

Religious discourse in Islam and elsewhere: What speech at the dawn of the 21st century?

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ABSTRACT

We are interested here in religious discourse in Islam and elsewhere in other religions and in other places (India, China, the West and others), as a lesson or course given orally in front of an audience.

We therefore immediately rule out the Muslim preaching on Friday or the speech in Church on Sunday, which has different meanings and objects.

Indeed, the speech, as an optional course, must have a certain number of characteristics to be listened to, understood and integrated into the daily conduct of the faithful. It should not consist of delivering incomprehensible text. It would be even more dangerous if it is not based on truths demonstrated in harmony with the development of knowledge and knowledge: dangerous for those who know and who will distance themselves from the people of discourse and also for those who do not know not and who will be pushed a little further into ignorance and credulity.

This work is not intended to make any judgment on the substance of the discourse as it is currently given in places of worship; on the contrary, it offers a method and “tips” for developing and reading the speech. However, it provides guidance on content when the context is that of multicultural and multi-religious societies.

We warn, however, against boring repetitive speeches which alienate the believer from the priest giving the speech.

Keywords: religious discourse, preaching, Islam, Christianity, faith, conviction.

Introduction

Religion is part of the lives of several hundred million people on our planet (Muslims, Christians, Buddhists or other pagan religions). Everyone believes in a Supreme Being, founder and creator of everything. Within religions, meaning is experienced and acted upon before being formulated into rational discourse. This is why we can add that faith is tested but not proven. It is not by showing that one goes to the mosque or to church that one proves one's deep faith in God; and it is not because we say our prayers at home that we do not have faith. It should also be noted that religious practice is punctuated by symbolic acts such as prostration (act of submission), the voice in reciting the Text or the raised hand (gesture of imploration, request or recognition of the Greatness of the Whole Powerful).

The religious universe thus appears as a symbolic universe which instructs the faithful from their senses and their entire body; these symbols allow the faithful to concentrate, to get closer to the Superior World, an invisible world, unrepresentable, untouchable, and inaccessible by the body. In fact, religions connect man to an invisible, inaccessible and indescribable reality, a reality fundamentally different from the perceptible reality that he experiences on a daily basis, a different and unreal reality; the language that religions use to talk about it is that of symbols different from everyday language. They have no other resource than this mediation of the symbol to make us close and sensitive to the inaccessible (Conference of French Bishops; the symbolic dimension of religious discourse).

Religious discourse is present in various forms and in various places. It can also be aimed at various types of populations:

- The faithful,
- Those we want to attract,
- iii) adults,
- iv) the youngest: Those who develop religious discourse can be: has in dedicated places (recognized places of worship),
- α) has in dedicated places (recognized places of worship),
- β) in authorized specific spaces (places of incarceration, authorized private schools, public spaces). This speech can take the form of a course, a sermon, a call, such as a call for contributions for example or a simple call to “discuss life here below”. But it can also be integrated into a school curriculum, as in the Maghreb where Koranic schools, existing well before decolonization, were considered a tool for strengthening national and convictional Identity and a bulwark against colonial assimilation. The introduction of religious education into official school curricula responds, in part, to this concern for identity and conviction. Deep reforms are starting to be decided here and there, particularly in Morocco. Thus, Sara Doublier (?) notes that in Morocco Islamic education is now replaced by “religious education” in school programs upon direct instruction from Mohammed VI (The king, considered in Morocco as the commander of believers and descendant of the prophet Mahomet has been leading a vast overhaul of the religious field in Morocco for more than ten years. Amine Belghazi (?) adds that: the King gave his instructions on the need to revise teaching programs and manuals in religious education, both in public schools and in private education. or the establishments of original education, in the sense of giving great importance to education in the values of tolerant Islam, within the

framework of the Sunni Maliki rite, which advocate the middle ground, moderation, tolerance and cohabitation with different human cultures and civilizations.

