EDITORIAL

In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Languages vary according to the peoples and cultures that use them. This is one of the reasons that when and where two different cultures and languages come into contact, it proves inevitable to have translators and dictionaries who facilitate interactions. In this regard, ordinary languages can be translated by means of using either competent bilinguals, i.e., people who speak in two languages, or well-designed dictionaries.

Religion is another aspect of human life. Apart from some atheist peoples or tribes, e.g., in Africa, who apparently do not believe in any of the canonical religions, e.g., Islam or Christianity, a great majority of people in the world assert that they simply believe in a religion. Practicing the religion aside, most people are mono-religious, a term provisionally coined on analogy with mono-lingual. In contrast to bilingual and polyglots, on the linguistic level, there are no bi-/ or poly-religious peoples.

Not only languages but religions create serious problems for

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communication among the followers of certain religions. In this regard, brief or even extended dictionary definitions would barely do any good. To overcome such intra-/ or cross-religious problems, better and more well-designed dictionaries must be developed. A recent publication event is M. Numan Malkoc, and Peter Pikkert, A Comparative Dictionary of Religious Terms in Islam and Christianity (Ancaster, ON, Canada: Alev Books, 2020). An insightful, innovative, and thought-provoking publication in its own right, it shows that some religious terms and concepts are just roughly synonymous with one another across two religions. For example, the concept and practices of "fasting", "prayer", or "pilgrimage" are hardly one and the same in two religions. Parenthetically, the aforementioned dictionary deserves serious revision and several in-depth review articles.

A corollary of this point of departure is that perhaps it would be better to develop dictionaries of religious terms and their corresponding ritual practices is developing certain dictionaries for introducing the concepts and terms for various purposes and types of audience. On analogy with dictionaries in that some of them are designed for native-speakers and some for foreign learners, certain dictionaries must be developed for facilitating learning about the basic concepts and rituals of another religion. This is because some concepts, however simple and basic may seem, e.g., "tawhid", i.e., belief in the Oneness of the Almighty, sound very strange and incomprehensible for a Buddhist or Hindu. On the other hand, as basic dictionaries are developed for those who need much simpler initiation and introduction into another language, such dictionaries must be edited with regard to introducing Islam, and particularly

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Shiite Islam which is richer in concepts and rituals for others. Perhaps such initiatives would facilitate cross-religious understanding. A positive effect will be that the audience would not come up with a horrible and frightening picture of Islam, as manifested in the bloodbath committed by some extremists, e.g., ISIS fractions, in the name of Islam, as a Divine religion of mercy.

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