

The Muslim World League Dedicates International Museum to the Prophet's Life

Embracing Evolution in Islamic Art

A Short History of Islamic Art

Islamic Cultures Opening to Western Influences

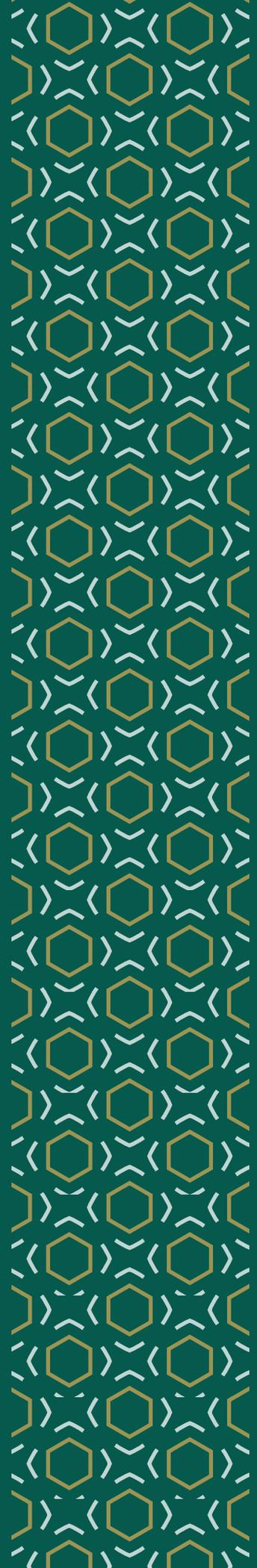
Islamic Art:

AN ENDURING LEGACY, A MODERN ATTITUDE





One of the pavilions in the Museum of the Life of the Prophet showcases the history of women in Islam and highlights the important role women played in the early days of Islam by spreading a message of truth and virtue. "



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The Muslim World League Journal

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Each year, the Muslim World League sponsors a robust international food basket program during the month of Ramadan. Ramadan is a time of spiritual purification, renewal of the individual, and heightened devotion and worship for Muslims around the world. One of the ways Muslims exemplify their heightened devotion is through charitable acts of service to the poor and needy.

So far, Muslim World League employees have distributed food baskets to thousands of families who have celebrated nightly break fasts throughout 30-day observance and might otherwise not have enough food to get through the month. These baskets are distributed to communities in need and include rice, sugar, oil, and other cooking essentials. In the last three years, the MWL has distributed more than 500,000 Ramadan food baskets in more than 30 countries.



Sudan



Jordan



Somalia



Niger



Benin



Nigeria



South Africa



Chad





Senegal



Mauritania



Uganda





Sure, it's art. But is it Islamic?

Muslim artists around the world are producing works drawing from their life experiences, their sense of the world and humanity, and the Islamic visual aesthetic that has surrounded them and spoken to them all their lives. Some of these artists produce works that are not immediately recognizable as Islamic, and yet the influence is clear.

We understand Islamic art as characterized by the absence of figures and the use instead of calligraphic, geometric and abstract floral patterns. Indeed, there is a tradition of aniconism in Islam that derives from the prohibition of idolatry and the belief that only God can create living forms. While there has been significant discussion among Muslim scholars over the centuries about what this means in practical terms, for those same centuries human and animal forms have been absent from Islamic buildings, ceramics, weavings, paintings and drawings.

In this issue, you will read about Muslim artists who are fusing the Islamic aesthetic with other influences to produce works that are unique. Are they Islamic? Yes and no. But they certainly are the product of the Islamic mind and spirit.

These works are the product of the increasing cultural interpenetration occurring in the world.

It is not a globalization of art; it is an openness and appreciation of the traditions and aesthetics of other cultures. This is not new in art, but it is accelerating.

You will also read about efforts of governments and the Muslim World League to bring worlds together through art. The United Arab Emirates, already home to the Louvre Abu Dhabi, will break ground soon on a new Guggenheim Museum on Saadiyat Island designed by Frank Gehry. The government of Saudi Arabia has put itself fully behind an explosion of popular culture in the country, including film, live performances and other attractions from overseas.

Amid all this energy and movement, there is still room for what is traditional in Islam, and we see it with the Muslim World League's launch of the Museum of the Life of the Prophet and Islamic Civilization in Madinah, Saudi Arabia, and its exhibition on Islam held in Taiwan, now home to more than a quarter million Muslims. And we cannot talk about contemporary Islamic art without discussing its roots and traditions, which we have done through a brief history of Islam art and an article on the venerable art of rug making.

- The Editors





Opening of the new International Museum of the Life of the Prophet and Islamic Civilization in Madinah.

The Muslim World League Dedicates International Museum to the Prophet's Life

The Museum of the Life of the Prophet was founded by the Muslim World League in early February to spread the message of Islam among people by using state-of-the-art technologies and displays and innovative programs. It is located next to the Prophet's Mosque in the Al Madinah Province of Saudi Arabia and will introduce visitors to all the prophets, to the study of the Holy Qu'ran and the Prophet's Sunnah, and to important recent authoritative documents in Islam, such as the Madinah Charter and the Makkah Document.

It will also support one of the goals of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: to enrich the experience of visitors and residents through opportunities to visit and appreciate rich cultural and heritage sites. Saudi Arabia is creating a host of projects as part of these efforts as it diversifies the economy, creates more cultural and entertainment opportunities and reduces the country's reliance on oil.

The Muslim World League has said that the museum aims to instill the spirit of love and



The Museum of the Life of the Prophet is the beginning of a series of Islamic museums that will be constructed and operated by the Muslim World League in capitals around the world. ”

- Prince Faisal Bin Salman

goodness and the meanings of mercy, humanity, moderation, tolerance and coexistence, as well as to spread the message of Islam.

Prince Faisal Bin Salman, emir of Madinah region and chairman of the Madinah Region

Development Authority, opened the exhibition and museum with the support of the Madinah Region Development Authority.

The exhibits use the latest technology to take viewers on a historic and spiritual journey of the Prophet’s life. It is dedicated to the history of the Islamic world and the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and open 24 hours a day.

The modern exhibit includes educational panoramas and theatres, the first of their kind, dedicated to portraying the life of the Prophet through a series of documentaries, virtual and augmented reality and 3D displays. Many of the Prophet’s personal possessions, including details of his furniture, clothing, footwear and even his comb, have been recreated from the historical record and bought back to life. The museum also showcases holographic technology, physical models supported by interactive technology, which take viewers on a spiritual and historical journey. Visitors can enjoy the exhibition in



Museum opening.

Arabic, English, French, Turkish, Indonesian, Urdu and Spanish.

During the opening, Prince Faisal said the Museum of the Life of the Prophet is the beginning of a series of Islamic museums that will be constructed and operated by the Muslim World League in capitals around the world.

The contents and collections of the exhibition and museum exemplify a historical legacy from which to spread understanding of the Prophet's message and his rich and fruitful life to all parts of the world to demonstrate the Prophet's exhortation to tolerance and moderation.

The integrated scientific and technical exhibition offers comprehensive and modern displays of the Islamic message and laws, as well as Islam's message of humanitarianism and faith.

Visitors can walk through 25 pavilions, view dozens of paintings and interactive displays, go through 350 educational and teaching methods that highlights the greatness of Islam and preserves the rights of non-Muslims, and appreciate more than 500 artifacts as they go through the museum that narrates the history of the Prophet's life in Makkah and Madinah. Moreover, visitors can also enter the Prophet's Mosque.

One of the pavilions in the Museum of the Life of the Prophet showcases the history of women in Islam and highlights the important role women played in the early days of Islam by spreading a message of truth and virtue. Women played a vital role in the life of the Prophet. The pavilion also promotes the importance of children in the life of the Prophet, giving accounts of how he played with them and the advice he gave on how to raise them.



Malaysian PM Muhyiddin Yassin, fourth from left, visits the International Museum of the Life of the Prophet Biography and Islamic Civilization in Madinah.



Jameel Art Prize Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London

Embracing Evolution in Islamic Art

Art plays a crucial role in promoting and expressing culture. It has a power to engage and inspire people whether it is from their native culture or not. For younger generations, art can inspire a deeper connection with their roots and cultural identity. As in many parts of the world, art in Islamic societies has seen notable change over recent years as societies evolve, merge, and interact as never before. This is led to a new era in Islamic art.

