence. But as for the Mystery that lies within the boundaries, that can never be totally expressed in words. Therefore, it is true that for me as a Christian God is three in one, and therefore, for me as a Christian, it would be false to say that God is one and not three. And it would be false to say that God is four in one or five in one. These things are excluded. But what is meant by the Mystery of God as "three in one" cannot be fully expressed in words and can be discovered only through prayer. The fact, however, that definitions do not express the total truth does not mean that we lay them aside as provisional and transcend them. We never go beyond the definitions, but we never fully understand the Mystery which those definitions are safeguarding.

Cutsinger: When the Hesychasts are taught to lay aside all "thoughts", are they not being taught that in some sense they must lay aside "definitions" as well?

Ware: No, definitely not. But you can *believe* something without *thinking* about it all the time. So, the Hesychasts are taught that, when praying, they should have simply a sense of the presence of Christ. They do not formulate in their minds what precise remarks were made concerning the relation between *hypostasis* and *ousia*, and how these things are to be interpreted philosophically. They are not using their discursive reasoning to grasp these mysteries so far as they can be expressed philosophically. But you can believe something without thinking about it through your discursive reason, so the fact that you are not thinking about something does not mean that you have ceased to believe in it or that you think you have transcended it.

Vincent Rossi: In immersing myself in the early Hesychast fathers and, in particular, in St Maximus the Confessor and Dionysius the Areopagite, I have been led to make one or two observations that

may be relevant and helpful here. My own observation is that the dogma of the Trinity has a function like a *koan*, in which the mind or the thoughts are supposed to be broken down in order for an experience to become manifest. So St Gregory the Theologian, for example, will say that anyone who tries to understand the one and the two and the three rationally—I am only paraphrasing—is liable to go into a frenzy, which is what seems to have been happening in some of our discussions. Professor Cutsinger poses the question, If you are asked to go beyond thought, then where is the Trinity? Well, according to St Maximus, the Trinity *is* beyond thought to begin with, and so there is no problem there; you are already beyond thought—thought simply does not work in that context. Furthermore, I would not be quite honest in this ecumenical setting if I failed to point out that in the Orthodox Hesychast tradition, going from the Cappadocians through Dionysius through Maximus through John of Damascus through Simeon to Gregory Palamas, there is a very clear sense that the Trinity functions as the basis, in part, for a criticism of the doctrine of Unity. One of the things that Dionysius and Maximus are doing when they teach the doctrine of the Trinity is being critical of Unity as a thought, or as a concept. Maximus insists that the Unity of God and the Trinity of God are on the same plane because he knows that as soon as you put them on different planes, you are in the realm of thought. But if you keep them on the same plane, you are messing up all thought—there is no way you can think that. There is, though, a way to enter into the Reality devotionally: with your mind and your heart enduring the remembrance of God in a spirit of devotion, keeping the Unity and the Trinity on the same plane, regardless of what you want to think about, regardless of how much your metaphysically oriented mind wants to put a hierarchy there. If you keep them on the same plane in a spirit of devotion, you may actually be able to remember God, and I think that this is what Maximus is all about.

Cutsinger: Turning now in a different direction, to a topic that has been very much on all of our minds, let me pose this question. Could the panelists elaborate further on the "hardening of hearts" which has led to the polarity of modernism and fundamentalism, specifically in light of the recent attacks on modernism by fundamentalism on September 11?

Shah-Kazemi: One of the most important developments arising out of this recent atrocity is the way in which moderate Muslims in the West and, to a lesser extent, in the rest of the Muslim world—but particularly in the West—have seen the danger of identifying Christians and Jews as the enemy. The otherness, the exclusivity, of the Islamic message is therefore becoming less of a dogma for them. Muslims who see themselves as living in the modern world, and who are at the same time trying to find some roots in their religion to cope with the problems in the modern world and the situations they are faced with, cannot escape the fact that their religion has indeed become hardened; it has become modernized in a way that prevents the spirituality of their tradition from enabling them to cope with their problems effectively. It is precisely put in the Quran that "their hearts were diseased, and We increased that disease". Many Muslims are now realizing that a hardening of the heart has taken place, namely, a turning away from the spiritual tradition followed by a turning towards religion as a source of ideology, thus intensifying that hardening process. To realize that this has happened, however, is to realize, at the same time as we are faced with this current crisis, that we are also faced with a tremendous possibility of opening, whereby the spiritual sources of the tradition can come forward. Frithjof Schuon has said that as soon as the esoteric essence of the religion is eclipsed or denied or ignored, what happens is a hardening of the exoteric form into a shell. A religion cannot live without the sap that gives it the spirituality without which it would suffocate and die. So I think that there is an opening in the midst of this crisis.

