



Interactive Seminar: "The secret of the West's fear of Islam: a modern reading"

Lecturer: Dr. Abd Ali Sfeih/ Consultant at the French Ministry of Education.

Moderator: Dr. Muhammad Al-Quraishi / University of Kufa.

Al-Rafidain Center for Dialogue RCD organized an interactive seminar entitled "The secret of the West's fear of Islam: a modern reading", hosting Dr. Abd Ali Sfeih/ Consultant at the French Ministry of Education. The lecturer touched upon the influence of the Eastern religions, Islam, Christianity, and Mithraism, on the European Renaissance. The three principles of the French Revolution: fraternity, equality, and freedom were derived from those religions. The coexistence that Europe knew during the Muslim rule of Andalusia, where the Caliph was an Arab Muslim, the Prime Minister was Persian, and the court physician was a Christian, was a pioneering experience in achieving fraternity among humans based on reason. The Christian view of people as equal and what differentiates them is their proximity and distance from Christ had established the principle of equality, and the embrace of the Jews by the Ottoman Empire for centuries is another example of the principle of fraternity that Islam offered to Westerners. The lecturer considered that the West's fear of Islam is due to the West's fear of the East, as Western materialistic civilization has not been able to fill the spiritual side of man, which is full of religion. All religions are of oriental origin, and the West's attempt to produce an alternative religion to the oriental religions has failed despite the communist or liberal proposition, as these propositions could not fill the spiritual side of man. The lecturer considered that diagnosing the secret of the Western fear of Islam due to the fear of the East, as it is the source of





religions or the spiritual source of human beings can facilitate dialogue with the West, as the case is not limited to Islam as a legislative system. During the discussion session, many interventions were made by the attendees, who are from the religious, academic and cultural elites. Below are the main conclusions of the seminar:

1. The fear of Islam was not confined to the Western political elites only. Rather it extended to their thinkers and philosophers, which necessitated a search for the roots of this fear, especially with noting the modest financial capabilities of Muslims compared to that of the West.
2. There are two types of fear in the structure of behavior of the Western person. There is a fear that crystallizes out of the collective mind, and another that is deeply rooted in the subconscious mind. The real fear of Islam lies in the subconscious mind of the West.
3. Eastern civilizations influenced the European Renaissance greatly. The three principles of the French Revolution, freedom, fraternity and equality were derived from eastern religions. Fraternity is derived from Islam, equality from Christianity, and freedom from Mithraism, an Indian Persian religion.
4. Europe had two experiences with Islamic rule, the first in Andalusia, which lasted for eight centuries, and the second with the Ottomans, which lasted for five centuries, and that period of thirteen centuries had a great impact on the European Renaissance.
5. Modern European civilization is based on a material foundation and is devoid of spiritual values, and it searches for those values, which





- are concentrated in eastern religions and civilizations such as Islam, Christianity and Buddhism.
6. The experience of the Islamic state with the caliph being an Arab Muslim, the prime minister a Persian Muslim, and the court physician a Christian. This diversity based on reason and not nationalism had affected the values of the European Renaissance.
 7. The inclusion of Ur on the World Heritage List comes in the context of mankind's search for a single capital for the world in which to organize trade matters. Choosing Jerusalem to be such a capital when Israel was established failed and Ur became the alternative.
 8. The theory of knowledge in Islam, which is based on reading and learning from the cradle to the grave, differs from Christianity, which is based on teaching the Bible, and there is no civilization built on the basis of reading and learning. This fact makes Muslims have a place in the hearts of others.
 9. European countries differ among themselves in terms of their interpretation of Muslim behavior. For example, in Britain, the veil is considered a right as long as it does not affect the rest of society, while in France, the veil is considered a restriction on the freedom of women, and therefore it is prohibited in schools and official institutions.
 10. Knowing the secret of the West's fear of Islam can facilitate the process of civilized communication between Muslims and Westerners, by following an accurate scientific method, to dispel the West's fears, and build real civilizational bridges with it.