Islamic art has always followed a different tradition from the artwork produced in the West. It is rooted in a desire to honor and show deference to Allah. It eschews images of animals

and people, favoring recurrent motifs and patterns to symbolize the infinite nature of Allah. Some artists would even introduce small errors in their repetitions purely to show humbly that only Allah can produce perfection.

In the contemporary period, the boundaries of Islamic art have expanded to include works both from artists in the Middle East and those with roots in the region who form part of the global Islamic diaspora. This new generation of artists draws inspiration from their own cultural traditions. They incorporate imagery, techniques and ideas from earlier periods, repurposing Islamic art into a platform for their own personal

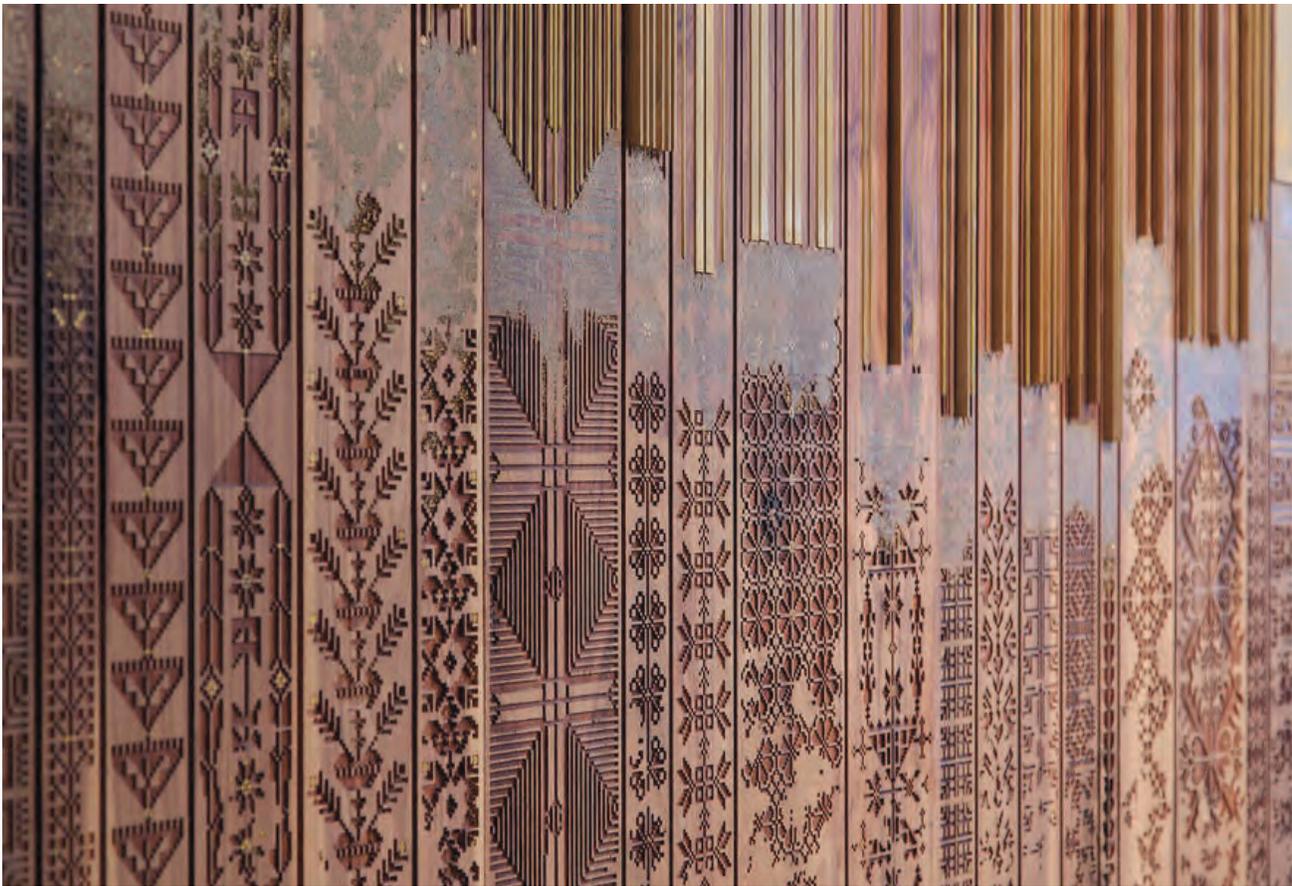
expression. In this way contemporary Islamic art is less constrained by traditional intentions.

In the series “How Iraqi Are You?” artist Hayv Kahraman tells an autobiographical story of her own experience growing up in an Islamic family, intertwined with her journey to re-learn her mother tongue as she seeks to impart her Arabic heritage to her daughter. The painting *The Translator* forms part of this series and tells the story of her mother attempting to translate between some Swedish aid workers and a group of Iraqi refugees. The exchange became heated, and her mother was asked to choose a side. This alludes to contemporary political dialogue, where all too often people are pressured to take absolutist positions, a sensitive issue in post-Saddam Iraqi society.



Islamic art has always followed a different tradition from the artwork produced in the West. It is rooted in a desire to honor and show deference to Allah.”

The Naqsh Collective was founded in 2010 to exhibit art and furniture inspired by contemporary and traditional Arabic aesthetics. Created by sisters Nisreen and Nermeen Abu-Dail, the Collective merges the art, architecture, and cal-



Naqsh Collective (Nisreen and Nermeen Abudail), *Shawl*, 2015, Solid walnut wood with brass and brass inlay.

igraphy of a rich cultural heritage with a minimalist modern look that appears at home in a modern environment. Their work is dominated by traditional patterns more commonly seen in embroidery, but in their work these patterns are carved into wood, creating beautiful wall panels that respect the Islamic traditions behind them in a sleek, modern design.

Efforts to support the evolution of Islamic art have been present across Islamic society. Based out of Dubai and Jeddah, the organization Art Jameel supports artists and creative communi-

“
In the contemporary period, the boundaries of Islamic art have expanded to include works both from artists in the Middle East and those with roots in the region who form part of the global Islamic diaspora.”

ties, running education programs and initiatives that connect artists of all ages with their heritage, inspiring new creations.

In partnership with Art Jameel, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London supports the biennial Jameel Art Prize exhibition. The Prize is one of the most prestigious awards for contemporary artists and focuses on work inspired by Islamic art and design, one of the few global art awards focused on Islamic culture.

These sorts of organizations and partnerships are important for the continued development of Islamic artistic life. As young Muslims become more connected with the wider world than previous generations ever could have imagined, new influences are flowing into Islamic society. Modern Islamic artists are embracing this exposure to distant cultures, blending new ideas with their own traditions to create a wave of innovative works. Grounded in admiration for their heritage, this new perspective is driving a beautiful new era in Islamic artwork.



Kamrooz Aram, Ephesian Fog, 2016

RIYADH FASHION WEEK AND THE SPREAD OF ARAB FASHION

Clothing has long been a defining aspect of Islamic culture. Style of dress signifies rank, status or profession, and historically fabric was a common gift to reward loyal service. While modern Muslim fashion is deeply steeped in traditional textiles and cultural values, within the past decade a new league of modern designers has begun to revolutionize the industry.

Though these designs are inspired by traditional conservative dress, the modernized clothing features bright colors and new silhouettes, giving them a vibrant, chic feel. In the past decade, this modest style has swept through the Western fashion industry. In 2016, Anniesa Hasibuan became the first designer to present a New York Fashion Week collection with Hijabs. At the end of her show, Hasibuan received a standing ovation from the crowd. Since then, labels such as Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, Chanel, and Nike have introduced head coverings to their collections, and Muslim designers are often featured at the world's largest fashion shows.

In 2018, Riyadh hosted its first-ever Fashion Week, featuring local designers as well as popular high-end brands from around the world. The event had an all-female audience and instituted a social media ban to prevent leaked photos of women without head coverings. Regardless of these precautions, most of the models wore abayas and floor-length gowns or jumpsuits.

The event was put on by the Dubai-based Arab Fashion Council, which also launched the Saudi Top Emerging Designers' Initiative, a program that provides six up-and-coming designers with support and mentorship annually. The initiative is intended to encourage local designers in their efforts to be embraced by the international fashion community.