Nasr: This is such an important issue. I was in Egypt when this great tragedy occurred, and I have refrained from giving any public discourse until now. There is a delicate point to mention in response to this question. It must be said, first of all, that modernism came into the Islamic world in the eighteenth century. Parallel with it there grew a kind of puritanical movement, which finally led to the modern Salafiyyah-Wahhabi movement, which is the ideological background of these people who committed these horrendous acts. But had modernism not come into the Islamic world, that other movement would not have had the history that it has. It stood for a long time within Arabia itself in opposition to the onslaught of modernism. At the same time, as a Bedouin phenomenon in Najd, in

the southern province of Arabia today, it was also opposed to the philosophical, intellectual, and mystical aspects of Islam—for which Najd was not known, to put it mildly. It was a little bit like the Taliban, who are Pashtu people from the villages of the Pashtu area of Afghanistan, and who suddenly appear on the scene, and people wonder why they do what they do. But in fact that is what they have been doing for the last thousand years, except they were not on the international scene: they did not run a country; they did not have political power. It was only in the twentieth century that the so-called reformists or *salafi*, to use the Arabic word, which means "going back to the beginning"—a kind of back to the Quran movement with a rather hardened, puritanical, and "Calvinistic" interpretation of Islam—it was only then that they gained political power, political power through oil, and of course through American interest in the oil of the Middle East, and especially Arabia. And a new factor set in, which everyone who thinks about this problem has to think about if you want to get to the deep-rooted causes of this crisis. It is also important to understand that the real critique of modernism in the Islamic world did not come from the Wahhabi movement; it came from Sufism. This is something which is getting all mixed up right now. In the nineteenth century, after the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, even the class of *'ulamâ'*, that is, the religious scholars who were associated with the law, with the exoteric aspects of religion, became weakened *vis-à-vis* the onslaught of modernism. It was only the Sufis who resisted. It is not accidental that the most profound critique of the modern world, which came from the pen of René Guénon, came from the pen of a man who was a Shadhili Sufi living in Egypt, and who spent the last twenty years of his life in that area. This is very, very important to understand. The profound criticisms that have been given by Frithjof Schuon, René Guénon, Titus Burkhardt, and others of the very foundation of modernism must not be confused with what is going on right now. There is a tremendous confusion in the West between fundamentalist Islam, traditional Islam, and modernism. Fundamentalist Islam is not the same thing as traditional Islam, no more than is the fundamentalist Judaism that is wreaking havoc on the Middle East the same thing as traditional Judaism, and this is true of course in other religious frameworks. Fundamentalist Christians, some of them extremists, are not the same thing as traditional Christians who have been practicing their religion for centuries.

This very severe reaction we have seen by Muslim extremists who have come from the background of the Salafiyyah-Wahhabi movement, and who have now led the world to this disaster, must not be confused with the constant, but never violent, opposition of Sufism to modernism, as a philosophy, from the very beginning. And this must also not be confused with an attack on the other Abrahamic traditions. The attack against modernism is not the same thing as attacking Christianity and Judaism. Many people in the streets in the Islamic world might not be able to make this distinction, of course, because they think in religious terms; they think that the whole of the West is Christian. We wish that it were, but it is not! But they do not understand this. So in order to really understand the deep roots of this crisis, you must be able to make a distinction between these nuances, and you must understand, above all, what it is that has led the terrorists to these extremist positions. How can one clear the swamp? It is not enough to kill a few mosquitoes that give you West Nile Disease; you have to change the environment that creates the mosquitoes. And this, unfortunately, nobody wants to talk about. In the press and on the television, you have the same old chattering heads, who know very little about the Islamic world, the so-called experts, who are there for ideological purposes and who really mislead the American public in a remarkable way. The misinformation, and disinformation, that goes on at a tragic moment like this is extremely saddening. You really have to practice *hesychia* at the present moment in the middle of all this disinformation that clutters the space. But there is, as Dr Shah-Kazemi just said, also tremendous hope. Many people now are beginning to ask, "Well, what is this Islam that everybody is talking about?" And despite veil after veil of disinformation and malicious distortion, there is also I think a great deal of hope for making things better understood, and in this context I think that nothing is more important than the writings of the perennialist authors, especially people like Burckhardt, like Schuon, like Guénon. I think that they are going to have a very important role to play in the future, not only for America and the Middle East, but for the whole world.