Religious discourse, which has existed for a long time in various forms, attempts to strengthen the religious conviction of the faithful, and attempt to awaken that of everyone. The speech does this by recalling :

- i) The symbolism, in particular of the gesture,
- ii) Tradition (the lives of the prophets),
- iii) The rules of the 'practice' of faith as formulated by the great masters who, in their time, reflected, analyzed and specified the most 'adequate' way of drawing closer to the Lord through the acts of life common, by conduct in society, by the intimate and discreet actions of the believer, by the relationship with the Other. The discourse also does this by instructing the faithful on the reading of the revealed texts.

Religious discourse is complex: it must find harmony between the real and the unreal, between the material and the spiritual, between what we see and what we can only imagine; in any case it cannot reflect the contradiction between two worlds, so different, otherwise it would appear incoherent, or even unacceptable. Thus, if a speech evokes a flat earth around which the sun and the planets revolve, whereas it is demonstrated that the earth is not flat and that it is it which revolves around the sun like the other planets of the solar system , then those who know, convinced that they have neither the right nor the possibility of correcting the speaker, will logically (and peacefully) generalize ignorance to all preachers and move away from the place of worship . Those who do not know will be plunged a little more into ignorance, convinced that the

speaker is the one who knows, therefore who tells the truth. It is useful for me to recall a little anecdote; we were on a pilgrimage to Mecca the guide speaking to the whole group in the bus states that there would be a kind of flash or ray of light which goes from the Kaaba towards the sky, a ray which cannot be cut or crossed by nothing built by Man; I didn't want to react on the bus so as not to embarrass him; Arriving at a place of rest, I took him aside and said to him: “dear sir, if this ray existed it would have been discovered by NASA or the Russian equivalent in their travels to space; the gentleman replied to me: “sir, it’s physics, you can’t understand; I did not dare to tell him that I hold two doctorates, one of which is in physical sciences.” He was convinced that he was telling the truth; he took me away from his speech; he has not shaken my faith! In reality, the religious discourse conveyed in many communities, particularly Muslim ones, has not integrated the essential distinctions resulting from modernity, notably the respective specificities of the scientific approach and the religious approach to the realities of this world. We need only cite two examples:

- ii) The complexity of the cosmos which is beginning to be explained by the development of space technology and cosmological theories but which still raises the question of the Origin. If a religion recognizes the legitimate autonomy of the sciences and respects it, it at the same time affirms the autonomy and originality of its own discourse and thereby renounces its claim to omniscience and can thus enter into the dialogue of modernity. This is not often the case. This is unfortunately what those who maintain the confusion of the areas of intervention (that of spirituality, immaterial, above and that of science, physical, material) refuse and misunderstand the symbols by making a reductive and

impoverishing reading of them. . It will suffice for us to mention here, for the Muslim religion, the example of the interpretation of verse 6 of sura 23 in particular of the expression "malakat aimanoukoum" interpreted as "slave acquired by war, raid or fortune». i) natural disasters explained by science but considered by ancient societies as signs of the wrath of God and the complexity of the cosmos which begins to be explained by the development of space technology and cosmological theories but which always raises the question of the Origin. If a religion recognizes the legitimate autonomy of the sciences and respects it, it at the same time affirms the autonomy and originality of its own discourse and thereby renounces its claim to omniscience and can thus enter into the dialogue of modernity. This is not often the case. This is unfortunately what those who maintain the confusion of the areas of intervention (that of spirituality, immaterial, above and that of science, physical, material) refuse and misunderstand the symbols by making a reductive and impoverishing reading of them. . It will suffice for us to mention here, for the Muslim religion, the example of the interpretation of verse 6 of sura 23 in particular of the expression "malakat aimanoukoum" interpreted as "slave acquired by war, raid or fortune" . We thus reinforce, under the pretext of tradition, an 'advantage' tolerated in a time of another time and we forget that the universal right of man to existence has definitively replaced, in modern societies, the right of servitude from man to man and that man is only a servant if he had to be, in any case, only of the Almighty and not of his fellow man. We also do not understand that God has authorized us in Islam to have up to four wives by explicitly adding that if we cannot be equal with our wives, then we are only allowed to have one wife. But the exegetes, wanting to please the leaders of the time, interpret the verse in another way. The example of verse 9 of sura 39 on the 'scholars' is also edifying. Some preachers explain that this is the science of canon law, of sharia and that everything else is just a parody of science; others, more "tolerant" think that the Text refers to scholarly believers whose research serves the Umma! What then can we say about those who advance medicine for all of Humanity, including believers? We use their discoveries (car, telephone, television) and tell ourselves that they serve the Umma. We could then ask them to use the camel like the prophet and to remove the tiles adorning their living room and replace it with a blanket.