Muslim officials see the spread of Muslim fashion as an opportunity to share their culture and values while demonstrating the creative strides their countries have made. "It's not just about women buying clothes," said honorary president of Riyadh Fashion Week Princess Noura bint Faisal Al-Saud, "It's about the knowledge they can gain by being creative, challenging people to think outside the box and bolstering creative industries across the board."



A model poses in fashionable conservative dress



Women sit on their mats before prayer.

Weaving A Masterpiece: The Cultural Significance of Rug Making in Islam

As you read this, mentally picture what “art” is to you. Truly take a moment to allow yourself to conceptualize examples of art and how it moves you. The first few images to flash through your mind may be of a painting, a song, a sculpture, a photograph, or even an article of clothing. Art consists of creative skill and imagination and can come in almost any form imaginable.

Most art is hung on walls, towering above us, so it is easy to take for granted the art below

our very own feet. Fiber art is a style of fine art that uses textiles; the manual labor involved in its creation adds to its significance. Carpeting has not only become one of the most essential household items in today’s modern world, but rugs are also some of the most valuable art items cherished by collectors and museums. Today’s textile art has been heavily influenced by the Muslim world. Beyond their decorative and utilitarian purposes, these rugs can also serve as a vessel for religious practice.



Ornate designs and rich colors are used in rug making.

Back to the Beginning

The Islamic carpet tradition is a very old custom that was practiced by early civilizations. It has been recorded that centuries ago, traditional Bedouin tribes, like the ones of Arabia, Persia and Anatolia, made use of the wool produced by their herds to create carpets that were useful in many aspects of their daily lives. Ancient weaving techniques created rugs that were then used as shelter by forming tents. These antique creations also served as protection from sandstorms, curtains for privacy and floor coverings for comfort, and were even formed into satchels for the transportation of objects.

Although it was in Central Asia that carpet weaving originated, Islamic culture truly transformed the craft into an art form that has cap-

tivated the attention of the Western World for centuries. It was under the Seljuks, a medieval Turko-Persian Sunni Muslim empire, that the Muslim carpet reached a high standard of technique and quality of design. Muslim carpets can be known as Oriental rugs, Turkish rugs or Persian rugs depending on the region and design. Sometimes using expensive materials such as silk and threads wrapped in metals, carpets were commissioned by the royal courts of the Islamic world. The intricacies of the design and quality and rarity of the materials made carpets a symbol of status and wealth for the owners. This art form eventually caught the eye of the Western world through trade and exploration. In fact, the Muslim majority regions during this time were sometimes branded as “the rug belt.”

A Global Reach

Before Europe knew of Muslim carpets, historians believe households used rushes as floor covering. Muslim textile products did not begin to captivate Europeans until the Middle Ages. During this time, contact with the Muslim world became more abundant, and through trade, Muslim carpets began to be seen as an item of luxury. It was under the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal dynasties that the craft thrived.

Textile art was so coveted that it was at first only possessed by the monarchy, the rich, or religious leaders. Carpets were considered national treasures, and those fortunate enough to own Muslim carpets often would hang them on walls like paintings, not wanting them to be stepped on.

Textile art eventually became an industry that empowered female artisans. Women created carpets not only for personal use, but also for sale. The tradition of weaving and looming has been passed down for centuries by females in Middle East villages and nomadic tribes. The craft not only financially befitted communities through sales and trade, it also served as a creative outlet whereby artisans transformed and perfected the craft.

A rug or carpet is now commonplace in most homes today. Thanks to the craft now becoming wildly popularized, appreciated and mechanized, many can enjoy the comforts and beauty of carpets at a modest cost. Despite the ready availability and affordability of machine-made rugs, however, many people still seek elegant rugs of many different styles and regional



Prayer mats being used at mosque.

patterns for their homes. While it is easy to take for granted the efforts that went into these beautiful utilitarian pieces, many still deem certain carpets as invaluable pieces of art and history. Some of the world's most impressive art museums have expansive exhibits dedicated to collections of antique Muslim rugs.

Religious Impact

Beyond their beauty, rugs play an integral role in how many Muslims practice their faith. The Prophet –Mohammed prayed on a mat that was made of palm fronds, also known as a khumrah. For Muslims, the act of prayer, practiced five times a day, must be conducted on a clean surface. Purity is extremely important in this daily ritual, which is why washing is performed

before prayer. Prayer mats, or sajjadat salat, provide a protective layer between the ground and those worshipping.

These religious pieces of art typically have a specific design. This design is referred to as a mihrab and represents a mosque that helps the worshipper pray in the direction of Makkah. Whatever the design may be, and no matter its material or age, a prayer rug remains one of the most precious and valued items in a Muslim home.

The Qu'ran says, "And God has laid the earth for you as a carpet." Muslims can appreciate the religious importance of rugs, as it is mentioned several times in the Qu'ran. Carpets are included as a furniture element of Paradise and promised to believers of Islam who enter the heavens.



A beautiful array of prayer mats.



Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem.

A Short History of Islamic Art

Islamic art is one of the few styles that has remained constant since its earliest days. Spanning more than a millennium, Islamic art is found from Andalusia, in southern Spain, to the eastern shores of China, boasting an almost unrivaled geographic diversity, and much Islamic art that is centuries old can appear quite contemporary. But how and when did this unique art style find itself in these various cultures?

Beginnings

Most scholars point to Islamic art as starting around the end of the seventh century, when it proliferated in various forms such as ceramics, mosaics, wood and ivory carvings, textiles and calligraphy. The most notable elements it shared in its roots lie within Persian and Byzantine art (textiles and mosaics) moving into



Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.

Greek and early Christian art (carvings and visual mediums), which were the primary art styles in the territories of the Islamic empires. However, Islamic art has always centered itself around Islamic ideals.

The Umayyad Caliphates (661-750) were the first overarching Islamic empire to institute Islamic art into practice. The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem is one of the best examples of the Umayyad's use of Islamic art motifs with a notable Byzantine presence in the mosaics. The

inscriptions and the prominent multicolored arabesques on the mosque's friezes and walls laid a foundation for the art style as a whole, especially in architecture.

The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus is one of the most notable pieces of Islamic art, and would serve as a foundation for future mosque construction. The Umayyads reconstructed an original Roman tower to create one of the first minarets, the oldest minaret in Islam. The marble window grilles are arranged in dazzling



shapes. Scholars point to this arrangement as the precursor to arabesques, one of the central identifiers of Islamic art.

The Abbasids (750-1258) largely cemented the foundation the Umayyads built, but transferred much of the style to small-scale arts, such as ceramics. With the invention of glazed ceramics and lusterware, the Abbasids transferred many of the Arabic inscriptions, the new arabesque style and the bright colors popular at the time to pottery. The popularization of the new art style also led to interest in calligraphy, with Qu'rans beginning to be decorated with more complex forms.

Medieval Period

The end of the Abbasids led to the breakup of the empire and the flourishing of regional interpretations to Islamic art. Al-Andalus in the south of Spain, widely known for being a great cultural center during the Middle Ages, also became a notable center for art. Artists fused the foundations learned from the Umayyads and the Abbasids with input from Berber tribes and Magrebi influence to create masterpieces. Ivory became a medium for the art style, with the pyxis of Al-Mughira widely accepted as the pinnacle of the genre. This carved cylindrical box, designed for cosmetics, contained silver containers of perfume. Left open, it would fill the air with fragrance. It is now in the Louvre.

In Turkey, Iran and the north of India, various groups struggled for power, constructing vast cities that boasted various artworks that demonstrated the rulers' power, wealth and sophistication. Kaleidoscopic arabesques decorated the marble of several mosques, notably the Great Mosque of Isfahan. Coinage for these various groups also displayed Arabic epigraphs that featured several images, including astrological and animalistic figures.



- Great Mosque of Isfahan.
- The Taj Mahal.
- A wide array of carpets with Islamic-style patterns featured in Berlin, Germany.

Large Empires Flourish

The end of the Islamic medieval period is largely marked by the creation of The Three Great Empires, the Ottomans, the Mughals and the Safavids and Qajars of Persia.

Ottomans:

The Ottomans cultivated a flourishing art industry, with the mass production of ceramics and tiles that cemented the empire as a major producer of Islamic art. Arabesques and patterns featured on mosques are found in metalwork, carpets and tapestries. By the 16th century, the Ottoman art style saw influences from China, mainly with the production of ceramics and the use of florals.

