

THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE

Journal

MWL calls for
new methods of
religious discourse

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Muharram 1440/October 2018

No.1

MWL selected as representative of Muslim nations at 'Friendship Meeting' in Italy



Social Networking Sites: From the Perspectives of Islamic Ethics



Letter From the Editor

Mercy and Flexibility in Islam

“The Concept of Mercy and Flexibility in Islam” was the theme of the global Hajj conference held by the Muslim World League (MWL) in Mina. The significance and the meaning of the theme were highlighted in the opening speeches and reiterated in the conference’s closing statement.

The following points were emphasized in the researches and discussions of the conference:

- It is important to reflect the aspects of mercy and flexibility in Islam because these two constitute the most influential features of Islamic rulings and make Islamic ethics stand out from utilitarian ones.

- Islam’s great and all-embracing mercy as well as unique civilization and flexibility make it fit for all times and places. Islam can coexist and collaborate with all human beings, as shown by the documented, accurate and true events of history, not the ones falsely attributed to Islam and Muslims.

- Allah’s mercy is great and all-embracing and this fact manifests itself in the Qur’anic verses and the Prophet’s Hadiths which show beyond doubt that the flexibility of religion reflects Allah’s mercy, delights creatures, brings light to and embraces all creations. No living thing or being is excluded from Allah’s mercy.

The speech delivered by Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League stressed the importance of reflecting the concepts of mercy and flexibility in Islam and put them into practice through Islamic conduct. The conference made recommendations, the most

important of which are:

- Encouraging researches and studies that establish the principle of mercy and flexibility in Islam, highlight its importance, spread it, introduce it to others, and refute the suspicions of extremists who hold deviant thoughts contrary to the implications and the meanings of the Shariah texts and purposes.

- Calling upon the media to produce and broadcast quality programs aimed at promoting and underscoring the value of mercy in Islam. Urging scholars and specialists to produce media materials under the theme of “Values of Mercy and Flexibility in Islam”.

- The religious discourse should be developed in terms of mechanisms, methods and means (while maintaining the established principles of identity), taking into account the differences of time, place and conditions. The religious discourse should be consistent with the deeply-rooted values of Islam, address the modern problems of societies wisely without any rash actions that ignore the far-reaching consequences and negative results. It is important to take the lead on all emerging issues and present authentic and productive Islamic visions that serve the public interest.

- Establishing a unit for Islamic and common human values at the Muslim World League. This unit deals with researches, studies, forums and conferences that handle the great characteristics of Islam, and emphasize the importance of addressing the concerned people and urging them to adopt “the Islamic values and common human values” course as a university requirement for all specialties in Arab and Islamic universities.



The Muslim World League *Journal*

Secretary-General

H.E. Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa

Supervisor General

Media Affairs Dept.

Adel bin Zamil Al-Harbi

Chief Editor

Dr. Osman Abu Zeid

Editor

Mohammad Zakir Hossain

Layout and Graphic Designer

Khaled Awad Al-Muazzin

The Muslim World League Journal

P.O. Box: 537

Makkah, Saudi Arabia

Tel: 00966 (012) 5600919

E-mail:

mwljournal@themwl.org

www.themwl.org

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King Salman affirms Saudi Arabia's pride in serving pilgrims, fighting terror

Saudi Gazette report

Mina — Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman emphasized that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was honored to serve the pilgrims and will continue to facilitate performance of their Hajj and Umrah rituals in ease and comfort. He said the Kingdom "affirms its firm stance on the fight against terrorism and adherence to the message of tolerant Islam."

The Monarch made the remarks while addressing the annual reception at the Royal Court of the Mina Palace for

the heads of state, prominent Islamic dignitaries, guests of the King and government bodies, and heads of Hajj delegations and pilgrim affairs' offices, who came to perform Hajj. H.R.H. Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense, and several emirs, princes, ministers, and high-ranking officials were also present.

At the outset of the speech, King Salman greeted the guests on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, saying that may Almighty Allah accept the Hajj

of the pilgrims. "Allah has honored the Kingdom with the service of the Two Holy Mosques, and taking care of their guests, providing them safety and comfort, giving all attention and care since King Abdulaziz founded it, and that was followed by the successive kings."

"We will continue to do so, as we deeply believe that serving Hajj pilgrims, Umrah performers and visitors of the Two Holy Mosques is our duty and is a great honor of which we feel immensely proud."

The King added: "As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosts the Qiblah of Muslims as well as the Prophet's Mosque, and emanating from its Islamic position and its regional and international role, the Kingdom affirms its firm stance to fight terrorism and extremism, eradicate them in all their forms and manifestations, adhere to the tolerant message of Islam and ensure Islamic solidarity and achieve security and stability in the region and the whole world."

In his speech, Minister of Hajj and Umrah Muhammad Benten congratulated King Salman and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman as well as the pilgrims and the Muslims around the world on the occasion of the Eid. He said that the Kingdom is proud of hosting over the past ten years more than 150 million pilgrims from around the world belonging to more than 100 nationalities, of which seven million have already performed Umrah this year, in addition to nearly two million pilgrims who are now performing their Hajj rituals. "We are working under the directives of the King and the Crown Prince to prepare for the reception and service of more than 300 million Muslims over the next ten years," he added.



On behalf of the heads of delegations of Islamic countries, President, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, Republic of Turkey, Prof. Ali Erbas delivered a speech, in which he congratulated the King and the Crown Prince for their utmost care and keenness so as to enable the pilgrims to perform their rituals in the best possible manner. He thanked them for providing all the material and human resources, and great efforts and high-quality services for more than two million pilgrims since their arrival until their returning to their homeland.

Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, also spoke.

The reception was attended among others by Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, Governor of Makkah, Advisor to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

and Chairman of the Central Hajj Committee, Governor of Madinah Prince Faisal bin Salman, and Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Supreme Hajj Committee Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif.

The foreign leaders who attended the reception included Côte d'Ivoire President Alassane Ouattara and Prime Minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly, Vice President of Ghana Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia; Chechen Prime Minister Muslim Khuchiiev and Parliament Speaker Magomed Daudov; Afghan Parliament Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahimi, Libyan Minister of Defense Uhida Najem; Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari; Minister of Defense of Sudan Awad Mohammed bin Auf; Head of Ruling Party of Mauritius Shaukat Sodhen and Egypt's Grand Mufti Shawqi Allam.

Grand Mufti lauds MWL's efforts in implementing (Halal) terms

Makkah - MWL

President of the Supreme Judiciary and Chairman of the Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta, Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al Al-Sheikh lauded the efforts exerted by the Muslim World League (MWL) to unite Muslims and heal their wounds. He stressed that everyone recognizes those undeniable blessed efforts and the clear achievements of the MWL.

The Grand Mufti spoke highly about the role played by the MWL in supervising Halal slaughtering of imported meat coming to Saudi Arabia. He praised the measures laid down by the MWL to supervise the mechanism of importing Halal meat, noting that the MWL sets rules guaranteeing Islamic slaughtering and inspects the slaughtering procedures according to the well-known legitimate ways and mechanisms.

The MWL reiterated its commitment to applying the highest legitimate measures in the field of Halal depending on the Gulf standard specifications under the Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO) concerning the conditions of Halal food. Halal certificates are issued based on the views of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy. Recently, the MWL banned several slaughterhouses and centers after vio-

lating the terms of Halal slaughtering.

The Muslim World League has been approved as the only legitimate authority of exporting "Halal" for the Kingdom due to its international connections and expertise in the field of coordination and cooperation with local and international companies and institutions as well as its implementation of legitimate conditions in producing, manufacturing and marketing Halal meat.

The Supreme Judiciary has issued a fatwa that the authority concerned with Halal slaughtering of the meat imported to the Kingdom is the MWL which is the oldest Muslim organization working in the field of Halal and food with more than 30 years of experience and offices in different parts of the world.