Wikipedia (8) tells us that the training of priests takes place in a seminar which ensures the spiritual, intellectual and human training of candidates for the priesthood. The training of priests is organized into three main stages of training called cycles. The first cycle, carried out over two years, mainly includes fundamental philosophical and biblical training. The seminarians stay on the seminary premises all week and return to their families or an integration parish at the end of the week. The second cycle, carried out over three years, combines training in fundamental theology, pastoral theology, moral theology, and the Bible with compulsory pastoral insertion at the end of the week. The third cycle is almost exclusively devoted to pastoral integration, but candidates for the priesthood can continue specific training modules or continuing education.

But it is not only the seminary that offers training for the priestly priesthood. Future priests wanting a more intellectual and different training can take courses in a Catholic university (such as those of Lyon, Paris, South-West, or even the Pontifical

Gregorian University of Rome), or in one of the two universities of State which has in France a faculty of Catholic theology (the University of Strasbourg and the University of Metz by agreement and sending of the bishop, while living in a university seminary. The knowledge is the same as in seminary, but much more in-depth and worked. It is the same number of compulsory minimum years: 6 in the ordinary. The studies themselves last five years and lead to a canonical baccalaureate in theology. Seminarian after 5 years (6 if he has completed a year of propaedeutic), is ordained deacon. He carries out his diaconal internship in a parish, or in a diocesan service, usually for a year.

We see that priests, just like Muslim preachers, do not receive any scientific training! This is a deficiency that should be corrected.

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However, in the current era in the Muslim world, there are still ulama and imams who have no skills in science, history, anthropology, philosophy, and who intervene in multiple fields of knowledge. We have just noted that the priests of the Church do not possess the scientific knowledge that would allow them to go further in their discourse. Muslim religious discourse cannot fall back into the space of theology. The preparation of the speech does not involve people of knowledge: physicists, sociologists, linguists. The one who prepares the religious discourse thinks that he has the capacity to understand the Text, but, more seriously, to interpret certain passages from the sciences, from sociology,

history. L. Addi (2) states: "Muslim religious discourse is theology ('ilm al kalam), but also profane knowledge derived from theology and conveyed by collective representations. With two verses and a hadith, any Muslim can produce a religious discourse on politics, economics, psychology, etc. This speech had its cognitive function in the Middle Ages and fulfilled a social function. It no longer has it today, because it is contradicted by daily experience." The author further notes: "Muslim religious discourse has been caught in an ideological fever for at least two centuries, reacting with verbal violence to social developments, which attests to a deep cultural crisis." But religious discourse is also used through school textbooks in countries where Islam is considered the "state religion".

School teachers, and even middle and high school teachers, are not trained in theology; what speeches will they have for their students?

In this regard, D. El-Mestari (3) examines religious discourse in school textbooks in Algeria and asks the question of whether school discourse is not ultimately a mobilizing and ideological discourse. Abdeljalil Akkari (4) analyzes the educational systems in the Maghreb and points to the Arabization of teaching and the introduction of religious education. M. Charfi (5), presents a liberal point of view on Islam reconciled with the concepts of law and the State; he writes in particular: "Islam is first and foremost a religion, not a policy, a question of conscience and not of belonging, an act of faith and not of force".