Mughals:

The Mughal Empire is most notable for the construction of the most famous piece of Islamic art: the Taj Mahal. Built to host the tomb of his favorite wife, Mughal emperor Shah Jahan is a masterpiece that boasts all the best motifs of the art style, encompassed all in white. The Mughals were also well known for their manuscripts, which saw influences from the Indian population and some aspects of Western pictorial description.



Safavids and Qajars:

The empires in Iran were also most notable in mosaics and painting. The 17th century saw the invention of the muraqqa, which saw the patterns used in mosques printed onto the pages into books, seen in drawings and calligraphy. Gardens also proliferated in an arabesque style.

Modern World

Perhaps the most marketable production of Islamic art is now found in the weaving and textiles industry, with carpets and tapestries sporting patterns shared by the mosaics and walls of mosques around the Islamic world. These artworks can be found in homes worldwide.



The Pyxis of Al-Mughira



Hassan Massoudy

Contemporary Artists and Islamic Tradition

Many famous Muslim artists have made a name for themselves using their faith and community as inspirations for their work. Here we spotlight a few Islamic artists who have been inspired by traditional art and are bringing a modern perspective to creative mediums.

Hassan Massoudy is an Iraqi artist renowned for his interpretation of traditional Arabic calligraphy. Massoudy applies a modern twist as he inscribes oversized letters in vibrant colors on

paper or canvas. His compositions are based on popular proverbs, and texts from poets, authors and philosophers from both the Arab European cultures, that promote a message of peace and tolerance — two themes that are central in much of his work.

“Despite the fact that the codes of beauty differ from one civilization to another, everyone can take something from them and enrich their soul or their art,” he has said.

Born in 1944 in Najaf, Iraq, Massoudy studied calligraphy in Baghdad in his late teens. As an apprentice, he spent hours with Hashem Al-Baghdadi, considered the last of the classical calligraphers. A few years later, he relocated to Paris and enrolled at the École des Beaux-Arts, where he studied traditional western techniques. Upon receiving his degree, Massoudy traveled through Europe with the French actor Guy Jacquet and the Iraqi multi-instrumentalist Fawzy Al-Aiedy. The trio toured for 13 years in the Seventies and early Eighties with *Arabesque*, a work incorporating performance, music, poetry and calligraphy. A later collaboration with the choreographer Carolyn Carlson and the Turkish musician Kudsi Erguner led to the creation of *Metaphore*.

Massoudy's work has become an important influence on a generation of calligraphiti artists. The artist lives in Paris, where he continues to create art that breaks with tradition yet conveys the beauty of Arabic calligraphy.

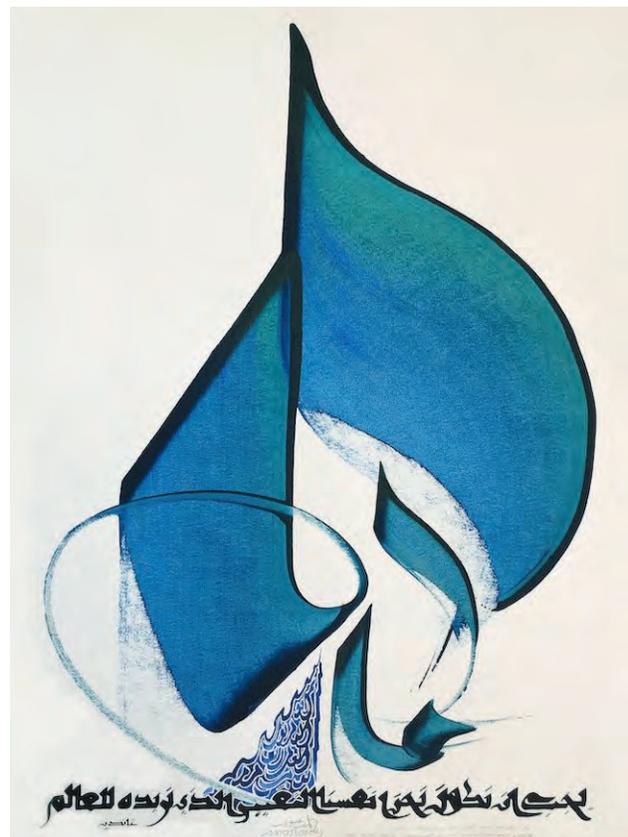
Lalla Essaydi is a contemporary Moroccan photographer and painter, known for depicting the multifaceted identity of Muslim women. In photographs, paintings, installations and films, Essaydi creates a juxtaposition of past and present, fantasy and reality, while challenging tropes found in Orientalist art. She has stated that her work is autobiographical, and she explores a wide range of perspectives, including issues of diaspora and identity.

Essaydi grew up in Marrakesh as part of a privileged, traditionally Muslim household. Following schooling in Paris, she married and moved to Saudi Arabia, where she lived until her children left for school in the United States. She then studied painting at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, before continuing her education in Boston.

"I invite viewers to resist stereotypes, Lalla Essaydi"

As she references art history, and contemporary cultural, social, and political realities, Essaydi uses art to reveal stereotypes and question assumptions maintained by Western and Eastern societies about the veil, the harem, and the. She carefully stages her subjects to mimic works by French neoclassical painters and superimposes Islamic tile patterns and Islamic calligraphy in henna on different surfaces, such as fabric, bodies, and walls, to project self-assuredness, and reclaim female empowerment.

Essaydi's work has gained worldwide critical acclaim and is held and exhibited at institutions such as the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C., the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Fries Museum in the Netherlands. She currently lives in New York City and works between Boston and Morocco.



"Be the change you wish to see in the world" (Ghandi) by Hassan Massoudy.



- **Converging Territories #24** by Lalla Essaydi.
- **Nadia Janjua.**
- **"Love Is A Give & Take", Acrylic, Spray Paint & Mixed Media on Canvas, 20x24 in. 2015.**

Nadia Janjua is a Muslim-American artist, architect and entrepreneur, whose bright and vivid paintings combine with religious inspiration. Much of her artwork is inspired by the concept of celebrating everyday objects and moments as works of art in themselves, and she is best known for her entrepreneurial and social activist spirit.

With parents from Pakistan & Kashmir, traveling to other parts of the world brought Janjua a deep appreciation for culture, religion, history and art. Her work is inspired by her deeply spiritual and emotional connection to her faith as well as the experiences of her life's journey. She went on to major in fine arts in college, and with the support of her family, she combined her passion for art and science by obtaining a master's degree in architecture. Her architectural design portfolio includes designs for homes, educational facilities and a mosque.

In addition to the work she produces at her own architectural design firm, she creates in a wide range of media, including photography, painting and sketching. She has been professionally exhibiting her abstract and mixed-media paintings for the past ten years, appearing at exhibitions and conferences in the United States, England and Malaysia. In 2011, she became the coordinator for the group Muslim Women In the Arts, leading a local group of approximately 30 Muslim women artists and managing more than 800 artists globally through social networks.

Janjua has contributed her expertise to relief work as well and worked as an art educator for upper level students at Tarbiyah Academy, a K-6 International Baccalaureate-authorized Islamic private school in Maryland. She was named one of Washington DC's Best Up-and-Coming Artists. She believes creativity can catalyze change and continues to use extremely vibrant, lively and colorful art to move individuals to see the world from a different perspective.



MUSLIM ART IN TAIWAN PROMOTES CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Dr. Al-Issa spoke at the opening of the exhibition promoting Muslim art in Taipei.

On April 9-18, Taipei's attention shifted to Islamic culture, thanks to an Islamic Cultural Exhibition at National Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall. The initiative, which welcomed the month of Ramadan, contributed to the promotion of a broader understanding of Muslim culture in Taiwan.

With the main focus on calligraphy and architecture, the exhibition was divided into four main thematic sections: "Arabic Calligraphy," "Islamic Cultural Relics," "Islamic Architecture" and "Islam in Taiwan." The displayed art pieces were loaned from several prominent art institutions in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Oman, Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Nigeria, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. They served to demonstrate the peaceful character of Islamic religion while exploring other spheres of Muslim heritage, notably Islam's contribution to human achievements in mathematics, astronomy, navigation, medicine and philosophy.

During the opening event, Dr. Al-Issa spoke to the visitors from a video and expressed his hope that the exhibit would contribute to a mutual understanding of both civilizations and strengthen ties between these cultures.