The MWL works to add the final touches of establishing the largest legitimate center for Halal in the world in its headquarters in Makkah to monitor and supervise slaughtering and Halal industry in addition to issuing Halal certificates according to international standards. The center will also issue Halal selling certificates as well as increasing awareness on Halal food, providing media and marketing consultations and supporting the industry and technology of Halal food.



The opening ceremony

MWL conference in Mina calls **for promoting new methods of religious discourse**

Riyadh - “Riyadh Daily”

The “Concept of Mercy and Flexibility in Islam” Conference, organized by the Muslim World League (MWL) and attended by 500 Muslim scholars and thought leaders from 76 countries, wrapped up its activities on a successful note.

The closing statement expressed gratitude for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz and H.R.H Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, for serving all Muslims and Islamic issues and helping pilgrims perform Hajj rituals in comfort and ease.

The statement stressed the importance of developing the methods of religious discourse tailored to the basic tenets of Islam, maintaining the principles of identity and considering time and place differences as well as conditions before addressing the problems of contemporary societies.

The statement called for adopting curriculum on the Islamic values and human common values and made it an academic requirement in Arab and Islamic universities and encouraging studies and research that enhance the principle of mercy and flexibility in Islam in order to demonstrate the importance of the principle and its role in distinguishing the moral system of Islam and highlight its difference from utilitarianism.

The statement pointed out that Islam, with its mercy, broad and comprehensive flexibility and civilized experience, is consistent with time and place, coexists and cooperates with everyone. The accounts of the documented, not the false, history have proved this fact.

The statement recommended highlighting the aspects of mercy and flexibility in Islam by standing against whoever places too



many religious restrictions on people to make their lives hard and by fighting sedition, hostility and hatred.

The statement stressed the importance of showing the real causes behind the chaotic and insecure situation in some Islamic states, which do not express their genuine heritage and cultural history. The statement appealed to all mass media to exert more efforts to broadcast programs aimed at clarifying, disseminating and fostering the true values of mercy and flexibility of Islam.

The conference, inaugurated by H.E Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, kicked off its activities with the speech of the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia , President of the Supreme Judiciary and Chairman of the Permanent

Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta, Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al-Al-heikh. In his speech, he said that Islam has been chosen by Allah to be the seal of the divine religions and the most comprehensive of them in terms of kindness, mercy, ease, tolerance and flexibility for the entire humankind.

As Allah has made Islam the religion of the entire humanity to the Day of Judgment, He has made it valid for every time, place, different environments and countries. One of the most important features of this religion is being the religion of mercy, ease and tolerance without constraints and oppression. It is the message of glad tidings and mercy, as the Prophet, peace be upon him, described it when he said it is the religion of ease. The Prophet forbade us from religious extremism.



Attendees from different countries during the conference

The Grand Mufti opined that some partial differences have an effect even on the discretion of jurists based on every jurist's observance of the customs of his environment, according to which he gives fatwa that does not contradict the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah and the legitimate rulings. This is the reason why dispositions and fatwas have differed among scholars. The flexibility of the Shariah allows for such differences. These facts should be evident to the wise people who view the Shariah rulings from a fair and just perspective.

The Grand Mufti emphasized that one of the manifestations of Islam's mercy and flexibility is the

kind treatment of the people of the Book who chose to stay in some of the Muslim lands or entered them with covenant and security and lived safe and secure. Islam has safeguarded their rights, blood, wealth and honors to help them practice their affairs easily. The Kingdom is the best model for the manifestation of ease and the approach of moderate Islam. It is the destination for all Muslims, and even non-Muslims who entered the State, lived on its land and exercised their work with safety and reassurance.

In conclusion, The Grand Mufti lauded the conference's efforts and positive results and thanked Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Ab-

dulkarim Al-Issa, as well as all the employees of the MWL's departments and offices and the participants in this conference including scholars, sheikhs and researchers for their contributions and valuable research that enriched the themes of the conference and its varied topics.

Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa delivered a speech welcoming the attendees. He explained that the test of behavior related to the values of mercy and flexibility reveals the level of absorbing adopting them.

President of the University of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic Sciences in Sudan Professor Ahmed Said Salman thanked the Kingdom of



Side of attendance

Saudi Arabia and the MWL and its Secretary General, praying for the success and support of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and His Crown Prince. He spoke highly of the Kingdom's efforts to serve pilgrims and help them perform Hajj easily. He added that worldwide efforts of the MWL reflect its sincerity, devotion, the clear vision and the scientific approach and the will and the high diligence of its employees for achieving its goals and hopes. Professor Ahmed called for establishing a society of mercy and brotherhood by spreading the value of mercy in the society and relieving those who are in distress.

Professor Dr. Harun Al-Rashid Ayoub, Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the International Islamic University in Islamabad, praised the idea of the conference, pointing out that the basis of Islam's treatment to other people is mercy and kindness because Allah sent the Prophet, peace be upon him, as a mercy for the worlds and not only Muslims, and to order Muslims to treat justly those whom the Prophet did not challenge in

religion or forced them out of their homes. Dr. Harun Al-Rashid Ayoub concluded his speech praising the great efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the MWL and its Secretary-General.

Dr. Muhammad Belhassan, Head of the Islamic Studies Department at bin Tufail University in Morocco, delivered a speech in which he said that Islam is the religion of mercy and compassion that freed humanity from cruelty and rigidity. Dr. Muhammad Belhassan added that the viewer of the basic sources of legislation of Islam - the Qur'an and the Sunnah - in addition to the general sources of legislation and the history of the nation and its thought, culture, literature, habits and traditions finds the whole presence of mercy throughout. Dr. Muhammad Belhassan wrapped up his talk expressing his sincere thanks to the MWL's excellent choice of the conference's topic "Concept of Mercy and Flexibility in Islam" and for addressing urgent and significant issues and demonstrating the mercy of Islam for everyone.



Final Communiqué

Hajj Conference 1439 H (2018)

on

"The Concept of Mercy and Flexibility in Islam"

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, who says in the Holy Qur'an: "And My mercy encompasses all things" [Surat Al-Araf, Verse 156], and: "He prescribed mercy upon Himself" [Surat Al-Anam, Verse 12]. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, who was sent as a mercy to humankind, and who said in the Hadith: "Those who observe mercy towards others, Allah (the Merciful) will grant them due mercy". Blessings and peace also be upon the Prophet's family and his companions.

In the blessed Hajj pilgrimage season, on the pure soil of Mina, on Wednesday 11 Dhu Al-Hijjah 1439H, corresponding to 22 August, 2018; and upon the kind invitation of the Muslim World League - a group of Hajj pilgrims made up of distinguished Islamic personalities, took part in the International Hajj Conference, held under the title, "The Concept of Mercy and Flexibility in Islam". The participants sought earnestly to increase the spread of awareness in the conscience of the Ummah, and to propose - within an enlightened and responsible scientific and intellectual framework - appropriate solutions to the serious problems faced by the Ummah.

The participants presented research papers focusing on the following sub-themes of the Conference:

* Mercy and Flexibility... Meanings and Aspects.

* Mercy and Flexibility... Evidence and Positive Outcomes.

His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, delivered his inaugural speech at the conference in which he welcomed guests and participants, and expressed his pleasure at such esteemed presence. He emphasized the importance of highlighting the concepts of mercy and flexibility in Islam through the actual display of Islamic conduct, and not by just merely theorizing and citing texts or incidents from the Prophet's life or events from the shining history of Islam. For a true and clear translation of the message of Islam that was sent as mercy to humankind, His Excellency said, these fine examples should be exhibited and embodied by the Ummah in actual thought and deed. He added that showing mercy and kindness towards all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, is a notable characteris-

tic of Islam and ever-present in its rulings, tenets and ethics, as well as in the customs and traditions of those who embrace Islam with conviction, and who practice those aspects as ethics with the sublime understanding imbued in them by Islam.

