Original Synthesis Article

The Tunisian Revolution "The Free, Youth Revolution" from an Anthropological Perspective

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Abstract - In this paper I focus on the anthropological aspects of the Tunisian Revolution of 2011 showing how anthropology could offer several angles of insight into the study of this revolution, which represents a new model of political revolutions. I show that this revolution has three major particularities: the young age of the revolutionaries, the independence of their thought and action, and their nonviolence. These particularities would not remove it from the political revolution category, but they mark a new step of paradigm change in the history of political revolutions. The behavior of the revolutionaries and their real objectives are among Muslim good morals, which are compatible with those adopted by the modern Western civilization and the Universal Moral Code. I present the dynamics of this revolution showing how it has removed immediate obstacles for reaching gradually its real objectives after the establishment of a new modern democrat constitution. In this paper, I also show how the ethnic and cultural homogeneity of Tunisian population has protected this revolution against attempts aiming to deviate it from its real objectives. As the spread of the political-religious terrorism is one of the major problems emerged after the launching of this revolution, I discuss the current causes of this spread and propose some initiatives that could be applied immediately for combating this terrorism at the cultural and intellectual levels. Moreover, I reveal its initial roots to provide a long-term strategy underlining, particularly, the need for a deep general review of all what falsely allocated to Islam and the motivation of Muslims to revitalize the real essence of Islam.

Keywords: Tunisian revolution particularities, Political revolution, Tunisian population history, Anthropology, Political-religious terrorism, Islam, Free Muslim Thought.

Introduction

Several revolutions have occurred throughout human history. If we focus on those that happened during and after the renaissance of modern revolutionary thought from the 16th century, we note that they are more or less encouraged and influenced by revolutionary concepts advanced by some scholars. For example, John Milton, the 17th century writer, considered revolutions as the right of society to defend itself. Likewise, Immanuel Kant, the 18th century German philosopher, believed in revolution as a force for the advancement of humankind[1]. Based on the general features of these revolutions already described and discussed by some contemporary writers (e.g., Goldstone 1993; Arendt 2006), I can classify and define them as follows.

First, we can distinguish nonpolitical revolutions from political revolutions. The latter represent the majority of revolutions that lead to political change, while nonpolitical revolutions lead to other things such as a change in technology or in the way people think. Second, concerning political revolutions, it is preferable to exclude the ones that are strictly political, such as the majority of government takeovers (coups d'état) clearly independent of social change. Hence, we can consider a political revolution as an event, which leads to a fundamental political change associated with the planning of economic and / or socio-cultural change. Moreover, this event often starts suddenly and is carried out by a large group of people who often use violence or war and are usually tied to an ideology and / or supervised by leader(s).

Referring to this general definition of political revolutions, I will try to class the Tunisian Revolution after its description and the revelation of its particularities. Moreover, I will develop its anthropological aspects beside the political and historic ones and showing how anthropology could offer several angles of insight into this revolution. This anthropological contribution could enrich our knowledge about revolutions poorly studied from an anthropological perspective (Thomassen 2012).

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[1] *For more details see the Encyclopedia Britannica at http://www.britannica.com/topic/revolution-politics*

How and why the Tunisian Revolution emerged

At the beginning of 2008, three years before the emergence of the Tunisian Revolution, a first uprising occurred in the mining basin of the "Rdaif" region. Given that the latter is located in extreme southern Tunisia, the authorities managed to extinguish it after the death of several martyrs and the wounding of others. Nevertheless, this first, limited uprising contributed to stimulate a feeling of popular anger that reached its peak in the region of Sidi Bouzid on 17/12/2010 when Mohamed Bouazizi, a young, poor street vendor, set himself on fire as a last resort after being subjected to oppression and humiliation by local authorities.

This event represented the direct spark of the revolution which started protests about the dramatic event in Sidi Bouzid that quickly spread to other regions including the capital city of Tunis. Although at the outset the protests were accomplished peacefully by young people, the violent reaction of the police force and / or unknown assassins pushed the protests to turn into violent riots leading to dozens of dead martyrs and wounded people. On January 14, 2011, a general strike and a great peaceful rally occurred in the capital in a show of strong support of the Tunisian population for this revolution initiated mainly by young people. This and possible undisclosed secret reasons led to the sudden escape and flight of Ben Ali (the second president of the first Tunisian Republic) and his family to Saudi Arabia.

The immediate objective of this revolution was to overthrow an authoritarian regime, which had aggravated corruption leading to a highly dissatisfying economic picture with high rates of unemployment and poverty in several regions of the interior. Moreover, this regime had almost completely restricted freedom of speech and had committed repression and torture. Thus during protests in late 2010 and early 2011, especially the great rally in the capital on January 14, 2011, Tunisians expressed their desire through several slogans including the chant "the people want to overthrow the regime" which has become a hymn repeated in several world protests. Moreover the protestors ordered Ben Ali to get out with contempt and a disgusted feeling by using the French word "*Dégage*" (clear out). Also they expressed in other slogans their real objectives such as their desire for democracy, social justice, dignity and freedom of expression.

The particularities of the Tunisian Revolution

Based on this brief description of its beginning, the Tunisian Revolution appears as a real endogenous political revolution: its different stages and its association with economic and / or socio-cultural change will be clarified in the following pages. However, this revolution exhibits new particularities that could distinguish it from classic political revolutions. In fact, as stated above, political revolutions are generally carried out by a wide mass of people, from different ages, who often use violence or war and are usually tied to an ideology and / or supervised by leader(s); while Tunisian revolution has been initiated mainly by young revolutionaries, nonviolent, and free from ideological links and without any orders from a leader. In other words, Tunisian revolution is characterized by three main particularities: the young age of the revolutionaries, the independence of their thought and action and their nonviolence.

Some persons do not consider it as a real political revolution. For example because of the absence of leadership, they have preferred to consider it as a simple "uprising" or "*Intifadha*" (in Arabic). However, I believe that the era of leaders is gone and most Tunisians, especially young people, are educated and represent a relatively high level of maturity to such an extent that they do not need a leader for starting a revolution. Moreover, I consider that the three, main particularities of the Tunisian Revolution would not remove it from the political revolution category, but they mark a new step of paradigm change in the history of political revolutions. Accordingly, Mallat (2015) who analyzed the nonviolent criterion of this revolution, considers that the philosophy of nonviolence practiced in the events of 2011 may have ushered in a fundamental break in world history and that this break is animated by nonviolence as the new spirit of world history.

Several names have been given to the Tunisian Revolution. For example, it has been called the "Jasmine Revolution" abroad and the "Revolution for Freedom and Dignity" in Tunisia. Although this second name is more adequate it remains more or less general, so in order to exhibit the most important particularities of this revolution I have called it "The Free, Youth Revolution" (Chaabani 2015a). I believe that the Tunisian Revolution particularities will not be erased from history's memory whatever the ridiculous attempts may be of some politicians to ride the wave of this revolt. In fact, no one denies that, before the revolution, some of them fought unsuccessfully against Ben Ali with the aim to take his place or to be among his government members.

At the same time, no one can deny the total absence of any link between their previous unsuccessful struggles and the success of the present Free, Youth Revolution. Namely, politicians must accept that young revolutionaries are far more creative than they are.

It is important to bring to light the fact that peace[2] (non-violence), and freedom of thought (non-mental slavery), which have marked the behavior of young Tunisian revolutionaries, as well as their real objectives such us dignity and social justice, belong to moral values. Namely, young Tunisian revolutionaries seem as been highly influenced by the good morals affirmed by their religion (Islam). At the same time they accepted the corresponding modern executive mechanisms, which lead to the establishment of a modern democrat government.