To further nourish ethnic understanding, visitors got a chance to personally get to know the customs and traditions of Muslim culture, art and cuisine through workshops and events. The most popular activities were live Arabic calligraphy presentations and Eid al-Fitr traditions with a halal food-tasting at sunset.

In recent years, the number of Muslims living and working in Taiwan has been increasing, and currently stands at 250,000. Islamic Cultural Exhibition wasn't the first initiative led by Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall that contributed to cultural understanding and recognized the presence of Muslims in Taiwan. To emphasize religious freedom, last year, the museum built a prayer room for its Muslim visitors.



During the exhibition, the visitors enjoyed the presentation of Arabic calligraphy.



Pakistan PM Imran Khan commended the humanitarian efforts of MWL and its Secretary General Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa

Prime Minister of Pakistan meets Dr. Al-Issa

Makkah - MWL

Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan recently met in Makkah the Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) and Chairman of the World Organization of Muslim Scholars, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, and both discussed issues of common interest.

During the meeting, His Excellency Dr. Al-Issa praised the position of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the Islamic world, and appreciated

the great efforts of its Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Muslim World League in humanitarian work around the world, and in promoting harmony and dialogue among the followers of religions, as well as how the Muslim World League approaches and addresses the phenomenon of Islamophobia.

MWL condemns attacks on sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque

Makkah - MWL

The Muslim World League (MWL), on behalf of its international councils, organizations and bodies, expressed its strong condemnation of the blatant attacks on the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque and worshipers, affirming its rejection of this dangerous escalation.

In a statement issued by its Secretary General, Chairman of the World Organization of Muslim Scholars, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the MWL condemned the violent practices that undermine the dignity of the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights, and provoke the feelings of Muslims around the world.

His Excellency called on the international community to put an end to the Israeli violence, preserve the

right of the Palestinian people, provide the necessary protection for Palestinian civilians, and ensure their right to practice their religious rites, in addition to stopping all violations, attacks and all forms of violence.

Dr. Al-Issa, on behalf of the peoples of the Islamic world, scholars and intellectuals, who fall under the umbrella of the MWL, reaffirmed the MWL support for the Palestinian people and its support for all peace efforts, in order to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause that enables the Palestinian people to establish their independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.





The program provides a legitimate and cultural presentation full of benefits associated with the life of human beings

“ Billati Hiya Ahsan”TV program presents a new vision on modern human issues

Makkah - MWL

“Billati Hiya Ahsan” Program, which was aired on MBC Channel in Ramadan and which translates into “Repel the evil deed with one which is better”, presented a new viewpoint on today’s reality in its second season.

The program’s idea is based on choosing and analyzing a Quranic verse then applying it to people’s daily reality in order to show how it is related to Muslims’ lives as well as the humani-

tarian, jurisprudential, legal and historical issues they encounter on a daily basis.



Dr. Al-Issa sheds light on the Noble Qur’an guidance and suitability to every age and place

As the guest of the program, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the Muslim World League (MWL) Secretary General, interprets and explains the Quranic verse before highlighting its benefits for contemporary human life. The Secretary General manifests by proof how the Noble Qur'an is suitable for every age and place and emphasizes that the Qur'an must be interpreted in every age in order to highlight its glories and generous guidance on the latest developments.

In many of his answers, Dr. Al-Issa refers to the names of important books a Muslim needs to read because such books provide in-depth analysis of the Quranic verses. Some of the books might not be known for those specializing in Shari'ah. However, Muslims are encouraged to read them because moving and looking ahead requires an understanding of the past and these books have preserved our past which our ancestors talked about. And this is what the program tries to clarify to the viewers.

The program's host, Abdulwahab Alshahri, said: "We seized the holy month of Ramadan to present key topics to the viewership and discuss such topics with a distinguished scholar who is known for being bold in addressing complex topics, and simplifying and explaining them clearly. His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa is a renowned scholar who enjoys extensive and considerable knowledge in various fields."

Alshahri pointed out, "The program provides a legitimate and cultural presentation full of benefits associated with the life of human beings. The topics of the episodes included the story of the beginning of creation, the normal human instinct, the tolerance of the Islamic religion, the scholars, the visions and dreams, the concept of tribalism, and the law of causation".



Dr. Al-Issa uncovered the corrupt practices of political Islam and ethics of its groups



The program interprets a Quranic verse and links it to Muslims' daily lives

He noted, "There was a special episode on the Charter of Makkah on the occasion of the two-year anniversary of its adoption," stressing that the program represents a cultural viewpoint that aims to open the door to dialogue and discussion of all modern ideas and theories and examine them under the microscope of the Noble Shari'ah."

The program was aired throughout the month of Ramadan at four o'clock in the afternoon (Makkah Al-Mukarramah time) and was repeated at four in the morning.



The memorandum signed by Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa and Dr. Umt Fural will enhance joint Islamic work

MWL and Austria-based IRAA sign a memorandum of cooperation

MWL - Riyadh

His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL), Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and Dr. Umt Fural, the Chairman of the Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (IRAA) recently signed a memorandum of cooperation.

The signing ceremony took place at the Secretary General's office where he received Dr. Fural and the accompanying delegation and discussed with them ways to activate the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Declaration.

The memorandum aims to put into practice and activate the contents of the Makkah Al-Mukarramah

Declaration and translate the contents for the parties concerned with civilized communication. According to the memorandum, intellectual and cultural events will be held to raise awareness about the declaration and incorporate it into educational programs. The memorandum will help promote discussion of the declaration



Dr. Al-Issa discusses ways to activate the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Declaration with Dr. Fural



Joint statement stresses the need to strengthen programs for national harmony and community integration

in the public space in line with the constitution of the Islamic Religious Authority of Austria and the constitution of Austria.

The memorandum of cooperation includes the exchange of information, experiences and publications in the fields of joint Islamic work as well. It focuses on introducing Islam and its tolerant principles, spreading moderation, combating extremism and Islamophobia, in addition to explaining Islam's position on extremist movements and exploring contemporary human issues and ways to address them in the most proper way. The two parties agreed on the importance of serving the Arabic language and its culture and attaching great significance to that in Austria.

As for bilateral activities, the two sides agreed to coordinate participation in conferences, seminars, lectures and programs of interest to Muslims as well as organize meetings with academics, thought leaders and researchers from the followers of other cultures and civilizations, in addition to promote understanding and peace between nations.

The two parties issued a joint statement in which they stressed their commitment to promoting joint action and spreading awareness of Islamic work and Austrian national values, as well as their eagerness to create programs to support national integration in cooperation with the competent authorities.

The MWL and IRAA stressed the need to support and activate the programs of the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Declaration, which was adopted by 1200 senior scholars of the Islamic Nation of all sects. It was welcomed by non-Islamic religious



Dr. Al-Issa discussing the implementation of the memorandum with IRAA delegation led by its Chairman Dr. Fural

leaders and considered instrumental for promoting peace and harmony in Islamic societies and among non-Islamic societies. It was also hailed by a myriad of political and intellectual parties around the globe as an embodiment of moderation.

The joint statement indicated that this cooperation came in the light of the importance of cooperation between the Islamic Religious Authority of Austria and the MWL, which is considered an umbrella for the Islamic peoples and an incubator for scholars, thinkers and youth of the Islamic world. This cooperation is an appreciation and recognition of the international role the MWL plays in preserving the peace and harmony of national societies based on the MWL's call, through the scholars and thinkers of the Islamic nation, to respect the constitutions, laws and culture of every country, and to work towards promoting national integration.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Ambassador of Austria Mr. Wolfgang Kochira, the President of the Arab Religious Authority in Austria Jabal Zakari, the Secretary of the Head of the Islamic Religious Authority of Austria Masoud Taha Papadstu, the Advocacy Officer at the Islamic Religious Authority of Austria Jamal Sabljakovk, and the Director of the MWL's Office in Austria and the Supervisor of the Islamic Center in Austria Dr. Ahmad Al Mufrah.



MWL Secretary General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa

Pentagon's NES Center invites Dr. Al-Issa to talk about violent organizations and their messages

Makkah - MWL

“ At the invitation of the US Defense Department's Near East South Asia (NES) Center for Strategic Studies, His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, delivered a lecture to senior executives on the violent organizations' ability to adapt to new conditions.