In the light of the research and papers presented, the Conference concluded with the following recommendations:

Firstly: Mercy and flexibility are the two most influential features of Islamic rulings; due to them, the Islamic ethical system has developed differently to the utilitarian one. This understanding has played a major role in establishing a meaningful, harmonious and satisfying life for Muslims and those who interact with them. These two features have been truly deep-rooted in the conscience of the Islamic Ummah throughout its long history of holding fast to the guidance of the Holy Qur'an, immaculate Sunnah and the enlightening example of the life of the Prophet.

Secondly: Islam, with its broad and all-encompassing mercy, flexibility and unique cultural experience, is without question capable - in any time and place - of providing solutions to the chronic problems of contemporary human societies, and saving them from the moral and social degradation impressed on them by material phenomena, utilitarian morality, and cultural and political deviations.

Thirdly: It is essential that qualified and specialized scholars project mercy towards humankind and flexibility in Islam through the explanation of Islamic acts of worship and other duties. They should also be urged to present the pure message of Islam, focusing on highlighting different aspects of mercy from the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him).



Attendees are following the conference

Fourthly: Explain the evidence pertaining to the all-encompassing and flexible nature of Allah's mercy through the study of relevant Qur'anic verses and Hadiths, the interpretation of which has proved that the mercy of Allah Almighty came hand-in-hand with due flexibility; and that it was a source of rejoicing for all beings, and extended to humankind and animals. Likewise, it was not restricted only to believers, and did not even exclude sinners or disbelievers, who enjoyed many aspects of it in this world; and explain that the punishment that they will eventually receive in the Hereafter is indeed justice, because it is mercy for Allah's servants who suffered injustice, in addition to fulfilling the rights of others.

Fifthly: Clarify that the aspects of chaos leading to militancy, cruelty and violence from which the Muslim Ummah currently

suffers, do not reflect its true heritage and lengthy cultural history that justly qualified it to lead human civilization continuously for many centuries and contribute significantly to building a system of human ethics in accordance with an integrated Islamic educational method. This has allowed the Ummah today to take advantage of achievements in humankind's knowledge and translate them into a reality of development that raises the eco-social status of Muslim countries and communities within the approach of Islam and its controlling principles.

Sixthly: Encourage research and studies that establish the principle of mercy and flexibility in Islam, highlight its importance, and seek to introduce and disseminate it across civilizations; and refute the extremists whose vacuous twisted ideas are in sharp conflict with the precisely defined principles of Islam

and objectives of Islamic Shariah.

Seventhly: Invite all forms of mass media to produce and transmit distinctive qualitative programs aimed at enhancing the value of mercy in Islam and highlighting it in its best form. The call should also be extended to scholars and specialists to produce media content under the title, “This is the way mercy is understood...” aiming to explain the meaning of mercy and kindness in the relevant verses and Hadiths and various incidents from battles and expeditions, and which have unfortunately been understood with little regard for their true meaning and correct context.

Eighthly: Consider the necessity of promoting Islamic discourse in regard to mechanisms, means, techniques and methods, but without changing the precisely defined principles, and in a manner that takes into consideration differences of time, place and event, and is consistent with the principles of Islam, and addresses the problems of contemporary societies, but dispassionately and without reactions that can have far-reaching effects and harmful consequences. This approach should also be at the forefront in all newly emerging issues through the presentation of authentic, perfect and productive Islamic visions that help realize the legitimate interests of the Ummah.

Ninthly: Establish an Islamic Ethics Unit at the Muslim World League, in order to handle research, studies, forums and conferences tackling the wide range of characteristics of the greatest religion of Islam. It is also important to communicate seriously and effectively with those in charge of educational institutions to prescribe an Islamic ethics course as an entrance requirement for all subjects at Arab and Islamic universities. This is, of course, intended to properly

refine the personalities of students with the best and most complete Islamic ethics, and protect young Muslims from vulnerability - without due protection – to association with parties and groups that commit forbidden acts and commit in the name of religion acts that religion prohibits such as murder, theft and intimidation.

At the conclusion of the conference, participants reiterated their thanks and praise to Allah Almighty for His infinite blessings and bounties. They further extended their profound gratitude to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, for the help that Allah granted them in rendering unprecedented invaluable services to the Muslim Ummah and its concerns in general, and to the Two Holy Mosques and their Hajj and Umrah visitors in particular. The participants also commended the brotherly care and outstanding services provided to pilgrims by all sectors of the country, thereby facilitating their performance of Hajj in a climate of security, safety, faith and tranquility. We supplicate Allah Almighty to grant in perpetuity this country and its wise leadership the blessing of serving Islam and Muslims and of having the Two Holy Mosques in its care, may they be preserved from the evil of corrupt and ill-intentioned individuals.

Allah grants success to what is good. Peace and blessings be upon our Prophet, Muhammad, his family and companions.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the universe.

Issued at Mina Ritual Site, Makkah Al-Mukarramah

11 Dhu Al-Hijjah 1439 AH corresponding to August 22, 2018



MWL selected as representative of Muslim nations at 'Friendship Meeting' in Italy

Rimini - Italy

On behalf of the Islamic nations, His Excellency Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa spoke at the Meeting of Friendship among Nations, held in the Italian city of Rimini. A large number of political and religious leaders took part in the event attended by more than a million people.

The one-week world's largest gathering included seminars and open discussion sessions aimed to bridge the gap among the world's nations and emphasize the importance of the values of coexistence as well as understanding between cultures and peoples.



Dr. Al - Issa delivers his speech at the meeting

It was the first time that the concepts of Islamic thought, culture and civilization have been raised and discussed in such a huge international gathering. Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa was selected as representative of the Islamic world, while Pope Benedict spoke on behalf of the Christian world in front of over a million attendees including Italy's President Sergio Mattarella, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and a number of leaders, thinkers, innovators, artists and academics from more than thirty countries, as well as a myriad of the EU ministers of security and cooperation.

The conference organizing committee selected Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa as representative of the Islamic civilization to speak about the Islamic culture. The committee said, "Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa was selected in recognition of the influential role of his speeches, delivered on behalf of the

MWL, in building bridges between cultures and peoples".

These speeches also resulted in the MWL initiatives and dialogues that contributed to reforming many concepts on the Islamic culture and civilization, because they were clear and solid, let alone based on documented facts and won trust and appreciation of the world.

They contributed to dispel many negative concepts that have been attached to Islam and introducing serious changes to the religious and intellectual dialogue and mutual respect, based on the religious context focusing on building bridges among nations.

The Secretary General of the MWL delivered a speech in which he emphasized that the will of the Creator has decreed that people should be diverse in colors, languages, religions, creeds, ideas and cultures.

He added that Allah the Almighty has



Over 5,000 people attended the meeting

honored everyone and has not excluded anyone, as this honoring is released by the divine justice and mercy, and the pure hearts, which are full of love and goodness and are pleased with justice and mercy, seeing in this diversity human richness that stimulates dialogue, coexistence, cooperation and peace.

Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa pointed out that evil has not been satisfied with that, and thus launched its hatred, waged wars and spread injustice, classifying people on the basis of racism, and clash of civilizations, acts which create conflict and make no peace and harmony, upon which our planet is founded. Evil theorized that difference and diversity mean clash, and that no dignity except for its religious, ethnic or partisan group, whether by declaring or exercising that without declaration.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa warned that these concepts are still insisting on this mania, stripped of human meanings in the moral side, logic in

the mental side and wisdom in a side that has learned lessons from history. These meanings will be the first to pay for their risks, even if their deceptive triumph takes long. He pointed out that it is everyone's duty to realize that there are groups which have reached this intellectual deterioration, based on extremist religious or philosophical convictions.