In fact, all moral values, such as honesty, justice, dignity of each human being, freedom of thought and belief, are detailed in the unique Book of Islam "Holy Qur'an", showing that one of the most important aspects of a Muslim's life is to have good morals (*Makarem Al Akhlak*): for example concerning the justice Allah said what means "*…And when you judge between people to judge with justice...*" [Qur'an: 4:58]. In this way, Allah described the behavior of Prophet Muhammad as being a model of a high degree of good morals: He said what means "*And indeed, you are of a great moral character*" [Qur'an, 68:4]. In addition, the Prophet had highlighted in several sayings (Hadiths) how important good manners are for Muslims. For example he said: *The best of you is the best among you in conduct* (quoted in 'Sahih al-Boukhari').

Thus, morality is one of the major foundations of Islam and represents until nowadays the universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole: In fact, good morals, affirmed in Holy Qur'an, were compatible with those adopted in the modern Western civilization (or modern European civilization), which is the product of the successive previous Mediterranean civilizations influenced mainly by three of the world's major religions, the monotheist traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Although the majorities of Western populations are mainly Christians the rich culture brought by Muslims particularly through Spain represented the first foundation of the development of the modern European civilization. Accordingly, Briffault (1919) said: "*there is not a single aspect of European growth in which decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable*".

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[2]*The Arabic word "Islam" was derived from the root words "salam" "Salama" "Silm" which mean " peace".*

The great Scholar Ibn Rushd, better known as Averroes (CE 1126-1198), represents a good example of the participation of Muslims in the starting of this civilization. In fact, he was a Spanish-Arabic philosopher, physician, lawyer and polymath from the Andalusia region of southern Spain. He had an even greater impact on Western European thought, and he has been described as the founding father of secular thought. A common theme throughout his writings is that there is no incompatibility between religion and philosophy when both are properly understood (see Averroes, 2012). Moreover, believing that there is a remarkable agreement around the world regarding fundamental moral principles, Keith (2003) created a Universal Moral Code: Meanings of all morals indicated in this code are clearly presented in the Holy Qur'an.

The first stage of the Free, Youth Revolution and its rapid success

The achievement of the overthrow of Ben Ali's system and the acquisition of complete freedom of expression represent the first stage of the revolution that was realized quickly and successfully. Several factors have contributed to this success, especially the following:

- The spontaneity and nonviolence of young revolutionaries, their independence from political or religious leaderships, their strong willingness, and their capacity to break down the barrier of fear.

- They advocated general principles shared by the great majority of Tunisians who did not hesitate to strongly support them. They demonstrated their ability to use the most modern means of communication between persons and civil organizations through social networks to such an extent that some persons called the Tunisian Revolution the "Twitter Revolution" and/or "the Facebook Revolution".

- The ethnic and cultural homogeneity of the Tunisian population has protected efficiently this revolt against any deviation from its unified objectives and any risk of ethnic clashes.

The cultural and ethnic Homogeneity of the Tunisian population

Generally, historians have used the Roman designation "Berbers" for those who have inhabited North Africa for about 4000 years. However, these inhabitants often prefer to be called "*Amazigh*" (pl. *Imazighen*), which means in their own tongue, a free man or (plural) "free men". This is in agreement with the fact that they are known by their strong refusal to be subject to any dominance which restricts their freedom. In case their enemy gets the upper hand, they often prefer to leave their territory rather than survive under someone's authority. Thus, they choose to live in other areas difficult to reach by the enemy such as mountainous regions where they can live in complete freedom. Several invasions focused on Berber territory such as the Phoenician ones between 600 and 700 years BC. These invasions led to the founding of the coastal city of Carthage and because of the Berber resistance, the Phoenicians managed to dominate only a few coastal areas. I can also cite the Roman invasions starting from the year 150 BC, which led to the control of several areas in Tunisia within the great Roman Empire in which the great majority of the Mediterranean territories are included. During the seventh century, Tunisia, like other North African countries, underwent Arabs invasions, which can be considered as somewhat different from the previous ones because the main objective of the Arabs was to disseminate and communicate a new religion called "Islam".

However, in the beginning, Arabs used force and therefore a fierce resistance confronted them and war persisted sporadically for several years. This period of war ended with the last organized resistance led in Tunisia by a woman called "Al Kaihna" known for her courage and her passion for freedom. The Arabs were able to spread Islam in Tunisia only when they ascertained that no force could dominate free men and therefore they changed their strategy and acted respectfully and gently while trying to apply and follow the moral principles urged by Islam. This strategy won the Berbers' affections: Berbers finally accepted to convert to Islam, to learn the Arabic language and to marry with Arabs who became a part of the inhabitants of North Africa. This behavior was contrary to that of former invaders who often avoided mixing with Berbers and preferred to leave Tunisia and return to their countries when they experienced defeat from new invaders.

Based on this brief historical picture and several published anthropological conclusions (e.g., El Moncer et al. 2010), the current populations of North Africa could be considered as a mixture between a large number of Berbers and a lesser proportion of Arabs. In addition, it includes a smaller proportion of peoples mainly coming from different Mediterranean regions during the historical succession of several civilizations. During past centuries, the great majority of these ethnic groups have been mixed and this created a homogeneous population belonging to a uniform Muslim Arab culture. This homogeneity is estimated by the study of Fearon (2003) who, measuring the ethnic and cultural diversity in different world countries, showed that Tunisia is one of the countries that is the most homogeneous both ethnically and culturally. Accordingly, our genetic studies (Bahri *et al.* 2008, Ben Halima *et al.* 2015) show a substantial degree of genetic homogeneity in the current Tunisian population. Moreover, Bahri *et al.* 2012 showed that the two principal ethnic components, Berber and Arab, are genetically close and, therefore, have a common ancestry. This is in agreement with my suggestion that ancient human movements occurred from Arabia to ancient Mesopotamia and North Africa (Chaabani 2002; 2014). It also agrees with some historical data such as that provided by Ibn Khaldun[3] who considered that Berbers, the natives of North Africa, mainly came from ancient Mesopotamia and southern Arabia.

This anthropological homogeneity of the Tunisian population was reinforced by the modernization of Tunisia's social structure during and after the era of the first President of the First Tunisian Republic, Habib Bourguiba, who was able to gradually eliminate the tribal traditions that were prevalent in the country especially in some regions far from cities. This in turn led to the almost complete disappearance of the concept of tribal structure and the fusion of all tribes into a unified Tunisian people living in a state under the rule of law. Thus, as stated above, the anthropological homogeneity of the overwhelming majority of Tunisians has ensured and will continue to ensure the protection of the Tunisian Revolution against the emergence of ethnic or cultural conflicts.

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[3] *Ibn Khaldoun (1375 – 1379) in his book: The book of the examples (Kitab al-Ibar, wa diwan al-mobtadae wa al-Khaber)* *http://www.ebanque-pdf.com/fr_kitab-al-ibar.html)*

This protection was already demonstrated by the fact that, during this revolution a few defeated and egotistical politicians have tried unsuccessfully to disrupt the homogeneity of Tunisian population through attempts to stimulate tribal-regional passions, or even through "playing the religious card" as they tried to fabricate two categories of Muslims. In the following part of this essay, I will explain and analyze this complicated point related to Islam in a wider context.

The second stage of the Revolution and its grave problems

After the quick and honorable success of its first stage, the revolution entered into a transitional bad period, during it, unexpected events happened: an evident economic regression and an obvious increase of corruption and contraband dealings, terrible terrorist acts, and the refusal of the transitory Government (2012-2014) to abandon power after a one-year mandate.

Concerning the terrorist acts, I can cite the assassination of two prominent politicians, martyrs Chokri Belaid and Mohammed Brahmi, who were killed by political-religious terrorists. Despite the partial disclosure of who carried out the killings, those who planned and / or supported directly or indirectly these killings have not yet been officially determined! Some assumptions point out the fact that a dishonest political network has managed to mask certain realities. Nevertheless, according to popular Tunisian cultural heritage, Tunisians believe that accomplices in these crimes, as in any other crime, will be surely detected sooner or later. This is expressed in their grandparent's proverb which says "Hey, killer of someone's soul. When and where can you secretly stay?" (*Ya Khatil errouh ouine trouh)*. Political religious terrorists also killed several dozen people especially from the Military, National Guard and Security corps. Tunisian people give great importance, respect, and solidarity to the brave people who have not hesitated to give their lives for their country. For example, to commemorate this, a great monument has been established in 'Beja' (one of the Tunisian governorates) as a memorial to the martyrs of this region.