Sheikh Al-Issa's speech shed light on the assessment of the consequences of violent extremism around the globe, analyzing the role of societies in addressing the trends of violent extremism. The Secretary General talked about the experience of the MWL in combating violent extremism, shedding light on its initiatives, especially the outcomes of the conference organized by MWL and held in the United Nations headquarters in Geneva in February 2020. The conference was attended by a myriad of world's leading religious, intellectual, parliamentary and governmental figures, and a number of specialized academics, in addition to heads of parliaments and a number of ministers.

The conference issued the Geneva Declaration which consisted of 28 initiatives and their implementation mechanisms, including the initiative: "Causes and Treatment of Extremism of Some Religious Youth", "How Do We Face Violent Extremism?", "Marginalization and Poverty as Causes of Violent Extremism - Diagnosis, Analysis and Treatment", "Addressing Extremism's Inferences with Religious Texts and Historical Facts", "Addressing the Employment of Violent Extremism for the New Media", "Correct Statistics and Measures in Studies of Extremism and Violent Extremism", "Assessment of International Efforts in Combating Violent Extremism and Terrorism", "Between Soft Power and Hard Power in Combating Violent Extremism", "Peace of Civilizations", "Friendship and Cooperation Between Nations and Peoples for a More Understanding World and More Harmonious and Integral Societies", "Religious Identity and National Identity Between the Concepts of Conflict and Complementarity", and many other important initiatives that were discussed by senior specialists around the world who attended the conference.

In his speech, His Excellency Sheikh Al-Issa touched on the importance of understanding the nature of extremism, pointing out the term differs in terms of its understanding. Extremism in the Islamic context refers to adopting ideas that practice violence or terrorism, or incite it or create intellectual incubators for the elements of violence



Extremist ideology has been promoted for a long time around the globe and has not faced any intellectual confrontation

or terrorism. Meanwhile, the term extremism is often understood outside the Islamic context, especially in the West, as expressing an opinion that tends towards the far right and may express sharp opinion only, especially if the name is devoid of any other description calling it violence or terrorism, but it is important to understand these differences to avoid any confusion.

Sheikh Al-Issa touched on another theme related to understanding the nature of extremism, saying "To comprehend its nature, we must understand the causes that drive extremists to practice extremism", then he mentioned a number of them and started explaining them.

His Excellency asserted that extremism ideology has been promoted for a long time around the



Religious intolerance

messages increased the rate of radicalization among youth and promoted the idea of conspiracy

globe and has not faced any intellectual confrontation. He explained that extremism was not based on an abstract political ideology or a military force, but rather on an ideology that succeeded in promoting its ideas in the absence of scholarly and intellectual confrontation. That is why it influenced some youth and took advantage of political conflicts and religious sentiment to multiply and spread.

Sheikh Al-Issa said that extremism managed to use this void and create a generation of extremists of different types. The MWL Secretary General talked about the types in detail and how to deal with them, noting that extremists and terrorists took advantage of the Internet and virtual technology to hack into borders and easily deliver all its messages anywhere around the world. This virtual world diminished the terrorist extremism's dependence on money. In addition, terrorism, especially ISIS terrorism, adopted a new strategy. Besides, a terrorist operation can be easily implemented by using a stolen car, a weapon, or a firearm that the terrorist possesses, or a self-made bomb. Dr. Al-Issa said that is why it is important to rely primarily on eradicating such ideas through counter ideas. Then, His Excellency explained how we could work on this counter-confrontation.

Dr. Al-Issa explained the adverse effects of using religious intolerance messages, stressing that the high rate of radicalization among youth can be attributed to employing unconscious religious sentiment and exploiting a number of issues, especially some political issues, while focusing on the idea of conspiracy.

He pointed out that most of the Al-Qaeda and ISIS militants were filled with religious sentiments, more than they were filled with extremist religious information, because most of them are not interested in studying religion nor can they engage in a religious debate. Besides, some of them may have general and non-specialized religious information and were influenced by Al-Qaeda and ISIS messages that are full of emotional content on social media websites.

His Excellency said, "I can say that about 85% of those joining terrorist organizations (or, to be precise, the militants of those organizations), whether they are with Al-Qaeda or ISIS, are young people who have been influenced by the religiously emotional content. As for the remaining 15%, they are people classified as intellectual theorists of those organizations. Many of them started with simple religious extremism then developed a strong and exaggerating religiosity. When I say religiosity, I differentiate between religion and religiosity, and the truth says that religion represents Islam, while religiosity represents the level of our understanding of the texts of Islam. This differentiation exists in every religion. Nevertheless, the scholarly and intellectual confrontation is important in resolving the battle with extremism, even if it is affected only by sentiment without getting into the intellectual depth, because sentiments are linked to excuses that are apparently attributed to religious texts. Therefore, everyone is under an ideological and intellectual influence, even if the levels of that influence differ".

His Excellency referred to the ideology of political Islam, noting that this deceptive ideology, with its negative pragmatism, is deemed the most dangerous form of extremism, and it is the one that make violent youth join terrorist organizations, specifically Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

His Excellency said, "The leaders of that ideology agree with what I said above. They openly admit that Ayman Al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, for example, embraced and were completely influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet, that group, with its known maneuvers, claims that these two persons deviated from the



Al-Qaeda and ISIS militants were filled with religious sentiments and knew nothing about religion

Brotherhood's ideas. But what reveals their maneuver and proves they are wrong is the fact that they were involved in a number of assassinations, which were also denied by the books of their great theorists such as Sayyid Qutb and others, whom they cannot deny or disown. This reveals the truth of that maneuver as well as the dangerous acts they have committed."

His Excellency indicated that this group restricts the general and overall concept of Islam to political objectives only, while Islam's messages focus on beliefs and legislation. Also, Islam has never addressed the form of governance; it made it up for people to decide what is the most appropriate form in line with the standards of public interest and the values of justice based on constitutional identity.

Dr. Al-Issa said that this extremist ideology has permeated in Muslim societies and attempted to hinder the efforts of community harmony in countries of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity, and also hinder friendship efforts between nations and peoples, as well as hindering efforts for dialogue between followers of religions and cultures. By reading the speeches of the leaders of this ideology and the books of its spiritual and political leaders, we find very scary ideas that are hidden in books and speeches, but are published and available to everyone in many languages. Yet, it is astonishing that how they talk about civilized values, while their constitutional foundations and practical reality are completely different. If anything, their action can only be described as schizophrenic, or an exposed maneuver.

His Excellency added that several years ago, a di-

ologue took place with one of the leaders of this ideology about this contradiction. The leader did not agree with the ideas in those books and was asked if he could respond to them in a book or a lecture to clarify the truth. But the leader said that things could not be dealt with in this way. In the end, it was clear that he was practicing deception.

Dr. Al-Issa indicated that it was this group that established the concepts of hatred and demonized everything outside its extremist framework, whether within the Islamic World or in the West. The group instilled in the consciousness of Muslim youth the hatred of all people. They are against dialogue and the alliance of civilizations. They reject the commonalities and focus only on differences, clashes and conflicts. They are the ones who have agitated Islamic sentiments on the issues that they can exploit. They do not know dialogue, nor wisdom to act, nor justice in judging things, while they resort to a cunning method that depends on finding actors who have no apparent reference. Therefore, the prosecution, in the event of entering the accusation circle, is limited to those actors and it is not counted against the group as an organization.

His Excellency added that the current situation of that group is deemed fragile due to their exposure through their practices that contradict the maneuvers of their leaders and also through the Muslim youth whom they provoked and pushed into places of political conflict. Thus, terrorist organizations were formed as the case with Al-Qaeda and ISIS, as well as by making sure that the group's strategic goals do not differ from the strategic goals of Al-Qaeda and ISIS, and that the difference lies only in tactics. The talk of some leaders of this group behind the scenes with their followers from among the active and influential youth differs from their public talk with the public, especially in official meetings and conferences.

Then, His Excellency explained that there is now a great awareness in the Islamic world and in a number of Muslim minority countries of the danger of the ideology of political Islam led by the Muslim Brotherhood. Its adverse effects that

are detrimental to the reputation of Islam and Muslims have been unmasked, and the practices of hatred and isolation that they are working on against their national societies, whether within the Islamic interior or outside it, have been exposed.

Dr. Al-Issa talked about the sharp division between religious sects, which in some cases gave rise to sectarianism that developed into violent extremism. Moreover, the insufficient awareness of Muslim youth in the Islamic world and in Muslim minority countries regarding the correct religious values and the failure to promote the values of comprehensive citizenship that believe in the inevitability of difference and diversity helped weaken their scientific and intellectual immunity, and thus the easy influence over them by violent and terrorist extremist groups.