Huston Smith: Of course we do not want to turn this conference into a political conference, but at the same time this is so deep that if we do not speak out the stones themselves will cry out. So having heard from my dear friend from the Islamic side, as an American, I

just want to mention two facts which, in all the deluge and oceans of words, I have not heard in the public media. First, I suspect if one were to ask which major newspaper in history has ever been least read, the answer would be my local paper, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, on September 11. Why? Because it went to press before the Trade Buildings fell, but by the time it hit the homes and the streets, the buildings *had* fallen, and everybody listened to the television and the radio and nobody read the paper—except my wife, who is a marvelous research scholar in these respects. And on the front page of that paper, there was an article with a headline saying, "The War Goes On and On". But the war it was talking about was Vietnam, and it subject was the way in which agent green was still causing stillborn children and deformed children. I mention this just to say that my country has much, much to apologize for and to ask forgiveness for. My second observation is this. I happened to be a student at the University of Chicago when the first chain reaction, nuclear reaction, was, as we call it, a "success". And President Hutchins gave a speech with a striking title, which he had borrowed from a theologian: "The Good News of Damnation". And the point of his remarks was that if we take seriously enough damnation, we may mend our ways a little. I suspect that being toppled from the assumed position of the country that can "run the world" is, in the long run, probably a very good thing for America.

Ware: What I want to say fits with what has just been said by Professor Huston Smith. When a tragedy happens such as occurred on September 11, one's immediate reaction is to look for somebody to blame, and therefore to hate. That is a natural reaction, but it is also a very dangerous one. We fall into the trap of looking for someone responsible, a guilty person or group, whom we can then demonize, and we think in terms of "them" and "us", with a dichotomy and an opposition. But when a disaster such as happened on the 11th of September occurs, surely our true reaction should be to say, "I too am to blame. I too am responsible. I should not blame other people exclusively, but search my own heart." Surely the meaning, or one of the meanings, of what happened on September 11 is that we should all repent. If I had led a life of greater love and trust, would it have been exactly the same? You may say, "Yes, it would," but who knows, under the perspective of eternity, what all of us in this room have contributed in the world towards fear and alienation because

of our own narrowness? Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov* speaks of a judge who has to condemn a man in the dock to a period of prison—this is from the "Discourses of Starets Zosima". Father Zosima says that the judge should reflect, "I too should be in the dock beside the prisoner. Sentence should be passed also on me, because I too am responsible for what he has done." So I think we have to say that we are all responsible, and that we should all repent.

Gray Henry: I would like to join the Bishop. My first reaction in recent days has been, "What is our government doing?" And then I thought of my own guilt. How long have I known about what we have been doing to the Iraqi people by denying them medicine? The hundreds of women and thousands of children that die daily, and I did nothing. I have been to conferences; I have listened to people who have been there on the ground; and I did nothing. Earlier this week, we had a conference in Louisville on the subject of Thomas Merton and Hesychasm, and this question came up; and at first I thought that it was interrupting the beautiful subject we were dealing with, inward prayer. But then I realized that we have all been told over and over to love and pray for our enemies, but many of us have never had such a chance. Everyone on that panel spoke to the question in such a way that I was deeply moved. I wonder whether the Bishop, who was also in Louisville, could say something about what we decided on the subject of loving and praying for our enemies.

Ware: I do not wish to add to what you have just said, except to say that Christ constantly speaks of loving enemies. He would not have mentioned it so often if it was not important, and he would not have mentioned it so often if it was not difficult.

Rossi: I would like to get back to the original question and to Professor Nasr's answer, which I think is very crucial. The purpose of the question was to try to understand what is going on in the Islamic world at the present moment, and what can we trust. And I think that Professor Nasr's answer is extremely important, and all I have to do to add to it is to ask a further question. Strictly from my own reading, is it not fair to say that throughout Islamic history and throughout the Islamic world, whenever Sufism has had a chance to have some kind of influence, its influence has always been a moderating one?

Nasr: By and large, yes, but I want to add one proviso to this. There were times in the history of Islam when the Islamic world was invaded, such as the Mongol invasion, or the Italian invasion of Libya, in which the Sufi orders participated along with the rest of society in the defense of the country. The most recent example, of course, is what happened in the Soviet Union during seventy years of Soviet rule in Central Asia, and what has happened in Caucasia during the last five to ten years, when one of the Sufi orders, the Naqshbandiyyah order, has had a very important role to play. But one thing you could say definitely is that throughout the whole of Islamic history, the organized Sufi orders have never participated in any offensive moves, militarily speaking. This has never been seen even once. So yes, by and large, the influence of Sufism has always been moderating. It is interesting that Jalal al-Din Rumi, whose father had to flee the Mongol invasion, and who lost his homeland as a boy of twelve years old—and who was then brought to Mecca and Medina, and then settled in eastern Anatolia, where he died in Konya—is the most universalist of all Sufi writers, writing so much about the universality of the truth, of religion, and the love for Christians. He actually had many Christian disciples, and when he died, both Jewish and Christian rites were held for him. What we see is that his horrendous experience, family-wise, had no effect whatsoever on the moderating influence he had within Anatolia with regard to the relationship between Muslims and Christians.