Concerning the transitory government (2012-2014), also called Ennahdha government because it is mainly composed of Ennahdha members, although it was set up by an elected National Constituent Assembly for a one-year mandate, it did not fulfill its promises in spite of the evident increase of the deterioration of the country at all levels (political and policy making, the security situation and the economy). In fact, as stated above, Islam calls mainly for the exercise of good morals, while Ennahdha

government members did not keep their signed promise (in Islam this represents an immoral behavior). In addition, they are so egotistical and obsessed with power that they insist on continuing to govern even though by doing so creates a very great risk of launching a civil war. Based on all these behaviors and many other similar ones, a non-negligible number of Tunisians who had voted for representatives of this party, began to believe that Ennahdha government members consider Islam only as a tool, which can be used for attracting a maximum of Tunisians to their party.

This dangerous stubbornness from the Ennahdha Party's persisted for one year at the end of which it was stopped by a miracle thanks to the occurrence of two major unexpected events: (1) A new party emerged "*Nidaa Tounes*" and according to opinion polls this party became the most popular party only several months after its foundation; while Ennahdha occupied the second position showing its first popular disapproval. (2) Abdel Fattah Sissy, former Defense Minister and current Chair of the Arabic Republic of Egypt, overthrew the government dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood[4] party and saved Egypt from a certain civil war. In fact, having the same religious character and committing serious political errors, Ennahdha government in Tunisia and the former Egyptian government were in a similar situation and therefore the overthrow of the latter "Egypt'coup" has surely caused a serious negative effect on the transitory Ennahdha government.

In addition to these two incidents, the transitory Ennahdha Government was also affected politically and morally by the fact that it was unable to stop the deterioration of the security situation and the economy and the consequent popular protests and demonstrations. Hence, it began to declare the possibility of a partial abandonment of the government and started declaring that it must give its agreement regarding any replacements. During the summer of 2013 the intervention of civil society through its four principal organizations called the Quartet[5], exerted more pressure on the members of the transitory Government who finally accepted to enter into a dialogue with the opposition under the auspices of the Quartet. After great difficulties, the latter arrived to

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[4] *The Muslim Brotherhood, one of the oldest and largest political religious organizations in Egypt, was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. As of 2015 it is considered a terrorist organization by the governments of Bahrain, Syria, Russia, Egypt, UAE and Saudi Arabia (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood)*

[5] *The Quartet consists of four principal organizations: (1) the Tunisian General Labor Union, (2) the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, (3) the Tunisian Human Rights League, and (4) the Tunisian Order of Lawyers*

pave the way for a peaceful dialogue between the public, the political parties and the authorities. This helped to find a consensus, which saved Tunisia from a critical situation, which had nearly led to a civil war. Given the mighty efforts undertaken in its decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy, the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet was awarded the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize. The new, national consensus permitted the establishment of a technocratic government that in addition to its governmental role sped up the achievement of a new constitution for a second Tunisian Republic. The first election was prepared according to this constitution.

On November 23, 2014, a month after parliamentary elections, a presidential election was held in Tunisia and the results represented a clear victory for the main opposition party of "Nidaa Tounes" and the elected President, Mohamed Beji Caid Essebsi, is the founder of this party and the first President of the second Republic of Tunisia. This election was the first free and fair presidential election since the country gained independence in 1956. It was also the first regular presidential election after the Tunisian Revolution of 2011. During the establishment of the new constitution Ennahdha party has tried to introduce some stupid or unjust legal rules but the other parties and civil organizations have opposed strongly until the adoption of an acceptable modern constitution in January 2014. This led to put the basis for the creation of a constitutional court and a superior judicial council and, therefore, agrees with the modern concept of Mallat (2015) that a philosophy of nonviolence goes beyond the revolutionary phase to include constitutionalism and justice.

Moreover, although the spread of free speech had already been achieved since the first stage of the revolution, it was internationally recognized and confirmed within a wider context during the second stage. In fact, in 2015 the NGO called Freedom House gave Tunisia its highest ranking of "free". Hence, Tunisia is the first Arab country in the Middle East and the North Africa region to be declared 'free' by a world-recognized organization such as Freedom House.

Although the two successive official governments (that of 2015 modified in 2016) seem to be slightly more efficient than the previous transitory ones at the security level, Tunisians do not yet see an improvement in economic, social justice and a serious fight against all kind of corruption. In any case, with mood swings between pride, anger, optimism and pessimism, Tunisians hope that the planning of the present government will give some improvement from the next year (2018). But, I think that more radical

changes would be done when younger people arrive to the power with better mentality, honesty, competence, bravery, morality, and patriotism.

In addition of the first real objectives of the revolution, stated above, some new ones "neo-objectives" emerged, particularly that concerning the fight against the political- religious terrorism[6] that has evidently spread after the revolution. In fact, ideologies of this sort of terrorism came from abroad and have no connection to the original intellectual trends of Tunisians. I can recapitulate the history of these trends during the successive political periods as follows.

Intellectual trends of Tunisians before the Revolution

- The Pre-independence Period

Before 1957, during the French occupation period, although there was a scarcity of graduates and modern schools, the Tunisian people possessed a rich, inherited popular culture maintained by some Tunisian elites, such as the great poet Abu-al-Kacem Chabbi (1909-1934), the journalist and writer Tahar Haddad (1899-1935), and the great scholar of Islamic topics Muhammad-Tahar ibn Ashur (1879-1973). These elites, in addition to their intellectual and literary creativity, called for women's rights, the protection of the Tunisian identity and the liberation of the country. Before and during this period, one can note the absence of extremist religious trends and / or political- religious ideologies. Generally Tunisians follow a moderate way based on a reasonable understanding of Islam. The same goes for few persons called "Sufis", who were accepted by the society because they were unrelated to any political trend and their unique objective was to devote much of their time to reading the Qur'an, providing religious songs and immersing themselves in spirituality.

During this colonial period, the large majority of the Tunisian people were opposed to colonialism which tried to undermine the Tunisian identity. This majority entered into a phase of resistance that ended by expelling the foreign settlers from the country. However, a negligible number of Tunisians seem somewhat aligned with colonialists hoping to receive in return advantages such as prestigious posts. This is due, very likely, to a weakness and trouble of their personalities leading to do not take pride in their Tunisian identity to such an extent that they feel themselves inferior to the

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[6] *I define the political-religious terrorism falsely related to Islam as the use of this religion after changing some of its known principles in order to establish a strange ideology that help to reach the power even through the kills of thousands of innocent victims.*

colonizers and superior towards citizens of their own country. According to the Tunisian proverb they were "without either religious or ethnic identity" "*la dine wala milla*". Moreover, it would be possible to consider this negative behavior as a result, at least in part, of former generations' accumulations and inheritance from the succession of conquests and empires that influenced Tunisia's history. Namely, this behavior probably concerns only some of the few persons who probably were forced and / or accepted to be submissive.

- *The Period after Independence (1957-1987-2011)*

After independence from 1957 until the occurrence of the Revolution (January 2011) Tunisia was ruled by President Habib Bourguiba (1957-1987) than by Zine Abiddine Ben Ali (1987-2011). The regime of the latter can be considered as an extension of that of Bourguiba, especially because during the last dozen years of the Bourguiba era (period of his illness) most political power was in the hands of Ben Ali as Minister of the Interior and the Prime Minister. Furthermore, the main political strategies established by Bourguiba were not changed. One should note that many principal policies were maintained during Ben Ali period. However, it should also be noted that applied strategies may be suitable at the outset but must be upgraded, validated again, developed and changed after a lapse of time and when situations change. Unfortunately, this did not happen. For example, since the independence Bourguiba has appointed the French language as the second language after the mother tongue "Arabic". This choice is acceptable at this period (from 1956) when there is no an international language of science. However, since about 1970, English has become the established language of scholarly communication. To remove language barriers at the level of academic scientific research all world countries (non English native speakers) adopted the English as the second language after the mother tongue except few countries such as Tunisia in which, unfortunately French is yet the second language, while English is the third obligatory one. Such stupid situation has led to the fact that the Tunisian students generally do not arrive to master the three languages simultaneously particularly the third one. Hence, this abnormal situation has, among other things, negatively affected the advance of the scientific research in Tunisia.