His Excellency spoke at length about assessing the consequences of violent and terrorist extremism around the globe. He said that the war on extremism must depend more on its ideological defeat, and whatever it is confronted militarily and victories were achieved against it, the ideology remains. Among the very successful military confrontations is what the international coalition has done against ISIS with the participation of 83 countries led by the United States.

He added there is no doubt that the military confrontation is very important, but the most important of which is the intellectual confrontation, which goes through two stages. The first is preventive and immunizing, starting with the family, the school, and religious and social influence platforms, in addition to the importance of addressing the conditions that may help facilitate the recruitment of young people towards violence and terrorism.

The second is a therapeutic one that is mostly focused on dismantling its ideology through strong scholarly, intellectual and social presentation. This requires an institutional project that includes initiatives, programs, and continuous evaluation while measuring the results.



Religion represents Islam while religiosity represents the level of our understanding of the texts of Islam

His Excellency emphasized that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is considered today a global platform that inspires the reinforcement of the values of religious moderation. He said that over the past five years, beginning specifically after the establishment of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition in December of 2015, including three themes: military, intellectual and media, and confronting the financing of terrorism as of this date, there has become a major international turning point in the face of terrorism, specifically in the Islamic interior.

This was followed by the creation of several global platforms to confront the ideas of extremist ideology. With the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (Etidal), there is the Ideological Warfare Center (IWC) that works on dismantling the extremist ideology.

Dr. Al-Issa also pointed out that the agreement of the muftis and the world's senior scholars in the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Document Conference on "the Charter of Makkah" led by the Muslim World League in May 2019 is a strong step in confronting such ideologies. More than 1200 muftis and scholars from 139 countries, in an unprecedented historical meeting in the presence of all followers of the Islamic sects and (27) doctrines and sects, agreed to issue that Document, which serves as a roadmap for the enlightened Islamic thought. This important historical work is considered one of the strong blows that extremism has suffered.

In the second part of the lecture, His Excellency answered the questions asked by attendees, which dealt with a number of important related topics.



“Twitter and Facebook have the potential to make more effective efforts to combat all forms of fanaticism”

The MWL calls on social media to reject hate

By Nizar Abdul-Baqi Ahmed

“ The Muslim World League (MWL) launched recently a campaign to fight hate on social media and called upon the officials in charge of these platforms to intensify monitoring of accounts that promote hate, especially against Muslims. The campaign aims to stop those negative messages that would lead the world to a state of instability and encourage the spread of extremism and terrorist operations.



Everyone should have zero tolerance for hate speech targeting Muslims and followers of other religions

Intellectual problem

Many specialists point out that the spread of the scourge of terrorism and extremism that afflicted humanity during the past decades and struck most parts of the world is not only a security problem, but is also an intellectual problem. The most prominent reasons that led to its increase include the decline of tolerance and coexistence and spread of hate speech and the call to exclude the violator, which caused the emergence of the phenomenon of terrorism and violence.

Many international organizations have warned against the propagation of these negative rhetoric, especially with the increase in the use of the Internet and social media in all countries, as UNESCO indicated that hate speech is spreading "like a wildfire on the Internet among young people around the globe, which calls for strengthening their capacity to stop violence, now and more than ever before, in order to if we want to prevent extremism and intolerance". This clearly reflects the need to address this intellectual problem that threatens to harm everyone.

Definition of hatred

Although there is no agreed definition of the term "hate", there is almost an agreement that it is (every expression in verbal, written, gesture, or any form of communication and understanding between people, aims to demean others and negatively distinguish between them, or diminish their status and rights, or offending their religion and belief, denying their rights to life, calling for discrimination against a particular group, for the reason of religion, race, color, gender, language, opinion, or any other

considerations).

On the other hand, tolerance can be defined as (respect and acceptance of others, recognition of the plurality of religions and the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the world, recognition of the right of others to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms, and that even if human beings differ in their appearance, situations, languages, behavior, culture, beliefs and values, they are equal and they have the right to respect their beliefs, religions, and cultures).

Causes of hate

The reasons behind the spread of hatred vary, as in many cases hate speech arises with individuals since their first inception and in the environments in which they are raised. It is noticed that societies in which rates of interest in formal education or true religiosity decrease have a higher rate of negative feelings such as extremism and hatred. Thus, positive emotions such as tolerance, acceptance of others, and the desire to coexist decrease. In addition, some fall victim to extremism and exaggeration due to a misunderstanding of the principles of religion. Therefore, the link appears strong between the spread of education and the extent of widespread hatred and lack of tolerance. There are also other causes for extremism, including unemployment, poor education, family disintegration, academic failure, poor media and the tyranny practiced by some world regimes against their citizens.

Position of religions

All monotheistic religions agree that hatred for the other due to any reason is forbidden because it contradicts generous morals; therefore, they call on their followers to not engage in such behavior and always show tolerance and love. Religions recognize the necessity of preserving the dignity of the human being and his right to a dignified and safe life on the basis of freedom, justice and equality, regardless of his race, belief and religion.

Islam pays special attention to countering the rhetoric of extremism and exclusion and obligates its

Conferences held by the MWL to promote world peace

1	Harmony Week between Followers of Religions and Cultures	Vienna – Austria February 2017
2	The European Parliament adopts the speech of the League's Secretary General as an important document.	Strasbourg – France March 2017
3	Social Coexistence and Diversity of Religions	Durban - South Africa April 2017
4	The Tolerance in Islam	London – Britain May 2017
5	Global Forum of Heads of Cultural Centers	Singapore October 2017
6	"The Role of Followers of Religions in Promoting Peace and Harmony"	Geneva – Switzerland November 2017
7	The International Conference of Islamic Universities and the Promotion of Moderate Thought	Jakarta – Indonesia December 2017
8	Peace Promotion Forum	Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates December 2017
9	Al-Azhar International Peace Conference	Cairo Egypt December 2017
10	Moderation and Peace in the Prophet's Biography	Nouakchott – Mauritania December 2017
11	Alliance of Religions and Peace Lovers	Washington – USA February 2018
12	Dealing with Violence Practiced in the Name of Religion	Rome – Italy February 2018
13	Followers of Religions and Cultures	Vienna – Austria February 2018
14	Societal Security Conference and its Impact on the Nation's Unity	Amman - Jordan April 2018
15	Peace between Followers of Religions	Oxford – Britain May 2018

followers to coexist with others and be kind to them. It forbids all forms of coercion of others and guarantees every person the right to embrace whatever religion they want, protect their blood and preserve

their money. It also permits Muslims to deal with them in worldly affairs with kindness.

Saudi moderation approach



The Kingdom promotes dialogue among followers of religions to confront hate speech

Since its unification, Saudi Arabia has been keen to consolidate the concepts of moderation and tolerance and confront speeches of hatred. It has taken care of immunizing young people against extremism and deviant ideologies whereas it has focused on strictly confronting hate speech, spreading tolerance and cooperation, rejecting violence and racism, and instilling the values of moderation and tolerance in citizens' minds.

Because dialogue is the basis to confront hate speech, the Kingdom has strengthened this aspect by encouraging dialogue between followers of different religions. The government established the King Abdullah Center for Interfaith Dialogue, under the umbrella of the United Nations, and allocated huge budgets that led to its achievements and remarkable successes during the past years. Due to its unique status as the land of the Islamic message, the Kingdom has taken care to set an example for the rest of the world in terms of revealing the correct Islamic values and correcting misconceptions spread by advocates of violence and extremism in order to present the bright image of religion.

The role of MWL

His Excellency Dr. Al-Issa was interested in confronting the spread of hatred against Muslims in some Western countries, and he repeatedly called for confronting this phenomenon and stopping those who promote it, regardless of their positions. During his many tours in Europe, America and Asia, he focused on addressing all calls of hatred and exclusion, noting that extremism is one currency that has two sides: the first is the origin of extremism while

the second is the extreme reaction to it, both of which carry hatred and hostility. At the same time, he warned that terrorism harms affection, feelings and dignity of more than 1.5 billion Muslims around the world, who form large proportions in non-Islamic countries in which they became part of its national component.

