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## CAIRO DECLARATION

All Heavenly Messages were revealed throughout history to give man peace and security. All these messages integrate and harmonize the efforts of the scholars and leaders who should concert their efforts for the welfare of man, his security and happiness. This fact may not be clear to the followers of the Heavenly Messages amidst conflicts and disputes in our contemporary world.

Divine messages- from Adam to Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon them)- have concurred on the principles of faith, especially on believing in Allâh, Last Day, and righteous deeds. But the religious laws (*Shari'ahs*) of the successive notions of Prophethoods and Messages were numerous and distinct according to the differences of realities, nations, and phases of development that those nations have gone through. Ever-Glorious *Qur'an* has referred to this fact saying: "*to each among you We have prescribed a law and a clear way.*"<sup>1</sup>

Then the *Shari'ah* "Islamic Law" came as a seal of all previous religious laws and for being valid for all times and places. Therefore, its texts are confined to general concepts, and bases, and, to be permanently a rich source for fulfilling the objectives of *Shari'ah* that guarantee happiness for all peoples in this life and in the Hereafter. The main objectives of the Islamic *Shari'ah* are the five basic fundamentals upon which the general Human Rights are based, that are, protecting the right to life, and preserving religion, reason, human dignity and wealth.

Those who ponder over these objectives come to the conclusion that these are fundamentals and established rules for the rights of man honored by Allâh as His Vicegerent on Earth to populate it with goodness and spread security, peace and stability on our globe. It is also evident that the contents of international conventions on human rights are not out of the context of these objectives. Undoubtedly, human rights today are the most debated issues in the international arena. The concern about these issues is no more affluence or an intellectual luxury.

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**1 Sûrat Al-Mâ'idah (The Table spread with food) : (V:48)**



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Hence, it is necessary that Muslims and non-Muslims should be aware of the attention given by Islamic *Shari'ah* to human rights and to elevate it to become a necessity without which the life of man cannot be righteous.

Due to the fact that, human rights have been ratified in international treaties for more than six decades ago, and local and international foundations have been established to monitor their application in our contemporary world. Therefore, it is useful to hold comparisons between what has been stated by Islam for more than fourteen centuries ago with what has been ratified by the international institutions in their treaties that guarantee human rights. Henceforth, the topic of this conference is closely related to the contemporary issues, and to the recently emerging developments relating either directly or indirectly to human rights in the contemporary world at both theoretical and practical levels.

There is no doubt that clarifying this topic within the current circumstances in which Islam is exposed to unfair accusations regarding human rights, should bring out to whomever wants to know the reality of Islam that Islam is seriously observing, over more than fourteen centuries, the basic human rights, admitting religious and cultural pluralism, and is open to all religions, cultures, and civilizations. Moreover it is completely ready to dialogue with them, with the aim of cooperating in every field that may yield good to all peoples in all times and places.

Under such a climate of distortions against Islam and its teachings and the accusations of supporting aggression and spreading violence, it has become necessary to undertake a scientific effort to reveal the essence of Islamic *Shari'ah* and what it in terms of contents of teachings aimed at entrenching the principles of peace and stability in society. Furthermore it answers to man's legitimate needs and necessities, and rejects all forms of fanaticism and rigidity.

Unfortunately, there is clear ignorance among broad sectors of the objectives of Islamic *Shari'ah*. It is to be noted that when the term "*Islamic Shari'ah*" is raised in our contemporary age, many in the East and the West alike tend to believe that *Shari'ah* is just an application of the penalties imposed by Allâh, and declaration of *Jihad* to spread Islam everywhere. This is an understanding that lacks reason and one that does not express the reality of the tolerant *Shari'ah*. For *Shari'ah* came to set up the pillars of a sound society where fundamental human rights are well established. In fact, penalties – which represent just a minor part of *Shari'ah* – are but supportive means for the basic objectives of *Shari'ah* and not an objective in itself. As for *Jihad*, it is but a defensive war to repulse aggression and restore legitimate rights. It is not an aggression against others or a means to force anyone to



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adopt Islam because there is no compulsion in religion according to the Holy *Qur'an*.

Through projecting the true image of Islamic *Shari'ah*, any fair person can have an equivocal understanding of the reality of Islam which respects any human soul and protects basic rights without discrimination. In this context, it is enough to refer to the verse in the *Holy Qur'an*, "**Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women**"<sup>2</sup>. Mankind in all religions, races and ethnicities are affiliated to this one soul without discrimination. Allâh created all, without differences. But the Creator wished them to be different in their creeds, races, habits and traditions not for the purpose of disputing with each other but for knowing each other and cooperating together for their welfare and happiness.

Hence, Islam respected religious and cultural pluralism that in turn enrich human experience. This was emphasized by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when he issued *Al-Madinah* Paper after his immigration (*hijrah*) and in which he acknowledged equal rights for the population of *Madinah*. Everyone had the same rights and duties.

Undoubtedly, the scholars of the Muslim *Ummah* and its intellectuals realize the great importance of clarifying the objectives of the Islamic *Shari'ah* and henceforth, they are required to burden their immense responsibility for manifesting the real image of the *Shari'ah* to all people either Muslims or non-Muslims in order to eliminate the distorted image and the misunderstanding related to Islamic *Shari'ah* in particular and to Islam in general. Hopefully, this will be achieved by exerting united efforts for the sake of elevating Islam and for the aim of achieving a bright future for the Muslim *Ummah*.

*And Allâh says the truth, and He guides to the (Right) Path*

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**2 Sûrat An-Nisâ' (The Women) : (V:1)**