They also form an isolated case in every religion, of all time, and that there is no religion with an extremist origin, but no religion is void of extremists. Besides, there are philosophies that are closer in their theories to putting forward intellectual manias than providing a philosophic logic, referring to extremism and counter extremism.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed that the MWL, which represents and speaks on behalf of the Islamic nations, has found it important to clarify the real Islam, which loves, coexists, dialogues and cooperates with everyone, as the Islamic-isolated extremism has tried to



Attendees from different religious backgrounds during the conference.

discredit it by wicked, insane and ignorant actions and people. He added that any religion that is not in harmony with life cannot survive for more than one thousand and four hundred years, the age of Islam to this very day. It is still among the most widely spread religions and the largest in terms of number of followers.

Muslims have numbered nearly one billion and eight hundred million, all understand Allah's way in the multiplicity of religions and thoughts. They are also aware of the culture of others and consider coexistence, harmony, tolerance and peace as high moral values in their religion, as vividly shown in the Quranic texts and the Prophet's teachings. Muslims stand against whoever misuse these texts either by misunderstanding or deliberate misuse for any purpose.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed that it is neither logical nor fair to reduce this religion with its hundreds of millions of Muslims in an extremist category that does not exceed,

according to the MWL's statistics, one extremist in return for two hundred thousand Muslims who represent Islamic moderation.

He added that the religious and cultural differences among humans are a reality that cannot be denied. Regardless of the wide gap in some of its theologies or branches, this does not justify turning the world into an arena of conflict. This difference falls within the Creator's way in the existence of diversity and pluralism, which should never clash with the importance of co-existence and cooperation and even goodness and love for everyone as a prerequisite for living freely, peacefully and harmoniously.

He explained that history immortalized those who have sacrificed themselves in order to confront hatred, racism and other forms of injustice. On the other hand, history, with its fair logic, has crushed those who have raised the banner of hatred and injustice in the face of humanity for religious or racial reasons or even purely material ambitions. Though ev-



MWL's SG speaking at the largest world gathering in Rimini Italy

eryone approves mutual stereotypical images among some nations, peoples and cultures, few realize that these images result from a lack of dialogue, which often leads to the adoption of single-source information.

On behalf of the MWL and its affiliated nations, Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa called for replacing conflict with dialogue and understanding based on mutual respect rather than policies of hegemony and superiority, as a message of nearly one billion and eight hundred million Muslims who adhere to the values of their religion calling for morality and peace, and spurring on building bridges of human harmony in all issues, as well as the guarantee of the rights of minorities, women and men, migration issues, national integration, human trafficking, problems of poverty, ignorance and others, which require everyone to exert more efforts.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa referred to the role of the MWL's affiliated world organizations in

their relief and development functions around the world, which are estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars annually, taking their charitable work into human accounts only, and not differentiating them on basis of religious, racial or other reasons, as stressed by the teachings of Islam and values of ethics.

He said that the MWL provides all its services in direct and transparent coordination with the government of each country that it works on its territory, and establishes strong relations with different religions and sects, and has exchanged visits with everyone and held events that represent and support the shared values.

At the end of his speech, Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa thanked the organizers of the conference, and expressed his appreciation for giving him the opportunity to talk about Islam and the MWL that brings together hundreds of millions of Muslims and connects them spiritually with Makkah.

MWL denounces Canadian government's flagrant interference in Kingdom's internal affairs

Makkah - MWL

The Muslim World League (MWL) has denounced the Canadian government flagrant interference in the Kingdom's internal affairs in a statement released recently.

The statement stressed that the international conventions, principles and norms of state sovereignty must be respected and that a state should not interfere in another state's internal affairs because such affairs are governed by a constitution, legal regulations and procedures.

A state should not compromise the values of mutual trust and respect as these values constitute the basis of inter-state relations, the statement said, noting that any deviation from the legal framework governing the ethics of inter-state relations indicates a clear misjudgment which will lead to fabricated and false information resulting from the analysis of a single source. Such deviation also reflects a fragile political awareness and a lack of wisdom and logic, which result, according to diplomatic norms, in committing a grave mistake.

The statement emphasized that the Kingdom is governed by its constitution, laws, justice system and juridical tools as well as transparent legal guarantees and procedures, adding that the Kingdom adopts, like all legitimate states, impartial and fair assessment tools.

The Kingdom, the statement stressed, does have the right to take a firm stand against this unprecedented, outrageous and flagrant diplomatic transgression and

against the words used, which cannot be justified by the proper diplomatic logic and under any pretext.

The Kingdom applies the Shariah or the Islamic Law and does not allow anyone to compromise the Shariah firmly-established rulings, which constitute the fundamental identity of the Kingdom and determine the concepts of rights and freedom. The statement stressed that the Kingdom has always complied with and honored international conventions, agreements and norms.

It is the right of each state to adopt necessary measures under its constitution, laws and independent juridical tools in a way that guarantees and ensures respect for its public order, security and integration of national unity and harmony. Such measures, must, the statement said, protect and safeguard the requirements of all legitimate rights and freedoms through the state's independent and transparent judicial and control institutions, just like all civilized nations.

The testimonials to these facts come from numerous impartial international public and private institutions and organizations, which do not adopt double-standard policies, judge based on a single-source information, or believe false statements or fabricated lies.

The statement concluded, "Throughout its long history, the Kingdom has won international trust, credibility and support and has been described as a wise state. It will continue to uphold the same values and principles which constitute its entity and protect it against any external intrusion."

We need to unite against terrorism and forge Muslim unity: Sohail Bawa

Interview by: Muhammad Zakir Hossain



Sohail Bawa is the executive member of the Khatme Nubuwat Academy (Finality of Muhammad's Prophethood) and Imam of a mosque in London. The academy is a center for da'wah and authentic information on Islam with its activities in the United Kingdom and more than 40 countries countering misinformation about Islam. It educates people on core Islamic beliefs and works with multi-faith groups to represent Islam in a positive light. The centre is nonpartisan and has given lectures at a multitude of different masjids on the subject of core beliefs.

Bawa was in Makkah as one of the guests of the Muslim World League (MWL) to perform Hajj. Muhammad Zakir Hossain, the editor of the MWL journals interviewed him on the occasion. Here are the excerpts:

Q. How was your Hajj experience this time?

A. First, I would like to thank the Muslim World League, for giving me an opportunity to perform Hajj and I am really indebted to H.E. Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League for inviting me to the conference on “The Concept of Mercy and Flexibility in Islam”. I have performed Hajj twice before, but it was a wonderful experience this time, as I had the opportunity to gain from knowledge sharing. MWL’s Hajj guests came from over a hundred countries, which also provided a great opportunity to meet new people and exchange ideas with many distinguished personalities. This showcased unity on an international level. I think, only the MWL can achieve such a feat. Its services for the Ummah are well-known. I am highly impressed with the way arrangements were made for the guests. In Mina, it was a great spectacle to see the 22 government agencies in Makkah putting in huge efforts to make the event a successful one. I later saw their incredible Hajj works in an exhibition.

Q. The conference in Mina discussed the “Concept of Mercy and Flexibility in Islam” which is organized by the (MWL). How did you find these discussions?

A. The seminar provided a platform for the Ulama (Islamic scholars) and the other Islamic scholars to exchange opinions on several matters of Islamic importance. In the conferences that were held in the New York and Oxford too, the MWL encouraged dialogue between different faiths. In the current political climate, it helps to promote a positive image of Islam and alleviate misunderstandings, which should be our goal.

Q. Muslims today play an important role in every society with their own contributions as well as achievements. Would you give your own account of the community in the United Kingdom?

A. Muslims in the UK are engaged in spreading Islam and presenting a positive image of the religion. They have established many institutions in the last 50 years and the community has made great strides in producing scholars of repute. We are also working to maintain unity in the community. Besides, we are concerned about misrepresentation of our faith. In times of crisis – natural or otherwise – we reach out to the community with aid. We have seen an increase in multi-faith dialogue in the UK, which is a welcome trend for peace and harmony in the community. Muslims are participating at all levels of society.