Although Bouguiba has not established a real democrat political system, he was known by many honorable futures such as his clean hands, realism, clear vision and remarkable political ability and passion for Tunisia in addition to his several precious

choices and priorities such as education for all Tunisians, the freedom of women, and the use of a national family planning. As the fruit of these priorities, the great majority of young Tunisians received a modern education and graduated from primary schools to secondary schools and then attended universities.

Although Bourguiba was somewhat more open to the West, he was realist away from all religious or political ideologies. Admiring this behavior, the majority of Tunisian people refuse to be submissive to an ideology. However, during the period of his illness (1980-1987), marked by a general bad situation of the country, political groups emerged especially in the student community. Some had ideas belonging to certain left-wing ideologies; while a group has represented the first Tunisian political-religious sect. It is a political movement with religious tendency "*Haraket Al Itijah Al Islami*", which in 1988 has changed its name in *Ennahdha* movement "*Haraket AL Nahdha*", developed and became the current *Ennahdha* party. This movement started with an ideology, which has no roots in Tunisian intellectual trends, but comes from abroad: it was mainly inspired by that of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (*al Ikhwan al-Muslimin*)[4]. Although this political-religious movement had initially declared that its principal objective was to defend the Tunisian identity, the government (during 1991) had accused their leaders of the preparation to carry out several terrorist acts in an attempt to overthrow the regime and the execution of a terrorist operation known as the "Bab-Souika incident"[7].

Giving the old age of Bourguiba and the continuation of his illness, Ben Ali took advantage of his high position in the power to remove President Bourguiba from his duties in a "bloodless coup". In this way he saved the country from serious chaos, especially in the absence of a democratic tradition permitting the rotation of power and in the presence of a serious political-religious terrorist threat of Ennahdha movement. During the first three years of his regime, Ben Ali appeared as the savior of Tunisia by reestablishing security and the synchronization of a relative revival of the economy.

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[7] *for more details see Néji Jelloul (Academic Professor and Minister of Education) to African manager :*
« Ennahdha a fait des révisions idéologiques courageuses en abondonnant la Charia et le Califat » published by Khadija Taboubi in African Manager 13 - 04 – 2014   http://www.turess.com/fr/africanmanagerfr/164535

But, after his first three good years, although his government's members succeeded in making some positive achievements, they did not have a good grasp of community problems. Thus, several negative things were accumulated and Ben Ali was gradually involved in suspicious personal projects and was blind to several illegal business carried out by his extended family, especially his wife's relatives and an extensive network of cronies. Moreover, he continued to restrict freedom of speech and committed more repression and torture on who come into conflict with his regime.

The political-religious extremism after the Revolution

At the end of the Ben Ali period, other more dangerous, political-religious groups were formed as representatives of political-religious groups already formed in other countries. Due to the relative vigilance and domination of the interior security system of Ben Ali's government, these groups worked underground and emerged only after the revolution. Thus, particularly during the period of the transitory Ennahdha government (2012-2014) activities of these dangerous political-religious groups, such as that of "Ansar al-Shari'a", emerged often within hundreds of Associations with contrasting labels such as charitable associations and / or Qur'an teaching schools.

Moreover, in numerous mosques Imams were replaced by extremist ones, belonged to these groups, who together with many others, as phony preachers, began to polarize some young people by publishing political-religious ideologies, which are in contrast with the essence and principles of Islam. This first step of diffusion of such ideologies had represented the background and the basis of the establishment of political-religious terrorism[7]. In a second step, the so called leaders of these groups invite only persons seemingly interested in their ideologies in discrete reunions aiming to anchor their ideology in their minds, then people who are obviously psychologically fragile are chosen and encouraged to follow commands including committing suicide attacks. The last step includes the secret planning and the carrying out of terrorist acts.

Unfortunately, the Ennahdha government was accused of having turned a blind eye towards the two first steps leading to terrorism, but when innocent people were killed after the carrying out of the last step of terrorism, it declared that it was strongly against terrorist acts. In other words, it appears as if Ennadha party is against terrorist

acts only after they happen! This is one of the dangerous contradictions and lacks of clarity that has strongly characterized this party which always tries to present itself as a modern and moderate party with a religious reference.

In fact, all political-religious extremists, whatever at what group or sect they belong, have in common the objective of reaching the possession of power not only in Tunisia and all other Muslim countries but also throughout the world. Although these groups differ, among other secondary things, by the degree and the timing of the use of violence, they follow the same general strategy based on the use of Islam after changing some of its known principles in order to create an odd ideology which agrees with their stupid political objectives. In other words, by this strategy they try to perturb people's beliefs residing in the most sensitive and profound reaches of the human mind, then to try to enslave their minds by a stupid ideology which has nothing to do with Islam.

From 2015, many improvements have been made at the level of police and military forces performance in the fight against terrorists who have been subjects to several defeats such as that of the battle of Ben Guerdane[8]. However, even if, with a strict application of high-level security and military vigilance we can succeed to neutralize all the terrorists, we expect to see a continued emergence of new ones. Hence, it will be necessary, besides applying a legal and military approach in the combat, to include cultural and intellectual initiatives with related political and economic ones, in order to efficiently fight this terrorism at its roots in the short and long term.

Immediate measures fighting culturally against terrorism

As this political-religious terrorism has reached several countries and has become a world problem, except for certain details specific to each country, general cultural applications can be fruitful against terrorism in every country. Accordingly, several measures have been advanced and discussed in several world debates[9]. I underline and develop some of them as follows:

- Put a stop to all direct or indirect speeches and discourses related to ideologies of this kind of terrorism anywhere particularly in the internet, in prisons and in mosques.

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[8]*The Battle of Ben Guerdane occurred on March 7, 2016 in the city of Ben Gardane in Tunisia on the border with Libya. Political-religious terrorists attempted to takeover Ben Guerdane and establish an "Emirate" within Tunisia. But Tunisians(military, National Guard and police supported by civilians) have defeated terrorists in only few days.*

[9] *For example see the International Conference (May 31, 2016, Astana) "Religions against Terrorism" (see http://kazembassy.hr/en/2016/06/09/religion_against_terrorism/) or those of United Nations Action to Counter Terrorism (see http://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/).*

- Provide and promote freedom and human dignity to the young and help them to find a job; because poverty, oppression and disrespect for human rights creates a sense of injustice that causes young people to react with violence.

- Open youth cultural centers in every region of the country and revise the educational system including cultural programs (in schools and in the media) showing how dangerous objectives and acts of the political-religious terrorism are against the real principles of Islam. Promote a culture of tolerance, pluralism, and dialogue by given youth opportunities to participate in the development of democracy.

In addition to these socio-cultural solutions, I want to propose a particular intellectual one that could neutralize an indirect masked strategy applied together with several others by political-religious terrorists. This strategy concerns the introduction and use of some terms to attempt to disturb the thoughts of Arab Muslim citizens and / or to facilitate the attraction of youth to their cause. In fact, these terms, used now as new technical words, were first introduced and used by extremists and their Arab sympathizers, and then they spread to some Arab media, very likely, by the power of money. Then, unfortunately, they gradually spread, often unintentionally, in every Arab and international Media outlet and even in the writing and speeches of many intellectuals and politicians.