Shah-Kazemi: I just wanted to continue those comments, and to mention a very important example of the way in which Sufism responded to imperialism in the Algerian context. Professor Nasr mentioned Libya and Chechnia, but in Algeria we have the example of a Sufi saint, the Emir Abd al-Qadir al-Jazairi, who fought against the French. In the 1830s and 40s, the French had resorted to a kind of "scorched earth" policy in Algeria, and during that time the ears of Arabs were regarded as trophies by the French. The French soldiers would cut off ears, and they would be given rewards for the number of Arab heads that they could produce. It was a barbaric time, and when the Emir was asked, "What do we do in return?", he said, "When you capture a French soldier, you bring him to me, and if he complains of ill treatment, you will receive yourself a punishment of ten blows on the soles of your feet." When he was finally defeated and when he was taken to Paris, among the people who

came to him in droves to pay their respects were the French officers whom he had treated so well and who knew what their people were doing to the Algerians. Later this same man, the Emir Abd al-Qadir, was exiled to Damascus, and in Damascus he was responsible for saving, it is estimated, two to three thousand Christians at the time of the Civil War between the Druzes and the Christians. He was insistent that the Christians had absolutely nothing to do with the conflict, that they were non-combatants, and that their immunity must be respected according to the *shari'ah*. But he was ignored. Damascus was attacked, and the Christians were on the verge of being massacred, when the Emir took them personally first to his home, and then, when he realized the extent of the attack, to the Citadel of Damascus, where he assembled a few soldiers that were under his command and defended these people. His biographer, Churchill, wrote that this was an amazing scene: thousands of Christians, and their delegations and their families, were being defended; the Bride of Christ, he said, was being defended by a descendent of the Prophet. And Shamil, the great warrior from Chechnia, wrote to him and said, "How happy I am to live in a time when the *sunnah* of the Prophet is being really implemented by someone like you, who knows when to fight, when not to fight, and when to defend those who have a right to be defended." What the Emir was putting into practice is an extremely important Quranic principle, one which completely undermines the ideological edifice that was raised by the people who perpetrated the attacks on the innocents in New York and Washington. It says very clearly in the Quran, "Let not hatred of a people cause you to deal with them unjustly. God does not love those who are unjust." This is an extremely important verse. However much hatred and rage there may be in the Muslim world, the Quran does not allow the Muslim to act unjustly. And justice in war means that you fight only combatants, and that you do not make war against those who have no guilt or have no malicious intent towards you. Also in the Quran is the "peace verse", which clearly says that if your enemy inclines to peace, you should incline also to peace. The Quran says that you do not have any warrant against those who do not fight you for your religion. It also says, "God does not forbid you from making peace with those who do not fight you on account of your religion, who do not persecute you." I just want to make this point in relation to the Emir Abd al-Qadir, because here we have a wonderful combination

of the highest spirituality—in Damascus, at the tomb of Ibn Arabi, he wrote his famous *Mawaqif*, which is one of the most esoteric interpretations of the Quran and the *hadîth* we have, based on Ibn Arabi, but in a sense more esoteric than Ibn Arabi himself—with a genuine compassion toward people of a different religion. So we have in this figure a real *mujâhid*, who exemplifies the real concept of *jihâd*: one who is a warrior inwardly, first of all, who fights the *jihâd* within himself, and who has love and compassion for those who are defenseless, whether Christian or Jew or anyone else, and who is willing to lay his life down for them, in keeping with the verse which I cited in my paper. It is not just mosques, but churches, cloisters, synagogues—all places wherein the name of God is "oft mentioned"—which the Muslim is obliged by the Quran to defend with his life, if necessary.

Father John Chryssavgis: I am just so glad all this has been brought up. I do not think that we are politicizing when we address these concerns. The events of September 11 cannot help but be at the center of this conference, and what this conference is about. Professor Nasr remarked, in the discussion which followed his address, that we cannot do good unless we are good, and we have heard from Bishop Kallistos that the saint is the one who is conscious of God all of the time. But there is a flip side to this picture. The desert tradition tells me that I do not know whether I am doing more for my brother when I pray for him, or when I offer him a plate of beans. I do not think the issue here is offering beans, and yet there are clearly other ways of doing something for my brother. There is a spiritual depth to doing good as much of the time as we can in order to become good all the time, and not only to being aware of God as much of the time as we can in order to become aware of Him all the time—a spirituality "bottoms up", if you like. God will continue to do His work in Heaven. We need to do our work here, to knock down barriers that we have set up, and that work, that activity, is not secular or merely political. It is deeply spiritual.

Cutsinger: There was a final question that I had been asked to pose. How can we bring away from this conference something of the spirit of unity and friendship that we have found? But I think that we have already had any number of good answers to that. Please join me in thanking our panelists.

"Panel Discussion"

Features in

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Edited by James S. Cutsinger