We will retain from these analyzes and these reminders, to which we will return in more detail in the following paragraphs, the difficulties of dissociating "ordinary classical education" (we use here

the expression classical education in the sense of those who do not know?” (الذين يعلمون والذين ال يعلمون) (قل هل يستوي الذين يعلمون والذين ال يعلمون). (قل هل يستوي)

Western systems) and religious education in Societies where a fight for independence would have been almost impossible without an anchor in popular conviction and a forced and temporary “identity withdrawal”. This difficulty is amplified by two factors which have a very heavy weight: i) popular culture, tradition and religious belief before and during the colonial period and ii) the influence of fundamentalist groups, particularly since the end of the 1970s and the 80s and 90s. Religious discourse has thus entered de facto into school. The question would then be to know if the proponents of these discourses have the adequate training both in the deep knowledge of the revealed Text, in the educational competence of transmitting popularized Knowledge for very young audiences but also the capacity for openness to spirit to spread a “moderate” message, an intelligent message that prepares the child to live in harmony with a “new” world of globalization, multiple and numerous interconnections, challenges, hopes, but also conflicts. We will also note the attempts of North African thinkers on questions of faith, but also the separation of the spiritual and governance.

Religious discourse, why

As we have just mentioned, the main objectives of religious discourse are to comfort the faithful in their faith, to instruct them in the practice of their exercise, to show them how to be in harmony between their intimate convictions and their behavior. in his environment (spiritual, material, social), to warn him of the potential dangers which may await him and distract him from his conviction and his faith. Religious discourse can also claim to encourage the faithful in the search for Knowledge and Knowledge in accordance with verse 9 of Sura 39 which states: “Are they equal, those who know and those who do not know?” (الذين يعلمون والذين ال يعلمون) (قل هل يستوي الذين يعلمون والذين ال يعلمون).

Religious discourse, a complementary engine for strengthening faith

As we mentioned in our introduction, religions connect Man to an inaccessible reality (an unreality that is difficult to perceive) by using a particular language of symbols and parable, a language that the average believer does not naturally master. Religious discourse as a complementary engine for strengthening faith must help and guide him in this understanding. This discourse must, however, integrate and transmit the fact that the representations provided by a whole range of literary or iconographic imagery, which excite our imagination, cannot be read at face value. The use of the siwak stick to clean one's teeth and mouth at the time of the Prophet, to take only this example, should not be understood as an obligation as such but the symbol of cleanliness whose first consequence is well-being and individual health. In the age of the electric toothbrush, we will only remember this second reading of the symbol and we will knowingly neglect a first degree reading; because by taking the religious expression at face value, we confuse the sign (the siwak stick) with the reality that it designates.

(Clean your teeth and mouth) and we operate, often unconsciously, in the opposite direction.

Religious discourse must even go further in reflection: it must make the faithful understand that the idea of creation (how complex), as an act of God, is permanent. It is “eternally present” and cannot be reduced to a specific place or a given moment because space and time, in the spiritual, have other

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In the twentieth and first century man lives under the weight of the ills of contemporary society such

as materialism, the strengthening of egocentrism, the weakening of mutual aid, the perversity of morals, the almost omnipresent aggressiveness and the deterioration of the quality of life. But it also has hyperconnectivity (we are connected to our phone all the time even when we are at a table with others or when we are in a group or family; everyone is connected regardless of the discussions).

Furthermore, religious discourse should help to bring the faithful to bear the attacks they suffer daily but, above all, to embark on another way of living and to build, with Others, a better world of peace, respect, of understanding, love and hope.