Q. The initiative by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman for a series of religious and civilizational dialogues has received notable attention in the West. What are the most effective ways to create a global culture of dialogue among civilizations?

A. We welcome the move by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman to initiate a dialogue between the Islamic world and the West. In my view, we need to educate every individual to increase this process of dialogue between Islam and the West. We need to instill a sense of responsibility among people to pursue this cause. The first requirement for this is to spread the values of tolerance, love and respect; we should open the doors of places of worship to all. We need to unite against terrorism and seek to influence unity and harmony at local and international levels.

Q. Some participants in the conference suggest that the dialogue should be taken down to the general public. What do you say?

A. As I said, we need to open the doors of dialogue at each level and educate our public. No religion advocates hatred against other communities. We therefore seek to be part of this work, and continue to maintain a strong connection with it.

Q. What could be the best mechanism to expedite the process of civilizational interaction?

A. I think the representatives of MWL in each country should arrange more of such dialogues and engage local leaders preferably on an annual basis. We will be more than happy to assist MWL in any way possible for this purpose. The option of regional hubs for MWL with a reporting mechanism to a central point would be an ideal solution for this.

Q. How do you find the MWL Journal and its website? Any suggestions to improve its content and presentation?

A. For any publication, there is always a room for improvement. In order to increase the hits or the number of visitors, the website should ideally be transformed into a more modern format, engineered for mobile technology first. It can then be publicized more through social media and other channels. It should be a website that reflects the seniority of the group that is affiliated with it.

The journal contains interesting articles and is well written and constructed. It would be an interesting option to see more dialogue or guest interviews with constituents of the global group.

Q. Muslims in the West face difficulties in having Halal food. Besides, the issue of slaughter process is also raised over there occasionally. What do you suggest to put things in order?

A. Being a body for Halal recognition in the Kingdom, the MWL can set a model for the best possible methodology for animal slaughter. It could work on a global Halal standard and can study the Malaysian standards MS1500, which is the most widely accepted methodology of manual slaughter. It could be developed as a unifying standard for Muslims to follow across the world and would avoid the myriad of different standards which cause issues across the world.

Q. How best can we counter the relentless campaign to malign Islam by spreading misinformation about the faith?

A. There are many misconceptions held by people of the West in relation to Islam, at every level of society. Publications referring to the Arab understanding of history from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the present day should be developed. Books academically building awareness of the distortion of history through the ages like “The Crusades through Arab Eyes” by Amin Maalouf and “Saracens” by John V. Tolan have done a lot to expose the distorted history created from the middle ages until the present day. More works are needed in this area to include investment in research and publications, news stories and articles. Besides, the MWL must guide the new Muslims and support them during the initial stages of their journey, and a peer mentoring group in each country to support those that need it during their journey to Islam.



Project achieves one billion hours of voluntary work in serving the world

Saeed Al-Khotani

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and H.R.H. Crown Prince, Deputy Premiere, and Minister of Defense, Muhammad bin Salman, have received each a cable of congratulation from King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and Honorary Chairman of the World Scout Foundation and 50 million scouts in the world.

The congratulation cables were sent to them, early July 2018, by John Geoghegan, the Director of the World Scout Foundation, in the name of the Swedish King and the scouts, to celebrate “the Messenger of Peace” project achievement of one billion hours of voluntary community service work carried out by the scouts across the world.

Geoghegan said that, as part of the project, about 28 million people worked on

peace initiatives in Congo and Northern Ireland, assisted Syrian refugees integrating into Germany, Turkey, Lebanon, Sweden and Austria.

These scouts, he said, helped disaster-stricken families in Haiti, Nepal, Sudan, Indonesia and the Philippines, and worked to put an end to bullying in the UK, Costa Rica, Ethiopia and the US schools.

Geoghegan pointed out that the “Messengers of Peace” project is considered as the world’s largest community service project and contribution to the achievement of UN goals for sustainable development in communities around the world, and that hundreds of millions of people see KSA as a source of peace and stability.

The project came in line with the KSA Vision 2030 as it inspires Saudi young people

to become globally active citizens and spur them on to do better because they want to live up to the high standards of organization and effectiveness demanded by local scout organizations.

The spirit of dialogue rooted in the “Messengers of Peace” initiative has become dominant, especially with the help of both, the Riyadh-based King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue, and the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) based in Vienna, Austria.

He concluded that the scouts have been instilled with the idea that they must be “Messengers of Peace” within their communities to find solutions to problems and engage in fruitful dialogue with people who hold different viewpoints.

Origin and Progress of Messengers of Peace

The project was the result of an agreement between late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and King Gustaf to transform world scouts into “Messengers of Peace”.

It was launched in the presence of King Gustaf at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), on the Red Sea, north the port city of Jeddah, KSA, in 2011 with a very generous Saudi support exceeded US\$ 37 million.

The mission of the project was to transform more than 40 million scouts all over the world into ”Messengers of Peace”, and make at least two thirds of them capable of conveying peace messages to 200 million people around the world.

The project also aimed to encourage millions of scouts to carry out wonderful works in their communities so they become a source of inspiration to other fellow scouts of the world, carry out similar projects in their

communities that yield positive results, thus contributing to change for the better.

Some observers considered “Messengers of Peace” the best global scout project since the foundation of scout movement by the British army officer Lord Paden Powell in 1907, in terms of continuity and widespread in over one million local communities of 160 countries in the world.

A breakdown, made by the writer of this report for the one billion hours of the voluntary community service achieved by world scouts in the project, revealed that the figure equals work for almost 42 million day, or 1.4 million month, or 116 thousand years.

The project of “Messengers of Peace” has become the flagship mission for the World Organization of the Scout Movement, calling upon its member National Scout Organizations (NSOs) to support it through community service at the gross-roots level.

The project was designed to cater to five areas of service: Dialogue Training, Capacity Building, Peace Projects, Support to Children and Young People in “Hot Conflict” situations and Globalizing the Messengers of Peace Network.

Over six million voluntary community service initiatives have been carried out in different parts of the world over the last seven years since the implementation of the project.

Recognition of KSA role

In special statement to the Muslim World League journal, commenting on the giant achievement of the project, Dr. Abdullah bin Sulaiman Al-Fahd, Vice President of Saudi Arabian Boy Scouts Association (SABSA), Member of the World Scout Committee, and Member of “Messengers of Peace” project, said that it was not a surprise for the leaders of the Kingdom to receive such high recogni-

tion for the results achieved by the project.

“The project was launched here in the Kingdom, the cradle of Islam and peace, with a Saudi vision and global participation to promote dialogue and peace across the world for a better life in present and future. It was interesting that the project has achieved a quarter of the one billion hours of the voluntary community service, following the meeting of King Gustaf with Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman in November 2016 in Riyadh,” he said

“In the meeting attended by Geoghegan, the two leaders exchanged views on how to boost the project so it achieves its goal by the end of 2021 as planned. But what happened is that it achieved its goal this year 2018, three years ahead of the original deadline, which is a great result,” he added.

“This astronomical figure of hours is considered a global recognition and appreciation of the current big role the Kingdom continues to play in the field of international humanitarian and relief work. The role has been enhanced at the present era of King Salman by establishing Riyadh-based King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Works,” Al Fahd said.

It can be seen that the center is making strenuous efforts for the humanity stemming from the noble teachings of Islam and the insightful directives of our beloved country’s generous leaders.

The congratulation cable, Al-Fahd said, is a recognition of the SABSA active contributions at the global level, thanks to the wise directives and continuous support received from the leader of our beloved country and the Minister of Education and the President of SABSA, Dr. Ahmad bin Muhammed Al-Issa.

A half-century tradition



Al Fahd revealed that the “Messengers of Peace” was one of the many SABSA major projects for serving local and global communities but its largest project ever is the long tradition of Hajj services which have been provided for a half a century.