As examples, I begin by presenting the term "Islamist", which is a translation of the Arab word "*Islami*". The latter is a relatively recent Arab word that does not exist either in the Holy Qur'an or in ancient books and writings of Moslem civilizations. It has been mainly used by current political-religious extremists for distinguishing themselves from Muslims and trying to appear as the representatives of Islam. However, these two intentions are in complete contradiction with Islam: First, in the Holy Qur'an, all who convert to Islam are only designated as "Muslims" and only God can judge them based on their behavior as it relates to their degree of commitment to good morals. Second, only the Holy Qur'an and some assured prophetic hadiths represent Islam, so no one can represent Islam in order to replace God on earth or to be an intermediary between God and believers who must have a direct vertical relationship with God. Moreover, this designation "Islamists" represents a label, through it, they spread considerations and even laws, which have nothing to do with Islam, but unfortunately they could be believed as truly related to Islam particularly by some

young people who do not yet have sufficient details related to Islam and / or going by a fragile psychological situation.

In order to neutralize this strategy of the use of this wrong technical word, and other similar ones, as a lure to attract young Muslims, I invite all world's people especially persons working in all types of Media to avoid the use of these words. And people must call these terrorists by a suitable designation such as "Political-Religious Terrorists" or, if they do not yet exert violence "Political-Religious Extremists". Because if we continue to call them as they want, as "Islamists", this means that we accept that what they do belongs to Islam. Thus, we support the fact that some young Muslims continue to fall into this fallacy and will continue to be attracted by terrorist clans where they will be submitted to a deep brainwashing leading to their transformation into dangerous, narrow-minded criminals.

In Arab countries, all members of political-religious clans and some of the so-called Sheikhs prefer to be called by this aberrant word "Islamists". Moreover, these extremists have assisted in the fabrication of its antonym aiming to divide Muslims and to disturb Arab Muslim thought. I can summarize the development of this antonym word as follows. In previous times, the Arab word "*Al Almania*", derived from "*Al Alam*" (the world), was considered to be the translation equivalent of the term "secularism" in English or "laïcité" in French which means the separation of government and political authority from religion with the guarantee of freedom of conscience. As moderate secularism is generally accepted by the majority of Muslim populations, extremists have discreetly imposed a very small change in the pronunciation of the term "*Al Almania*" by "*Al Ilmania*" which has a different sense. In fact, it derived from the word "*El Ilm*" (science) and could mean "Scientism": ancient ideology of who believe that science contains all real knowledge without recourse to supernatural belief, and therefore he could be atheist. Thus, actually the word "*Al Ilmania*" is used in all Arab populations, as the extremists desire, to indicate a vague sense, which can mean both secularism and scientism. For example, based on this vagueness, the Ennahdha party has used this word "*Ilmania*" as an antonym of "Islamism" during the pre-selective periods for attracting a higher number of sympathizers. They have tried indirectly through their speeches to break the socio-cultural homogeneity of Tunisians implying that those who are not with them as Islamist ("*Islami*") must be an "*Ilmani*" (secularist and rather scientistic). Nevertheless, this funny and silly attempt enjoyed no success with Tunisians who are well-educated

enough not to be easily fooled with these false insinuations; that's why the Ennahdha party have seen a relative retreating in the elections of the first Government of the second Tunisian Republic in 2014. In fact, the great majority of the Tunisians are moderate secularists who believe strongly in God and respect their religion 'the real Islam', while scientistics, if they exist at all, are very scarce in Tunisia.

I can quote another example of the wrong use of Arab words: it is the case of the word "*Jihadi*" which was introduced at least in some western Media to wrongly designate the political-religious terrorist. In fact, this Arabic word derives from *"jihad"* that has two principal meanings: either a particular armed battle or a continual, peaceful battle against the bad desires of our inner selves; namely the attempt to establish (self-control) to assure good manners and to improve the individual's living conditions in society. To designate political-religious terrorists "*Jihadiien*" because they are in an armed battle is a great aberration. In fact, for Muslims the jihad, as armed battle, is possible in only some limited circumstances such as in the case when invaders come to colonize their proper country and / or prevent them from practicing their religious rituals. Moreover, in any case, the *jihad* must be decided at the highest level of the country's authority with the agreement of the majority of the concerned population.

Other several bizarre wrong designations were used such as "Political Islam" that could mean that there is a Political Islam and a non-Political Islam, while there is only one real Islam, which is a religion having nothing to do with politics. Likewise, the new designation "Democratic Islam" that could mean that there is another non-Democratic Islam, while what we today call democracy is compatible with the essence of the unique real Islam.

I can also cite the case of the largest and most recent clan of political, religious terrorists who call themselves 'The organization of Islamic State in Iraq and Cham' "*tandhim Daoula Islamia bil Iraq wa Cham*" (**DAICH**). I believe that we can keep the abbreviation but we must replace *Islamia* by *Irhabia* (in Arabic *Irhab* means terrorism) and the designation in Arabic becomes 'tandhim *Daoula Irhabia bil Iraq wa Cham*" (**DAICH),** and in English 'Organization of the Terrorist State in Iraq and Cham'.

Finally, it is clear that for fighting intellectually against terrorism wrongly related to Islam we must, among other things, refrain from using confusing terms in contradictory contexts and / or within wrong meanings. Moreover, the use of the adjective "Islamic" is inappropriate even in a general context such as "Islamic civilizations" that would be replaced by "Muslim civilizations" because Islam is a Holy

religion and during these civilizations some Muslims have more and less deviated from the real essence and principles of Islam, namely within these civilizations there are good things and bad ones unrelated to Islam.

I believe that the one who has already known the meaning of these aberrant words and the history of their manufacture, and continues to use them wants to give a wrong, negative image of Islam on purpose and / or to indirectly support the continual attraction of some young Muslims to the terrorist cause by wrongly using the Islamic label. Even if he has only a passive intention to accept the "fait accompli" of the use of widely-used aberrant-technical words, his behavior will lead to the same bad consequences.

Intellectual fight against political-religious terrorism in the long-term

As stated above the neutralization of political-religious terrorism is now in a positive progress thanks to the application of a serious legal and military approach. But among immediate cultural and intellectual initiatives, presented above, only some ones are already adopted. Moreover, any long term strategy was adopted; thus I propose a reasonable one established from the original roots of this sort of terrorism that I will reveal in the following through the presentation of the principal events occurred during the history of the Muslim thought.

- *The history of the Muslim Thought*

Muslim Thought is the whole of the production and innovation provided by Muslim peoples' minds that aims to deepen their understanding of Islam. Started during the era of the Prophet Mohamed (*Salla Allaho Alaihi wa Salem*) (CE 610 – 632), I consider it as a typical model of free thought, therefore I call it "The Free Muslim Thought". In fact, the Prophet had founded a nation based mainly on the knowledge and the application of good morals, good reasoning and good judgment in a context of freedom of thought and belief clearly, which are clearly indicated in the unique book of Islam the Holy Qur'an. As is shown above good morals are among major basics of Islam. Likewise, the freedom of thought and belief is clearly underlining in several Qur'an verses such as "*There is no compulsion in religion - the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error-*" [Qur'an: 2:256]; "*The Truth is from your Lord; so let him who please believe and let him who please disbelieve.*" [Qur'an: 18:29]; "*We have truly shown him the way; he may be thankful or unthankful.*" [Qur'an: 76:3]; "*To you your*

religion, and to me, mine" [Qur'an: 109:6]; and "*You are not responsible for their guidance, but Allah guides who He wants*" [Qur'an: 2:272]. Moreover, although that several times Allah speaks of people going back to unbelief after believing, never once He said that they should be killed or punished. Similarly, the freedom of thought and the importance of the use of mind in order to develop scientific research were also signaled in innumerable verses such as "*Say, walk through the earth and see how the creation began*" [Qur'an: 29:20] (see several other verses with their corresponding interpretation in, e.g., Chaabani 2006; 2011; 2015b).

Taking the conditions of its early period into account, the first Muslim nation could be considered to have evolved as a civil state. In fact, Prophet companions (in Arabic Sahaba) who helped him in the running of this state were already living their lives by applying the spirit of Islam focused mainly on good morals such as the love of justice, equality, tolerance, solidarity, and the respect for human freedom and dignity. However, after the death of the Prophet (*Salla Allaho Alaihi wa Salem*) the choice of the successor and leader of the State "Caliph" (in Arabic *Calipha*) had represented serious problems.