In the twenty-first century, Science and technology have transformed Societies which now live in an open world where traditions, cultures, beliefs and convictions coexist in a concrete or virtual way. Religious discourse must adapt to this and definitively abandon its old forms. He must now question how to push the faithful to integrate into these pluralities, living together, accepting the Other as they are, in their difference, in their right to live. It must now focus on making room for the Other, this Other who shares our space of life and Being. This other who does just as much as anyone, who modifies, sometimes in ways unconsciously, the World below where everyone seeks their place.

Religious discourse: enlightenment for the practice of faith

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Religious discourse: enlightenment for the practice of faith

Modern societies, particularly the Muslim community, face a real challenge. Many practice religious rites without realizing their true spiritual essence: we do the five prayers of the day almost out of habit; in reality, we perform a ritual; how many are there who achieve sufficient concentration, detachment (in the space of an instant) from material life and therefore who truly pray, in the full sense of the term? It is essential that we take awareness of the difference between ritual as a set of material acts or gestures and its spiritual value; it is also necessary that a human culture be formed among the faithful which realizes the true value of religion in mutual understanding and respect for the freedoms of each person. Religious discourse must aim to clarify and reinforce the spiritual essence of rites and acts of practicing faith. This is a very complex task that the speaker must carefully prepare before reading his speech in front of the faithful who consider him to be one who knows. Heavy is the responsibility for those who had the courage to document themselves, to prepare and to agree to expose their way of understanding and interpreting.

In this work of “learning” practices, religious discourse must not lose sight of the fact that practice is only practical and therefore does not represent the faith in its entirety; it represents, at most, a door to meditation, a true expression of faith. Let us take an example to clarify: when performing ablution, it is commonly accepted that one must wash one's hands three times; the question is whether ablution is void if one has only done it twice. Is the reality of the act in the three or in the “complete”? Another example will help us to go further in the reflection: certain schools recommend that the posture during prayer consists of crossing the arms in front of you; would prayer be void if we leave them straight in front of the body? And we can go further in this questioning: would prayer be a set of acts constituting a ritual, or a space-time of meditation and concentration to commune with the Lord?

In terms of the Muslim religion, many faithful know little about the practice of faith and rituals; However, it should be noted here that this practice has not always been “specifically clarified” in the Sacred Text. The great exegetes (the four schools of Islam), after reading the Koran, felt the need to clarify, specify and formalize the practice of faith and thus develop a guide to rituals in accordance with the Revealed Text. This part of the gigantic work of the exegetes must be used in religious discourse to enlighten the faithful on the practice of their faith; the revealed Text must, however, remain the first reference. Knowledge of societal, scientific and technological developments would allow the person writing the speech to rule out inconsistencies and contradictions. Christian exegetes should also draw inspiration from these societal transformations to push the faithful towards abandoning individualism, refusing the other who is from another culture or another religion; to push

it on the contrary towards interconvictionality, towards the preservation of environments for future generations.

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These examples show us that the speaker must be very careful in preparing the religious discourse, particularly for this “learning the practice” aspect; he must refer to the texts and mention his source for any assertion; but he must also take care to prune the points “superfluous” to the exercise of faith.

In terms of the Muslim religion, many faithful know little about the practice of faith and rituals. However, it should be noted here that this practice has not always been “specifically clarified” in the Sacred Text. The great exegetes (the four schools

of Islam), after reading the Koran, felt the need to clarify, specify and formalize the practice of faith and thus develop a guide to rituals in accordance with the Revealed Text. This part of the gigantic work of the exegetes must be used in religious discourse to enlighten the faithful on the practice of their faith; the revealed Text must, however, remain the first reference. Knowledge of societal, scientific and technological developments would allow the person writing the speech to rule out inconsistencies and contradictions. Christian exegetes should also draw inspiration from these societal transformations to push the faithful towards abandoning individualism, refusing the other who is from another culture or another religion; to push it on the contrary towards interconvictionality, towards the preservation of environments for future generations.