For the Hajj services project SABSA mobilizes and deploys thousands of its skillful scouts to serve pilgrims at various locations every year in Makkah, Madinah, Mina and Arafat, and ports of entry by air, land, and sea.

Hajj service didn’t only get the appreciation of the visitors, the Umrah performers, the pilgrims, and the Islamic countries, but it also received recognition and admiration from the international scout circles to the extent that the world Scout Committee highly lauded this service in its 2015 meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The participation of Saudi scouts in Hajj service began officially in 1963 (a year after founding SABSA) with 150 scouts; however, the number has gradually increased to over ten thousand in recent years.

The SABSA recruits the best scouts for Hajj service who hold senior scout ranks, offering them equal opportunities to apply and be selected. The selection criteria include enrolling before the deadline, passing medical and physical checkups, and successfully attending training courses in civil defense and



basic aid tasks. The selected scouts should undergo, at a later stage, more training related to the nature of activities performed at the locations they are assigned to serve in, Al Fahd explained.

Collaboration for serving pilgrims

In order to have successful Hajj season, SABSA collaborates every year with a number of government agencies that serve pilgrims in Hajj and provides them with scouts based on their needs. These scouts support the agencies and help them carry out the required tasks.

In health care, the scouts perform many tasks at the hospitals and health care centers responsible for serving pilgrims in Makkah, Madina, Mina, Arafat, and at all ports of entry.

Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Marghlani, the former advisor to Minister of Health and Spokesman of the Ministry of Health elaborate more on how health care sector is viewing this participation.

“During my service at the Ministry of Health, the Saudi scouts were always welcomed by the ministry for their vital contribution to health care facilities every year,” he said

“This contribution included ensuring that everyone stands in the line and waits their

turn at clinics, maintaining order in the corridors of hospitals, pushing wheel chairs of sick pilgrims and helping sick pilgrims reach their tents,” he added.

Scouts help Ministry of Commerce and Investment (MCI) squads in monitoring and enforcing price and quality control measures on consumer goods, ensuring sticking to price tag instructions, detecting substandard scales used in outlets and points of sale, checking expiry dates of food products, and confiscating damaged goods and food unfit for human consumption.

Scout work with Makkah municipality squads and help them prevent illegal vendors from selling goods to pilgrims on pavements and in public places. They also ensure that pilgrims do not shave or cut their hair near the Jamarat Bridge or public restrooms.

Scouts help authorities inspect health licenses of restaurant workers and food stuff selling outlets and ensure that food is clean and in good condition. They make sure that street cleaners do their job and collect garbage on streets and public places in Mina and Arafat.

Scouts cooperate with the Secretariat General of Islamic Awareness in Hajj to seat pilgrims attending its lectures and forums, distributing its publications and tape recordings, manage the lines of pilgrims who want to meet scholars and sheiks and ask about fatwa on Hajj rituals. They accompany the pilgrims of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Guest Program to the holy places and respond to their queries and requests.

Scouts show pilgrims how to get to the slaughterhouses, purchase sacrificial meat coupons offered by the Islamic Development Bank, and make animal sacrifice. They manage lines, prevent congestion and do not let any pilgrim take sacrificial meat without permission.

Should Hajj be reformed?

Jawzi Belkacem Lardjane

The New York Times published an article on 23rd of August, the last day of Hajj, claiming that Saudi Arabia was not exerting necessary efforts to enable all Muslims to perform Hajj once in their lifetime, noting that it would take at least 581 years to get all Muslims to do Hajj. This article calls, just like some critics do, for modifying the rites of Hajj in order to accommodate all Muslims and allow them to perform it without hazards.



Misinformation on Hajj

The article starts with many overstatements, false information and premises which drive its readers to think negatively about the Hajj and Islam. Instead of highlighting the Hajj as the largest peaceful human gathering, the most spiritual event, and the greatest lesson for humanity, the article uses this event in order to underestimate the Hajj services provided by the Kingdom.

The article opens with a false statement that the number of pilgrims this year reached 1.7 million while the actual number issued by the General Authority for Statistics is 2.371.675 pilgrims. It said that the Grand Mosque of Makkah or the Haram will accommodate 1.85 million Muslims after



the new expansion has been completed, whereas it has already been announced by the Central Hajj Committee that the nearly-completed expansion will accommodate 2.5 million worshippers with an envisioned plan to reach five million pilgrims in the near future.

Furthermore, it claimed that the number of pilgrims

dropped from 3.16 million in 2012 to 1.7 million in 2018 without clarifying the real reasons for it. In fact, the Saudi authorities gradually decreased Hajj quotas in recent years to protect pilgrims' lives against over-crowding and implement expansion projects in and around the Haram. In addition, the disastrous economic situation that followed the Arab Spring impacted massively the financial capability of Muslims from neighboring Arab countries especially highly-populated ones like Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

The Islamic view of Hajj

The author of the article failed to cite the 12-15 million pilgrims arriving annually to Makkah for the minor pilgrimage or Um-

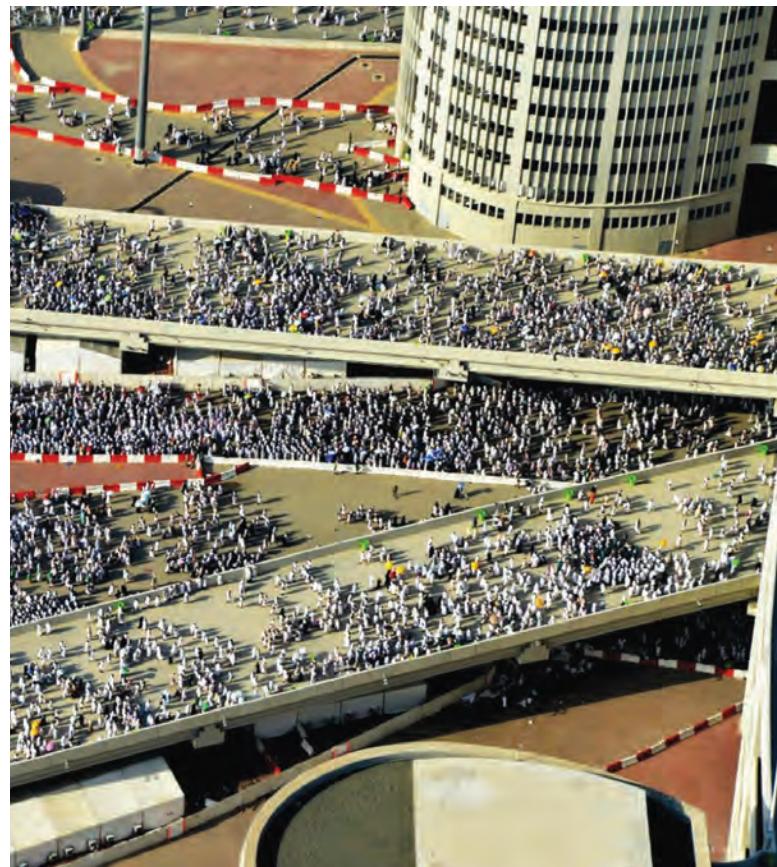


rah, and to mention that, according to Sunnah, whoever cannot afford to perform Hajj should, if possible, do Umrah instead. Allah knows that not every Muslim will be capable of affording the Hajj expenses or able physically to undertake this journey. Muslims are not required to perform Hajj if doing so will negatively affect their financial and physical conditions and make their life hard.

Allah said in the Glorious Qur'an: "In it are Signs Manifest; (for example), the Station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah,- those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures." (Surat Al-Imran, Verse: 97)

Hajj...Past and Present

Demographics shows that the number of pilgrims (Hajjis) in Makkah has only reached the current number it has today after the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has begun to construct huge infrastructure that can accommodate pilgrims from all parts of the world. The number of pilgrims rose from 50,000 in the 1930s-1940s to a staggering two



million in the early second millennium. A century ago, the Muslim population was around 300 million; therefore, 50,000 pilgrims out of 300 million is considered very low in terms of the overall global Muslim population, especially if compared to the number of pilgrims today. According to a Pakistani newspaper, The News, the rate of Hajj increased in a span of 92 years from less than 0,02 % in 1920 to 2,824% in 2012 and has been rising.