In fact, during this early era (from about CE 632), it was impossible to establish and apply mechanisms aiming to ensure that everyone could participate in the choice of a new leader of the State. Hence, following the principle of the meaning of Holy Quran verse "*..And their affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves…*" (Quran, 42:38), Sahaba had used a simple and possible mechanism, which was the consultation between them who in turn were in contact with senior representatives of the Arab tribes in order to choose the Caliph by giving the oath of allegiance (in Arabic *El Moubaia*). But, this possible mechanism seems inadequate since it led to political problems such as that of the dispute about the allegiance of the first Caliph Abu Bakr Siddiq or that of the killing of the third Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan. The accumulation of these problems had made easier the introduction of religion in politics and therefore the emergence, within the same religion, of contrived religious differences marked by a political profoundness. This was taken shape through two major events during the period CE 632 to about 700.

The first event concerns the emergence of a dangerous group who, for reaching political objectives, used Islam, after deviated from its essence. Members of this group are designated by the Arabic term "Khawarij" that means the Outsiders (the ones who deviated from mainstream Islam). The first persons who had initiated the formation of this group were, very likely, nomads who resented the centralization of power in the

new Islamic state that somewhat curtailed the freedom of their tribal society. After the death of the third Caliph, <u>Uthman</u>, a struggle for succession ensued between Ali and Muawiyah. Taking advantage of this situation, outsiders introduced themselves in this political problem. Initially aligned with Ali, they became against him as well as Muawiyah and the whole Caliphate system (for review see Higgins 2004). To prove causes permitting them to continue their political insurrection against the Caliphate and for developing a wider group, they had used religion (Islam). They falsely interpreted some of the Qur'an verses according to their desire, which was focused on their thirst for reaching the power. Hence, they invented new considerations and laws incompatible with Islam such as they had given to themselves the right to kill any Muslim who is not with them, namely who they consider under allegations of excommunication (in Arabic *Takfir*). Therefore, they had tried to violate the Free Muslim Thought and to establish a mental slavery, which is far more sinister than physical slavery. Broking into revolt against Caliphate system, they reached the pick of their terrorism at the end of era of Caliph Ali who was assassinated, in CE 661, by one of them. Since, they were strongly combated by the power of the next Caliphate states and they had disappeared progressively.

The second event had somewhat altered the unity of the Muslim nation. It is a tendency called "Shia" that began to develop timidly since the dispute about the allegiance of the first Caliph. Within this dispute the founders of the Shia (in Arabic *Chiia*) group believed that Ali (the husband of the daughter of the Prophet) had a strong claim and was eligible to be the first Caliph. The growth of the followers of Ali caused the first great splitting of the Muslim people into the two major denominations of Sunni and Shia (currently about 85-90 % Sunni and 10-15 % Shia[10]). In fact, the Battle of Karbala[11](*CE 680)*, during which Husayn the son of Ali (the fourth caliph) was killed, played a central role in shaping the identity of Shia with own rituals and collective memory considering Husayn's suffering and death as a symbol of sacrifice in the struggle for right against wrong. And since, although the split of Sunni and Shia was originally strictly political it became progressively religious in nature.

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[10] *According to "Mapping the Global Muslim Population". Pew Research Center, 7 October 2009.*

[11] *The Battle of Karbala took place in October 10, CE 680 in Karbala (in present-day Iraq) between a small group of supporters and relatives of Muhammad's grandson, Husayn (the son of Ali the fourth caliph), and a larger military detachment from the forces of Yazid I, the Umayyad caliph. In fact, When Muawiyah I died in 680, Husayn did not give allegiance to his son, Yazid I, who had been appointed as Umayyad caliphby Muawiyah. The people of Kufa sent letters to Husayn, asking his help and pledging allegiance to him, but they later did not support him. As Husayn traveled towards Kufa, at a nearby place known as Karbala, his caravan was intercepted by Yazid I's army (for more detail see: <u>Madelung, Wilferd</u>. <u>"Hosayn b. ali"</u>. Encyclopædia Iranica. Retrieved 2 November 2015).*

The period from about CE 700 to about CE 820 began with the emergence of the three first more known Sunni "Imams", Abu Hanifa (CE 699-767), Malik (CE 711-795), and Ash Shafei (CE 767-820), who had done a great effort to collect the authentic narrations of the Muslim prophet Muhammad (Hadiths) and / or to establish judicial rules and laws that could be adopted by the judges of their time. But just after their death, no negligible number of men of religion so-called "Sheikhs", recognized by their low level of knowledge and very limited intellectual ability, considered each Imam works as "Mathhab" (doctrine) and each of them chose to align himself with one of these Imams (at least four Sunni Imams). Thus, they defend him by repeating blindly his sayings, opinions and even fibs that were ascribed to him, considering that what they do as a science and called themselves "scholars!!!". In this way, the academic professor Mohamed Talbi (Talbi 2015b, 2016) called their strange science "the science of parrots". Moreover, at least some of these narrow-minded Sheikhs go even further in their stupidity for considering the Mathheb that they follow as the law of Allah "Shari'a" that must be applied in any time and in any Muslim societies. In the following I highlight at what degree their considerations are erroneous and represent a dangerous confusion.

First, the three first Imams themselves were against these considerations. For example Imam Malik, living in Madinah in Arabia, forbade Muslims to blindly repeat his explanations without identifying, understanding and accepting the corresponding arguments. Although his excellent knowledge and intelligence levels, he always tried to be prudent and often answer questions with "*I don't know*", or gave an argued explanation and added "*I am a human as you and I can make mistakes*". In addition, during his life Imam Malik wrote only one wildly influential book "*al-Muwatta*". It is a book compiling elements of selected Hadiths considered as veritable "Sahih" ones, as well as some general legal opinions mainly issued by the companions "Assahaba" of the prophet without entering in secondary legislative subjects. Owing to the importance of this book, three successive caliphs having tried to require to impose it (and the other Malik legal opinions) upon the entire Muslim world, but Malik refused to allow it every time and even in other world regions at the same time. For example in Iraq, during the Malki period, there was another Imam Jurist, Imam Abu Hanifa who had already established other rules and laws, some of them would be somewhat different from those

of Malik but more suitable to the general context and the particularities of Iraqi Muslim society. Hence, Imam Malik considers the differences in opinion among the jurists are a "mercy" for the Muslim people (for review see e.g., Haddad 2007). But unfortunately, after his death one of his students, contrary of the recommendation of Malik, wrote stupidly a more extensive book titled "al-Mudawwana", where he added secondary subjects with their corresponding rules and laws mainly adapted to constraints of the Muslim society during Malik era. Unfortunately, this book quickly became an essential reference source for the Malki school (Malki Mathheb !). I think that the whole content of this book, if really was declared by Imam Malik !!!, could be only a patrimonial book which represents a step in the history of the verdict and the jurisprudence of the Muslim society. Likewise, Imam Abu Hanifa believed that deduced laws cannot stay inert for too long, but they must represent a dynamic form. In addition, as an expert in Fiqh (jurisprudence), he considered the concept of using debate and logic as a cornerstone of his methodology for looking for rules and laws. Accordingly, the third Imam Ash Shafei continued to develop the legal reasoning: although he appreciated that of Malik and Abu Hanifa, he underlined the weaknesses inherent in both their school thought (for review see Khadduri 2011).