Continuous efforts

Dr. Al-Issa drew attention to the fact that the crimes committed by Islamophobic advocates against Muslims, whether in the West or the East, and the insults they direct to Islam have been used by terrorists to portray their actions as just a response to such terrorist acts. He pointed out that the recurrence of crimes would help the terrorist organizations to attract more extremists who, before being recruited, were ordinary and moderate in peace. Therefore, it is important to confront the calls of hatred that has spread in some Western countries due to the actions of some politicians who do not bear any responsibility and who belong to the extreme right parties and populist groups. These have become a danger threatening the world, no less dangerous than what was represented by Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Confronting the hate preachers

To eliminate the phenomenon of hatred, there is an effort that must be made by all the members of society, especially the family and the school because they form the nucleus of society and the source from which a person draws his convictions and ideas. This will ensure the emergence of a generation possessing the values of coexistence, tolerance and the rejection of extremism and hatred. There are similar roles that the various media have to play due to their influence in societies and decision-makers, and its ability to address everyone directly. Therefore, media honoring charters that exist in most countries of the world should be taken into consideration, which call to keep away from everything that stirs up discord and increases disagreements, all of this in order to immunize society against the factors of hatred and racial discrimination.



In Malaysia, zakat is managed by the authority of the Islamic affairs councils in the states

Zakat in Malaysia: A Unique Experience and Lessons Learned

By Dr. Osman Mohamed Osman

“ Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam. Because of its importance, it was associated with prayer, which is the pillar of religion, in many places in the Noble Qur’an. The administration of zakat in the Islamic world varies from country to country. Many countries have presented distinguished experiences in the management of zakat, and Malaysia is one of the countries that has been distinguished in this regard.

The administration of zakat affairs in Malaysia is subject to the authority of the Islamic affairs councils in the states. These councils are responsible for managing, collecting, and distributing zakat as well as raising awareness of the obligation to pay zakat, providing the infrastructure to pay zakat, and managing the distribution of zakat for items in their states. Each state has its own legislation on how to administer the Zakat Fund accordingly.

Zakat as a social institution

The Malaysian government has adopted various initiatives to ensure that Zakat is practiced and implemented in accordance with Islamic Law (Shari'ah), and that the religious and social obligations associated with Zakat are met. As part of its efforts to expand the scope of the application of zakat, the government has adopted the concept of zakat as a social institution and as an Islamic socio-economic tool to improve the social and economic well-being of Muslims in the country. The first initiative to institutionalize zakat as a social institution was to establish a unit for collecting and distributing zakat, and to appoint zakat officials at the level of each state to implement zakat regulations.

The promotion of the Zakat approach as a social institution has greatly increased the collection of Zakat. This increase is attributed to the various initiatives taken by the government, especially the establishment of the Zakat Collection Center, which was a milestone in the approach of zakat management in the country.

Previously, all records relating to the collection, distribution and administration of Zakat were 100% manual by human resources. This process has had a negative impact in terms of a lack of competence to ensure that all data and documents are properly recorded. Recently, the adoption of technology by the Zakat Foundation has helped maintain an accurate record of collecting zakat, accessing items to distribute Zakat, as well as managing the Zakat fund for investment purposes.

The 1990s witnessed a remarkable development in the structure of zakat administration in many



Malaysian government has adopted various initiatives to ensure that Zakat is implemented as per Shari'ah

states. Responsible zakat authorities have sought to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Zakat management process as a strategic objective. The most prominent of these developments has been the collection of zakat by third parties, i.e. certain entities that act as agents.

From needy to payers of zakat

The authorities responsible for managing zakat affairs have spared no effort to enhance the effectiveness of zakat in society by establishing programs aimed at converting individuals receiving zakat into becoming payers of zakat. These programs include short and long term aid.

As an example, Selangor is the most developed state in Malaysia. The collection of zakat in this state is the largest compared to other states. The state has established "Pusat Zakat Selangor" a center for managing zakat affairs. It is also one of the most active Zakat collection and distribution center as it played a very important and effective role in collecting and distributing Zakat within the state of Selangor. Since its inception, the center has embarked on raising awareness for the payment of Zakat through official channels.

The center has contributed to promoting an effective collection and distribution of Zakat as part of the efforts led by the state government to improve



Malaysia has adopted the concept of zakat as an Islamic socio-economic tool to improve social and economic well-being of Muslims



The promotion of the Zakat approach as a social institution has greatly increased the collection of Zakat

Zakat is viewed as a social instrument that helps relieve poverty among members of society

the management of the Zakat Foundation in the state, and as a model for other states. The center has adopted various measures to ensure the realization of Zakat programs and activities as an Islamic social and economic institution. It should be noted that the performance of the center is not only measured based on the collection process itself, but the most important thing is the achievement in solving the social and economic problems faced by the Muslim community, especially in alleviating poverty.

In addition, under the economic development program, the center presented the “Asnaf’s Business” program, which aims to get the recipient of zakat out of poverty.

Asnaf’s Business has identified three categories to provide assistance, which are: (1) the one who is not capable to do anything except to continue his own life, (2) the one who needs one off assistance in order for him to face or exit the situation and (3) the one who is currently in the hardship but has a potential to develop, grow and graduate from the asnaf status.

Training

To qualify the target groups, the program provided eight modules to train them to acquire basic skills for

managing small and medium enterprises and ultimately, out of poverty. Training programs include 5 types: (1) food handling and typhoid, (2) car services and insurance, (3) motivation, (4) online marketing and (5) halal.

The program also offers soft skills activities through extended courses to enhance the soft skill, competence and behavior of the target groups to become entrepreneurs. There is also a technical training program that aims to train Asnaf entrepreneurs in business areas that require technical skills in areas such as bakery, sweets (kueh mueh), laundry and sewing.

Financing

The “Asnaf Business” program offers two types of financing, the first is through “Leading the Asnaf Economy” and the second is individual. The first funding is intended for those who are take out the sponsored program, and this includes the provision of a motor cycle with three wheels, burger kiosk, food truck and asnaf market. As for individual financing, it is based on considering each case separately.

Supervision

The process does not end when the project is established, but continues through supervision and fol-



Zakat has a positive impact on economy

low-up. Communication is ongoing between “Asnaf Business” and the beneficiaries to ensure the effectiveness of the project and achieve positive returns.

In fact, this article was just a brief background on the experience of zakat in Malaysia. This experience deserves to be studied and analyzed by other Islamic countries to further develop and improve Zakat management in a way that effectively contributes to eradicating poverty.

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King Abdulaziz Public Library reveals rare manuscript

JEDDAH - MWL

The Saudi Arabia's King Abdulaziz Public Library has revealed a rare manuscript dating back more than a thousand years that sheds light on the science of Arabic grammar.

"Al-Murib sharh kitab al-Qawafi lil-Akhfash" was written by Abu Al-Fath Othman bin Jinni Al-Mawsili and provides detailed explanations for one of the oldest manuscripts in Arabic grammar, "Al-Qawafi," written by the linguist Al-Akhfash al-Akbar.

Bin Jinni's manuscript, which was copied in the ninth century, was written in Moroccan-Arabic calligraphy and is considered to be an important scientific, historical, and cultural reference, especially since its author was one of the most renowned specialists in linguistics, rhetoric, grammar, and morphology of his time.

The one-volume manuscript has 58 parchments made of goatskin, some of which needed treatment.

Bin Jinni wrote 50 books of poetry, rhetoric, and grammar, the most famous of which were his analyses of Abu al-Tayyib Al-Mutanabbi's collection of poems, "Al-Khasais" (The Characteristics), "Al-Lama Fil-Arabiya" (Creativity in Arabic), "Sirr Sinaat Al-Irab" (Secret of the Grammar Profession), "Ilm Al-Aroud" (Prosody), "Al-Munsif" (The Fairer), and "Al-Tanbih fi Sharh Mushkilat Al-Hamasa" (Alert in Explaining Enthusiasm Problems).

He met Al-Mutanabbi in Aleppo in the court of Sayf Al-Dawla Al-Hamdani and in the court of Adhud Al-Dawla in Shiraz.

Al-Mutanabbi respected him and said: "This is a man whose worth is not known by many people."

Whenever he was asked about matters related to grammar in his poetry he used to reply: "Ask our friend Abu Al-Fath."

Bin Jinni was the first to analyze Al-Mutanabbi's collection of poems, with Al-Mutanabbi telling people: "Ask bin Jinni for he knows my poetry more than I do."

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