Back then, much of the

Muslim world lacked basic transportation infrastructure and technologies. In their book "The Hajj: Pilgrimage in Islam" (2015, Cambridge University Press), Pr. Eric Tagliacozzo and Pr. Shawkat M. Toorawa of Cornell University in New York ascribe the dramatic increase in the number of pilgrims in the 1970s and subsequent decades to air transport.

Contrary to how it is portrayed by mainstream media, rarely do stampedes happen in Hajj. The num-



ber of victims or martyrs is relatively small, compared to the mortality rate of any city in the world. More than 60% of pilgrims are elderly and physically weak or ill. For example, the mortality rate in Europe is 10 out of one thousand a year, according to the United Nations. The Hajj season has a lower mortality rate despite the inevitable hardships the elderly and ill pilgrims usually face. Besides, it is the dream of every Muslim to die in Islam's holiest city.

Islam and Hajj cannot be reformed but the infrastructure of Hajj rites can be developed continuously without changing the time span and the space limits of Hajj, which represent symbols of spiritual meanings and objectives.

The advanced technology used by Saudi authori-

ties for the provision of Hajj services and the electronic devices used by pilgrims show that Islam is fully compatible with modern sciences and scientific advancements. In fact, Islam views such technologies as bounties from Allah to facilitate our mission in life.

In Islam, a Muslim should not travel for the purpose of visiting any mosque except the three great mosques in Makkah, Madinah, and Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). Makkah is not a museum or a tourist destination, rather, it is a place of worship. That is why the Kingdom had full legitimacy to remove most of the old dilapidated buildings surrounding the Grand Mosque in order to expand it and facilitate the performance of Hajj rituals.

If the Prophet's companions were alive today, they would have done the same thing and even given up their own houses for the Haram expansion. For instance, in the year 17 hegira (638 AD), Caliph Omar bin Al-Khattab bought and tore down the houses that hindered expansion of the Haram and even the houses of the people who had refused to sell despite the high price he had offered them. The second expansion of the Haram took place in 26 hegira (647AD) during the era of Caliph Othman, who purchased more adjacent houses and expanded the area of the Haram and even ordered to tear down houses hindering expansion plans. No country possesses today the economic and political capabilities and know-how to manage the Hajj activities the way the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has successfully and efficiently done. Many projects have been implemented in Makkah and more will be implemented to turn it into one the world's most technologically smart cities. The current period under the Saudi leadership is considered the golden age of Hajj in the Islamic history.

Arabic Linguists sounding the alarm: Save classical Arabic from Al Arabeezy

**By Mustafa Muhakkar
Translated by Dr. Muhammad Salim**

Some Arabic linguists and specialists have stood up to the spread of Al Arabeezy (Anglicized Arabic) in social media web sites (Face book, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc), a phenomenon which poses a serious threat nourished by youth clinging to the crusts of Western civilization, which considers the Arabic language as an inferior one.



To seek out decisive solutions, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Center for Arabic Language Service has steadfastly stood up to this phenomenon and monitored how native speakers of Arabic use the language and the contexts they use it in.

The Center conducted a study on the reality of the Arabic language and evaluated how native speakers, particularly young men and women who constitute the majority of technology users and are the most affected by it, use it in the social media web sites.

The Center has singled out a scientific program allowing language researchers and specialists to study Al-Arabeezy (also called the pidgin language and the Franco), which the Arab youth use in modern social media sites.

Such a program aims to identify the reasons for using Al-Arabeezy and its impact on the classical Arabic language and suggest methods for tackling this phenomenon. A seminar was conducted in Riyadh where an elite of Arabic linguists and specialists took part.

Through the MWL Journal, we highlight the views raised in order to find out remedies for this worrisome



phenomenon.

Anglicized Arabic and Latinized Arabic (Al-Arabeezy and Al-Arabteeny)

Professor Sa'ad bin Taflah Al-Ajami, the Kuwaiti then Minister of Information says: "The phenomenon seriously appeared in the writings of some Arabic speakers and can be called Latinized Arabic or Al-Arabteeny, where Latin alphabets are used for writing Arabic words.

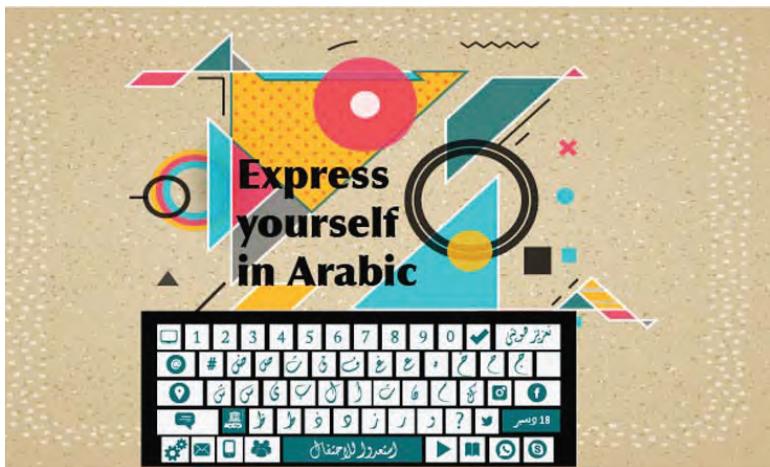
The researcher differentiates between Al-Arabeezy and Al-Arabteeny terms, with the first referring to speaking Arabic with mixed English words and expressions, and the second involving the use of Latin alphabets for writing the Arabic language."

Al-Ajami gave some examples of Latinized Arabic. For instance, some write 'If Allah wills' as 'Inshallah' and some prefer to write

**Al Munziry:
Curricula
should include
values empha-
sizing the im-
portance of
classical Ara-
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'mitabitoud min asafur' instead of 'When will you come back?' A third example is writing 'Yaah', to express exclamation.

Some Arab youth prefer to write words in Latin alphabets instead of the beautiful Arabic alphabets, simply because they prefer this type of writing. They consider it easier, faster and more effective. The rapidity factor is one of the reasons why today's digital genera-



A1 Salman and A1 Harraq: A studied plan to implement a project for Ar- abic language promotion is needed

tion tends to write Arabic in Latin alphabets, according to Al-Ajmi.

Researchers should continuously monitor this phenomenon and measure the extent of its spread or decline. There is a viewpoint that the phenomenon is related to chatting groups and that the social media sites have restricted this phenomenon. In Twitter, it has been noticed that there is slight predominance of the Arabic

alphabet among Twitter users.

Twitterers who use the Latinized Arabic (also called Al-Arabteeny) are teenagers and this gives an impression that the next generation will use it more frequently than the previous generation and so on. Al Ajmi stressed the necessity of monitoring the phenomenon in order to protect the Arabic language.

Professor Salih bin Nasir Al-Shuwairikh, an applied linguistics professor at Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, said: "Some people think that the phenomenon of Anglicized Arabic or Al-Arabeezy represents some sort of crusts of Western civilization and they describe the Arabic language as backward, primitive and incapable of coping with todays' modern age."

There are some people who believe that using Al-Arabeezy at the expense of the Arabic language is some sort of inferiority and backwardness and consider the West as a role model that should be emulated. They believe that using and speaking English is a chance towards progress and getting a privileged social position. Aware or unaware, these people are fighting the Arabic language.

However, some Arabic language specialists believe that using the Anglicized Arabic leads to denying the values and cultural heritage of the Arab nation either in terms of language or cultural heritage.

Youth Enlightenment

Dr. Abdulaziz bin Hamad Al-Humaid, professor of Islamic jurisprudence in Saudi Arabia, stressed the importance of bringing this phenomenon to the attention of scholars and researchers in order to find a solution, providing that their efforts should be combined and based on studied plans so that they produce fruitful results.