Second, the term "Shari'a" is mentioned only one time in the Qur'an, as being the *path* marked out by Allah, in what means "*Then we put you on the path of an order [a clear and perfect religion]- Follow it so and don't follow the passions of those who do not know*" [Qur'an, 45: 18]. Thus Shari'a is the eternal, perfect path of truth and justice that any human being can establish; but humans, particularly real scholars and Jurists, in a given period and place could strive to establish rules and laws as close as possible to the Path of God or Law of God or Schari'a, but without reaching it. For example, if the first four Imams had deduced some laws directly from the Islam essence such as the good morals that are clearly detailed in the Qu'aran and Hadiths, they had established many others through the application of uncertain methods of what they called Fiqh (jurisprudence) such as consensus of Imams and Sheikhs (ijma), analogical reasoning (qiyas), the customs of the local population (urf), and the personal opinion. In other words, the works of the first fourth Imams, as any human work, surely include mistakes and imprecision, beside the fact that they are evidently influenced by the political, and socio-cultural restraints of their periods. Hence, although the deduced rules and laws could be used by the Jurists during their era and place in a Muslim society after rectification if necessary, they must not be confused with the perfect

eternal Path of God (Shari'a). Accordingly, Abou El Fadl (2005), distinguished professor of Law, most noted for his scholarly approach to Islam from a moral point of view, wrote: *Fiqh, unlike Shari'a, is the human law - it is the human attempt to reach and fulfill the eternal law as it exists in God's mind. As such, fiqh is not itself divine because it is the product of human efforts.*

Third, by following forever one of the four Sunni Mathhabs, narrow-minded Sheikhs have indirectly called for the interruption of research on the interpretation of Qur'an text; while Allah orders all Muslims, particularly Great-Minds, to continually do "Ijtihad" (Arabic word that means the utmost effort an individual can provide in an activity) in the research of more adequate interpretations thanks to independent reasoning at anytime and anywhere. For example, He said what means " *(Here is) a Book (Koran) which We have sent down unto thee, full of blessings, in order that great minds think ,remember and interpret its verses*" [Qur'an, 38: 29]. In other words, by the narrow-mind thinking of these Sheikhs Islam was made stagnant and waning; while it is a dynamic, progressive religion that stays worthwhile at anytime and anywhere. I think that these great characteristics of Islam through its Holy Book the Qur'an could be due, among other things, to two pertinent facts: (1) the fact that Allah, in some situations or particular subjects, does not give a definitive law and / or do not give secondary details, is to offer Muslims the right to establish and choice rules and / or complementary details, which agree with the good of humankind at the individual and social levels in a given era, and (2) the fact that some signs relating to scientific concepts are masked within Arabic rhetorical modes, which reaches unusual creativity summit by presenting two possible meanings: a provisory superficial meaning and a real scientific meaning. Thus, the revelation of the real scientific meaning could be possible only from the time when the corresponding scientific concept is discovered by scientists (Chaabani, 2006).

On the other hand, at the beginning of what is considered as the rich era of Muslim civilization (the Golden Age: from about CE 850 to 1400), given the wrong considerations of narrow-minded Sheikhs and the fact that the fourth Sunni Imam, Ibn Hanbal (CE 780-855), avoided the use of personal opinion and critical thinking, an opposed react was emerged within a group of thinkers called "Mu'tazilites". They were known by the power of their reasoning and logic and by their spiritual faith based on the reality of Allah, They were considered as theological rationalists. For example, working to resolve the theological problem of evil, their reasoning is based, among other things, on the fact that since God is Just and Wise, He cannot command what is contrary to

reason or act regardless of the good of His creatures (see Fakhry 1983; Martin 2013). Although Mu'tazilites were successful in the objective review and correction of several traditional considerations, they uselessly evoked some metaphysical subjects related to Islam such as the fact that they do not accept to consider the Qur'an as uncreated and co-ancient with God, asserting that if the Quran is the word of God, logically God must have preceded his own speech. However, Imam Ibn Hanbal advocated strongly the opposite opinion that, for him, represents the truth ! But I believe that anyone can arrive at the absolute truth relating to this sort of useless metaphysical subjects.

Since several real Muslim Scholars emerged and flourished. They excelled in the first steps of development of several sciences such as physics, medicine and mathematics. At the same time, they presented original contributions in social sciences and the humanities particularly in philosophical and religious subjects. Therefore, they reached a high rank of the Freedom of Muslim Thought thanks to their scientific objectivity and the ripeness of their talent and wisdom. As examples of these great eminent Muslim scholars I can cite Abu Bakr Al-Razi (CE 854 – 925), Ibn Sina (CE 980 – 1037), Al-Ghazali (CE 1058 – 1111), Ibn Rushed "Averroès" (CE 1132 – 1198), and Ibn Khaldun (CE 1332 – 1406) (see Saliba 1994).

For example, Al-Ghazali, although he was essentially a theologian, a mystic and a jurist, he had well taken cognizance of Philosophy and sciences of his epoch making for the first time a real clear distinction between philosophy and sciences such as mathematics and medicine. Moreover, although he had fought strongly against uncertain philosophical approaches (often leading to atheism), he could be considered among the eminent philosophers of his era: in fact he excelled in the study of several philosophical subjects such as that of the faith. He defined the latter as "*a light ejected by Allah into chest*". He considered that each cult has what is visible (the peel), and what is inwardly (the interior which represents the essence). In this way, he severely criticized narrow-minded Sheikhs who focused on formalities and secondary useless details "peels" often incorrectly made-up and / or falsely allocated to previous Imams, and, therefore, he refused that the ownership of the Muslim thought would be in the hands of these narrow-minded Sheikhs. He considered that the society would be committing a sin if they neglect sciences such as mathematics and medicine having an evident positive impact on the society. Hence, he advised students to study a science such as medicine instead of their indulgence in useless secondary variable points in the jurisprudence. (see Al-Ghazali 2003; 2005).

I can also cite the great Muslim scholar Ibn Rushed "Averroes" who, although in agreement with a lot of Al Ghazali opinions and conclusions, was especially against the exaggerated attack of Al-Ghazali on philosophy. This is demonstrated in his most important original philosophical work "*Tahafut al-tahafut*" (The Incoherence of the Incoherence), in which he defended philosophy against the claims of Al-Ghazali in his "*Tahafut al-falasifa*" (The Incoherence of the Philosophers). For Averroes, there is no conflict between religion and philosophy, believing rather that they were just different ways of reaching the same truth, and consequently, there is no incompatibility between religion and philosophy when both are properly understood (see Averroes).

After this flourishing age, the Muslim nation weakened progressively, especially from the last period of the reign of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent periods of colonization of Arab countries. Consequently, the Muslim Thought became relatively "dormant" and all the stupid wrong considerations and confusions of extremist narrow-minded Sheikhs, presented above, have been unfortunately spread and persisted with many fibs up to now, and served by political-religious terrorists who at their turn made laws that they consider as belonged to the so-called Shari'a (the law of God). But these laws, evidently deviated from Islam, are the product of false interpretation of Qur'an verses evidently drawn off their original contexts and / or deduced from Hadiths often weak (false) and / or used out of context[12].

From all these analyses and explanations, it is clear that the roots of the political-religious terrorism is not in Islam itself, but absolutely in narrow-minded and opportunist Sheikhs through their wrong considerations and confusions represented (and represent) the most important potential seed of the political-religious terrorism, which can sprout anywhere when favorable conditions emerge.

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[12]*As Hadiths were not compiled since the beginning they represent until now a great problem: In fact, from about 11830 Hadiths transmitted verbally through about three generations, only about 4400 Hadiths were selected and considered as veritable "Sahih" ones. This shows, the non negligible number of evil people who had fabricated false Hadiths and the almost impossibility to transmit verbally and accurately thousands of adages (Hadiths) without making unintentional mistakes. Moreover, the so-called veritable ones were selected by honest and competent great Imams who are in any case humans and all human work could contain some mistakes and imprecision. So it is reasonable that any Muslim can, even among the so-called veritable Hadiths, do not take into account the ones who seems for him slightly incompatible with Koran and / or concern a particular situation strongly linked to the Arab society lived at the Prophet era, namely the very particular Hadiths would not used out of their original contexts.*

This does not deny the existence of many other Sheikhs "real Sheikhs" who could be considered as "Scholars" owing to their intellectual eminence and their honest attempts to be as close as possible to the real essence of Islam such as the philosopher Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (CE 1838-1897) (Persian from Afghanistan), and his student the Egyptian religious scholar Muhammad 'Abduh (CE 1849-1905), who were both Muslim religious reformers. Also, the Tunisian Muhammad-Tahar ibn Ashur (CE 1879 - 1973), a judge and a prolific writer and author on the subject of reforming Islamic education and jurisprudence. Among his several books I can quote the greatest one composed of several tomes on Qur'anic exegesis, al-Tahrir wa'l-tanwir (see M. Nafi 2005). In the same epoch Muhammad Iqbal (CE 1877 – 1938), eminent Pakistani Scholar (poet, philosopher, and politician), proposed a modern reconstruction of religious thought in Islam pointing out that the classical schools (Mathhabs) were merely human constructions developed in the Middle Ages (Iqbal 2000).