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Religious discourse: conviction and social life

In certain writings, it is postulated that Islam has isolated itself and stood back from reality – Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd) (?). Some transform this simple postulate into an indisputable truth and launch into the interpretation of all social, economic, political, cultural and moral problems..., concluding that only the return to “historical” Islam and Shari'a is likely to resolve them without worrying about why, how and when we moved away from the reality of Islamic societies. This is not specific to Islam and can be found in other beliefs.

In lived reality, “Muslim” societies in particular have definitely moved from autarky to the globalization of trade, to technological developments of which they are only consumers, to the Internet, to telephones, smartphones and satellite television; these tools now allow everyone to be informed, to communicate, to compare, to question without fear and even to give opinions on any current subject, including religion.

Enlightened religious discourse must be very careful in addressing societal problems, which are numerous in this case, particularly in urban areas where a significant number of people live, in difficult conditions, confronted with attacks of all kinds and of all kinds. sources. It must guide the faithful towards a life of understanding, sharing and mutual aid. He must show him, through examples, as clear and understandable as possible, how faith will give him the strength to overcome the many and varied obstacles of daily life.

The speaker must first of all find out about the reality experienced in the geographical space where the place where the speech will be given is located; inform yourself as completely as possible, but also understand the context in which the population to whom the projected speech is addressed lives. This understanding obviously requires discussions with informed personalities.

The speaker must obviously avoid personal analyses with hasty or superficial conclusions that are too often disconnected from the reality of the situation ground. He must also avoid the temptation to “reread” without questioning, without intelligent adaptation, speeches written centuries ago.

Religious discourse for children: the family and school textbooks

In Christian societies, the child is generally “baptized” as soon as he is birth. The meaning of baptism is to move into life in God. He makes thus a rite of sacrament from birth to Christian life: marked with sign of the cross, immersed in water, the newly baptized is reborn to a life new.

In Muslim societies, we evoke God (Allah) at the

first meeting with the newborn. It is generally the grandparents who are responsible for saying in the child's ear: Allah Akbar (God is great) as a sign of gratitude to the Lord but also in the hope that the little being gets used to it and becomes serious within himself. -intimates this call to God, which will later be the call to prayer. Later, the boy will be entitled to the circumcision ceremony.

Israelite baptism is different for boys and girls: i) for boys, circumcision consists of the total or partial removal of the foreskin, leaving the glans of the penis exposed; the ceremony thus takes place on the eighth day of the birth in the presence of a quorum of ten adult men necessary for the recitation of the prayers; ii) for the girl, it consists of a naming ceremony one month after the birth of the child at home or in the synagogue. After baptism, the family will not feel able to continue the religious education of the child who will be sent to Koranic school, catechism or any other place that can instruct them in religious matters. Of course, this still fragile being is already "oriented", without his consent and by his family "origin", towards a given religious conviction. Of course, this still fragile being will later be confronted with unavoidable questions, with choices, with the various pressures of his context, of the Family, of his friends, of Society in general. We could also ask ourselves the question of the situation of a child born in a non-believing family, of knowing whether he would be led to question himself one day about existence, about his origin, about beliefs.

Religious education in educational systems

In the Maghreb spaces: D. El-Mestari (3) examines a religious discourse in school textbooks in Algeria. For this, two main questions arise, namely: i) whether school discourse is of the educational and

cognitive type based on the principle of moral integration or whether it would, on the contrary, be a mobilizing and ideological discourse, ii) whether the content of the manuals specifically religious, educational and objective, or does it lead to a discourse where the ideological function of religion prevails over the rational and proven knowledge?

The author also notes the presence of content similar to those provided by traditional religious institutions (universities specializing in religious disciplines, training schools for imams or zaouïas), that is to say theological studies dealing with the Koran and the Sunnah (life of the Prophet). He deduces that these manuals "go so far as to present religion as closely linked to current social reality and interacting with the problems posed today on a global scale. According to these manuals, Islam is able to resolve individual, family, economic and political problems; it contributes to development, while co-existing with other religions and cultures, and encompasses all the values produced by human experience in the modern era."