Likewise, some contemporary Tunisian elites are in the process of participating in the reforming of Muslim thought and the revitalizing the real essence of Islam such as the eminent academic and writer Olfa Yousef who, in her book "*Shooq*" (Longing), has taken a new appropriate approach on the research of the spiritual and psychological dimensions of the acts of worship and their strong relationship with good morals (Yousef 2014), and the eminent academic and writer Mohamed Talbi who said "*All thought, which is not object of reflection and questioning, and which is not asked from a perspectivist angle and a futuristic point of view, is a dead thought. And thinker does not kill, but it must be always ready to be killed. At this moment, he will be free*" (Talbi 2015a).

Planned solutions to fight intellectually against terrorism in the long-term

On the basis of the major initial roots of the political-religious terrorism, revealed above, I can present briefly some solutions that could be planned to neutralize this sort of terrorism at its roots in the long term:

 -The first step must be done at the international and / or national level (s) by establishing a real Great Research Center of Islam in which academic professors and young researchers will be recruited after a meticulous and strict competitive

examination: they must be known by their good morals and their freedom of thought. Namely they must not be involved in any religious ideology and any commitment in political parties. Moreover, the academic professors must be Great Minds: eminent specialists at the international level in one of the scientific field (such as physics, mathematics, genetics……) or in human and social sciences (such as Anthropology, Arab literatures, history, history of Islam….) and interested in the research on Islam subjects. Hence we must eradicate one of the erroneous stupid rules established by narrow-minded opportunist Sheikhs who consider that only themselves can speak about Islam or do research on the different aspects of Islam; while the reality could be the contrary. In fact, these so called Sheikhs are often unqualified to accomplish any deep study that aims to establish new more convincing interpretations of Qur'an verses because they are unaware of scientific fields; while data belonged to many principal sciences (sciences and human sciences) are more and less existed or signaled within extraordinary Arabic rhetorical modes in the Qur'an text. Even eminent scientific researchers are unqualified to interpret all Koran verses, but only verses on subject related to their specialty and ability (Interpretation of only Qur'an verses related to a determined subject: *Al-tafssir Al maoudhou'i*) (Chaabani 2006). The history of Muslim thought, which were presented and discussed briefly above, may serve as a better platform from it innumerable subjects of research would be started in the future "Great Research Center of Islam".

 - A second necessity to review the statute and the objectives of all Institutes of religion related to the study of the different aspects of Islam. Radical changes must be done on the classic strategy of teaching and on the choice of teaching fields and related programs. These changes must be in agreement with results and conclusions of the deep studies that will be accomplished in the future Great Center of Islam. Moreover, these entire academic and non academic Institutes must be continually controlled by the government and the teachers must be selected on the basis of strict criterions such as those presented above. While waiting for the first batch of students graduated from these restructured institutions, current Imams of Mosques must be reselected.

 - What is more, we must stop problems emanating from the so-called "Fatwa". In fact, this Arabic term means a simple opinion, but men of religion had given it an authoritarian meaning. For them it means a religious legal opinion issued by one of them called "Mufti". I believe that it's a crying shame that in the 21st century we accept that someone appointed by himself or by the government for sign instead of Allah a

religious legal decision on complex and thorny subjects. Although the current role of Mufti in Tunisia is limited and mainly symbolic, it would be replaced by that of a consultative national council composed by Great Minds.

Prediction of a third final stage of the Tunisian Revolution

Finally, as I have signaled above the current second stage of the Tunisia revolution would be relatively long as much as no improvement was achieved particularly at the level of social justice and economy. However, concerned the intellectual fight against terrorism, although only some of the immediate measures, proposed above, were already adopted, any solution was envisaged for long-term. In any case my optimism rests in my belief in the infinite possibilities of the great Tunisian people, particularly the elite (artists, writers, journalists, academic researchers….), to continue to fight intellectually against the political-religious terrorism: First, they can try to drive the government to plan to accomplish other envisaged measures and solutions. Second, they continue to take part, through their intellectual and artistic product, in the reconstruction and the reviving of the real essence of Islam. I think that such participations were already started softly predicting a possible development of a gentle intellectual movement "The Movement of Free Muslim Thought". This together with an evident improvement of the economy and the social justice will mark a crowning third final stage of the Tunisian revolution "The Free, Youth Revolution", which was (and is) object of pride not only for Tunisians but for the whole humanity. Among other things, this intellectual movement will enable the anxious and betrayed youth to regain their spiritual and psychological poise, and break the chains by which political-religious ideologies have closed their minds. Therefore, they will retrieve and benefit from their mind as free as it had been originally given by God.

This freedom of thought cannot be separated from the human freedom as a whole (the mental-physical freedom) that gone, throughout human history, by continual attempts of violation by men themselves such as some of who have power. Hence, several Great Minds, known by their remarkable humanism, down the ages have expressed their astonishment towards this sort of abuse such as Omar ibn al-khattab (636-644), one of the most powerful and influential Muslim caliphs in history, through his saying: "*Since when do you have enslaved people, although their mothers were procreated them free?*". Or, later in 1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, known as one of the

most influential thinkers during the 18th-century European Enlightenment period, wrote "*Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains*". Later on, the great Tunisian poet Abu al-Kacem Chabbi (1909-1934) described, in one of his wonderful poems, this precious freedom and encouraged Tunisians to refuse strongly all sort of infringement of their dignity and freedom (motivating them indirectly to revolt against the colonialism already stated during his era).

Speaking to Tunisians and intending to be heard by all human beings he said:

You are created in complete liberty like a nice breeze…
and free like the morning light in its sky.
You sing like a bird where you threw and recite what God has inspired in you.
You play between morning roses and enjoy with the light when and where you see it.
You walk, as you desired between meadows and pick roses from hills in God's mounds.
Son of existence, as that God has created you……. and, in the universe, this life has left you……why do you accept the ignominy of restrictions and to bend over for those who have enslaved your forehead?
Get up and walk for life………life does not wait for those who slept
Don't be afraid from what is behind the mounds….. there is only morning brightness in its boyhood
Towards the light, the light is soft and beautiful…….towards the light……. the light is the shade of God
(These verses were selected from the same poem and translated by myself from Arabic) (see Chabbi)

Likewise, the eminent contemporary Tunisian journalist and poet Sghair Oueled Hmid (born 4 April 1955 for leaving us forever 5 April 2016) in his following magnificent verses he expressed (on behalf of Tunisians), his (their) deeper love of the country and the imperative need to fight strongly against those who try to deprive him (Tunisians) of his (their) freedom and dignity. In other words he united the deep love of the country with that of freedom and dignity, and he forecasted the Tunisian revolution before its emergence:

We love the country as any one does not love the country…in the morning, the evening, before the morning, after the evening, and Sunday.
And if they killed us as they killed us…
And if they dislodged us as they dislodged us…
We returned raiders to this country….
And trees returned to our territory …
And the moon returned to our nights….and the martyr shouted…
Peace…peace on who resisted.

(Translated by myself from Arabic)

Dedication:

This work is dedicated to the
free-brave youth of the Tunisian Revolution
and to the
memory of all Tunisian martyrs

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