Abdeljalil Akari (4) analyzes the place of Islam in educational systems in the Maghreb. He points to the Arabization of teachings and the introduction of religious education. According to the author: "Arabization was used by public authorities in the education system not only as a means of anchoring it in national identity but also as a measure aimed at satisfying religious and conservative circles." He also underlines that: "it is important to note that the three challenges (persistence of illiteracy, lack of professional prospects for young people, omnipresence of religion) are connected. They highlight an unfinished modernization torn between insertion into economic globalization and withdrawal into identity." He recalls that the impregnation of the

Maghreb educational systems by Islam seemed to take place without apparent tensions during the first periods of independence, particularly until the 1970s. He notes, however, that with the arrival of teachers from Egypt, often followers of the Muslim Brotherhood, the beginnings of a divide based on religious practice have emerged in the education system.

The three Maghreb countries reacted differently to this situation: from conciliatory, for Algeria and Morocco, too radical for Tunisia, which decreed a ban on wearing the veil at school. Mr. Charfi (5), for his part, presents a liberal point of view on Islam reconciled with the concepts of law and the State; he writes in particular: "Islam is first and foremost a religion, not a policy, a question of conscience and not of belonging, an act of faith and not of force". For the education system, the author questions the school and the subject taught in the last chapter of his work (entitled: "Education and modernity"). He notes, in conclusion that: "The Cultural policy should be oriented towards complete freedom of creation, greater encouragement of creators and more openness towards universal culture. And that: "Peace and harmony will reign between individuals and peoples when we have clearly separated politics and religion and when we have taught the foundations of this separation to our children."

Let us recall here that Arabic was established by the three independent states as the language of instruction both to compensate for the departure of French teachers but also to mark national identity and take note of the difference with the colonial system. However, and under various constraints, French is often maintained for a few hours in primary and secondary schools and specifically for

scientific disciplines at university.

Islam being decreed the state religion; religious instruction was introduced into the primary and secondary school programs. Algeria, which had a significant shortage of Arabic teachers, massively imported teachers, particularly from Egypt. These teachers, who had no knowledge of the local social context and many of whom were followers of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, believed their task was to Arabize and Islamize audiences "polluted" by the West.

On religious education in India

The Indian Union has more than one billion and 60 million inhabitants. This federal entity, independent for 57 years, allows a certain neutrality of the State in religious matters. The law authorizes denominations to set up educational institutions and manage them autonomously. Religious minorities are encouraged to found establishments and administer them in the manner that suits them. The constitutional text says nothing about the principles of public education, apparently for two reasons: (i) The instruction is not compulsory and (ii) This is an area devolved to the provinces (States) except for the higher level.

D. Heuzé (6) specifies: "The preamble to the Constitution defines secularism as the desire of the public authorities to respect and treat religions impartially, to prohibit discrimination linked to religion and to allow everyone access places of worship of "his choice". Conversions are authorized but practices of seduction through money or propaganda are prohibited. Activities offensive to religious sentiments are prohibited." In this system, the child therefore receives his religious education in his community. We can assume that the family,

social pressure (visible or supposed), submits to the common choice.

The child, upon becoming an adult, can hardly have other choices.

Religious education in China

In millennial China, religion is understood above all as a teaching and a process of education; the religious dimension and the educational dimension appear immediately inseparable and linked by the generic term “jiao” which encompasses them and which means both education and instruction. Religious practices are practiced in a cultural place where the community and the individual educate themselves by cultivating their relationship with the sacred; thus, instruction (understood as learning Knowledge) and religious education shapes, for the community, the barrier between the two equivalent states in West to education and ignorance (or illiteracy). We will also note that the individual is thus intimately linked to the community and education is itself linked to the sacred. In this regard, Zhe Ji (6) notes: “In Chinese educational practices and discourse, cosmology and religious ritual are in fact fundamental themes, themes whose mastery and use constitute a line of demarcation between barbarity and civilization, between mass and elite. The knowledge conveyed in the writings has a sacred character, and writing itself can become an object of worship.” The child, as a still fragile being, is taken care of in a comprehensive manner for his instruction and religious education through the practice of *ljiao*, a concept that is both religious and educational.

With the establishment of Christian schools in China and the political regulation of education, the rearticulating of religion, education and politics

(construction of schools with temple property which demonstrates the desire for a transformation of society by the State), then the modern crisis of education and religion, and finally attempts to modernize the education system in the 1980s, the dominant ideologies have undergone profound changes. To this end, Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer (2011) question whether religion “is called to become an alternative source of civility; one commodity among others on markets for culture and health products; or even a source of ethnic or national identity? ”.

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Religious education in Western societies

We will only discuss the French context here which could give an idea, certainly not complete but a fairly representative idea. J. Carpentier (2004) asks the main question falling squarely within the framework of this work:

“Does France learn about religion from the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen and from free, secular and compulsory education, from the Dreyfus Affair and from the Law of Separation of Churches and State to his children? ”. The author relates the evolution of school programs in the different primary and secondary cycles, the weight of the past and the present, the of conscience and the first measures of the decade 1980-1990 (the author reports on “the two debates: on the ignorance of history and the religious ignorance of young people”); he concludes with “the recent emergence, in France, of the teaching of religion in a secular approach”.

Thus the education system teaches religion and not religion; this aspect is left to the private institutions concerned. If the Church and the Synagogue do not pose any particular problem, the Mosque and the private schools which may be affiliated with it always give rise to lively debates generated by fears of radicalization induced by fundamentalist religious discourses.

From these analyzes and these reminders we will

remember the difficulties of dissociating "ordinary classical education" (we use here the expression classical education in the sense of Western systems) and religious education in Societies where a fight for Independence would have been almost impossible without an anchoring to popular conviction and a forced and temporary “identity withdrawal”.

This difficulty is amplified by two factors which have a very heavy weight: i) popular culture, tradition and religious belief before and during the colonial period and ii) the influence of fundamentalist groups, particularly since the end of the 1970s and the 80s and 90s. Religious discourse has thus entered de facto into the school. The question would then be to know if those responsible for these new discourses (the teachers) have the adequate training both in the deep knowledge of the revealed Text, and in the pedagogical skills of transmitting popularized Knowledge for very young audiences. But the question is also whether these new discourse leaders have the open-minded capacity to disseminate a “moderate” message, an intelligent message which prepares the child to live in harmony with a “completely different” world of globalization, multiple and numerous interconnections, challenges, hopes, but also conflicts. We will also note the attempts of North African thinkers on questions of faith, but also the separation of the spiritual and governance. Thinkers who are often criticized, misunderstood even by their communities.

Religious discourse for children and the concept of freedom of choice

International Convention on the Rights of the Child – UNICEF: it was adopted on November 20, 1989. It is the first legally binding international text enshrining all of the fundamental rights of the

child.

Article 1 of the Convention specifies that: For the purposes of this Convention, a child means any human being under the age of eighteen years, unless majority is attained earlier under the legislation governing him or her is applicable.

Article 5 states: States parties shall respect the responsibility, right and duty of parents or, where appropriate, members of the extended family or community, as provided for by local custom, guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to give him, in a manner which corresponds to the development of his capacities, the guidance and advice appropriate to the exercise of his rights recognized by this Convention. Article 12 states: States parties shall guarantee to a child who is capable of discernment the right to freely express his or her opinion on any matter affecting him or her, the child's opinions being duly taken into consideration having regard to his or her age and its degree of maturity.

The universal declaration of human rights:

Adopted in Paris (at the Palais de Chaillot) by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is defined in its preamble (8)

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