Campaigns must be organized to enlighten youth about the importance of preserving the Arabic language.

Al Ajami: Next generation will constitute the majority of Al Arabeezy users

Youth should be aware of the danger of such phenomenon. It does not suffice to deliver a speech about this negative practice; rather, a practical solution must be sought out.

Both Dr. Abdulmalik Salman Al-Salman and Dr. Fauzy Ibrahim Al-Harraq, of King Saud University, emphasized that the more frequently Al-Arabeezy is practiced, the less frequently the classical Arabic is used; therefore, this could weaken the classical Arabic, produce weak content of the classical Arabic in internet and undermining the efforts to defend the classical Arabic.

They called for paying attention to the risks and consequences of neglecting the usage of the classical Arabic, which could jeopardize its future. Therefore, an urgent action must be taken in form of a studied Arab plan to adopt a project for promoting the classical Arabic in addition to enlightening youth about the risks of using chatting language instead of the classical Arabic. Moreover, pride of Arabic language should be instilled in the minds of youth, as the language is the most important pillar of Islamic and Arab identity.

The role of school and family in curbing the phenomenon

Dr. Thurya Al-Munziry, assistant professor of curricula and teaching methods at Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman, stressed the importance of engaging Arabic language teachers in curbing this phenomenon through the adoption of certain teaching techniques, helping students be aware of

the dangers of it.

Teachers must intensify writing composition classes that develop the writing skills of students and encourage them to use the classical Arabic in writing. Education curricula should include the values that stress the importance of the classical Arabic so that youth may avoid using styles that negatively affect the learner language.

Al-Munziry called upon families to encourage children to perfect the classical Arabic and read books and journals. It is also necessary to provide translated and Arabized journals for youth and educators.

Moreover, mass media should educate families and students about Arabicization and increase their interest in the Arabic programming industry in order to ensure the continuous use of such programming in electronic Arabic writing without distorting it as is the case in the phenomenon of Anglicized Arabic.

Dr. Najwa Muhammad Al-Hasani, assistant professor of curricula and teaching methods at the University of United Arab Emirates, called for educating students about the phenomenon of Anglicized Arabic and reviewing the curricula of the Arabic language.

There should be more focus on developing the Arabic writing skills at all educational stages, improving teaching methods and reducing the use of Al-Arabeezy.

Al Shiwairikh: The phenomenon repre- sents some sort of crusts of Western Civi- lization

Social Networking Sites:

From the Perspectives of Islamic Ethics

Dr. Sumaiya Ahmed

Introduction:

Communication is highly demanded in Islam in accordance with the Noble Qur'an and Sunnah - the two major sources for Muslims. A variety of methods and mediums have been used for communication since the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), particularly for conveying and spreading Islamic messages. However, nowadays the use of social networking sites is considered as the main medium for disseminating and sharing information. Therefore, an Islamic communication should promote virtue and prevent vice in community.





The advent of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, has created a new opportunity for educating people about Islam because these sites are the result of fast-paced technological advancements, besides they are interactive and exciting. With such features, they can bring greater impact towards inviting people to take part in Islamic activities and, in turn, influence the interests of community members and bring them closer to one another through Islamic messages.

Background:

The central belief of a Muslim lies in his/her relationship with Allah the Almighty. Because Allah the Almighty is considered to be beyond human comprehension, Muslims do not depict Allah the Exalted. One verse showing how close Allah the Exalted to a human being is can be found in the Noble Qur'an, "... and We are closer to him than

(his) jugular vein.” (Surat Qaf, Verse 16)

The Noble Qur'an sets out the principles for creating a system that regulates the human relationship with Allah through acts of worship (Ibadah) and piety (Taqwa) as well as systems that regulate the relationship among human beings themselves. This system guarantees that character-based relationships can liberate humanity from disgrace and enhance their chances to attain glory.

Focusing on specific acts of worship such as performance of prayer and remembrance of Allah the Almighty with an aim to strengthen our relationship with our Creator, we should not ignore the responsibility for building good relationships with members of community. It is another act of worship that we should carry out as the Creator ordered and instructed us to do so.

In general, the relationship between human beings and the Creator and the relationship among human beings involve commu-

nication. The former is conducted through acts of worship and piety while the latter is forged based on character, ethics and brotherhood as mentioned in the Noble Qur'an, "The believers are but brothers..." (Surat Al-Hujurat, Verse 10)

Many of the Qur'anic verses emphasize the importance of communication in inviting people into Islam. The two basic guides of Islamic social and political behavior, the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah, are communication-based. Political and social communication in the early Islamic community was oral, but later on the written communication was used. The latest method of communication today is through Information Communication Technology (ICT), where communication is being conducted digitally on the Internet.

Islam on Internet

The Internet includes an unimaginably vast sea of data that is profoundly changing the range and nature of human communication. Today everyone is living in the Internet age. Communication has become easy where people can communicate using the information and communication technologies. Many are connected to the computer and internet for two reasons: information and entertainment. Border less communication can easily occur using various social sites and networks such as Facebook, Instagram, etc. This has created a platform for meeting and getting to know people around the world. Allah the Almighty has emphasized the importance for Muslims to mingle with other in the Noble Qur'an.

Social Networking Sites and Ethics

In her book "Social Networking and Ethics", Shannon Vallor said in the first decade of the

twenty-first century, new media technologies for social networking began to transform the social, political and informational practices of individuals and institutions across the globe, inviting a philosophical response from the community of applied ethicists and philosophers of technology. While this scholarly response continues to be challenged by the rapidly evolving nature of social networking technologies, the urgent need for attention to this phenomenon is underscored by the fact that it is reshaping how many human beings initiate and/or maintain virtually every type of ethically significant social bond or role: friend-to-friend, parent-to-child, co-worker to co-worker, employer-to-employee, teacher-to-student, neighbor-to-neighbor, seller-to-buyer, and doctor-to-patient, to offer just a partial list.

The complex web of interactions between social networking service users and their online and offline communities, social network developers, corporations, governments and other institutions, along with the diverse and sometimes conflicting motives and interests of this various stakeholders, will continue to require rigorous philosophical analysis for decades to come.

Brief Outline of Islamic Ethics:

The Noble Qur'an consists of more than 6,000 verses; with hundreds of verses focusing on ethical aspects. Islam is basically based on two sources: The Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Sunnah is mainly defined by Muslim scholars as "all what Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, acted, or agreed on", which is mainly documented in six authenticated sources: (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abi-Dawud, Jamea Al-Termethi, Sunan Bin-Maja, and Sunan

Al-Nisa'ee).

In his study “Software Engineering Ethical Principles Based on Islamic Values, Shihab Hameed of the International Islamic University of Malaysia noted that the general understanding of ethics in Islam can be expressed as a “set of moral principles and guidance that recognizes what is right behavior from what is wrong or what one should do or not”. The Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah show that all the life of all Muslims should be guided by Islamic ethics. The Noble Qur'an says, “Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward.” (Surat Al-Isra, Verse 9)

Allah the Almighty uses the Arabic term Akhlaq or khuluq in the Noble Qur'an to refer to ethics. The importance of ethics in Islam is shown when Allah the Almighty describes the character of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the Noble Qur'an as, “And indeed, you are of a great moral character.” (Surat Al-Qalam, Verse 4).

The Islamic ethical system differs from the secular one and the moral code advocated by other religions. Throughout the history of civilization, these secular models assumed moral codes that were transient and myopic since they were based on the values of their human founders. For example, Epicureanism or happiness for happiness's sake. By contrast, the moral code embedded in Islamic ethics emphasizes the relation of man to the Creator. Because Allah the Almighty is perfect and omniscient, Muslims have a code that is neither time-bound nor biased by human whims.

The Islamic code of ethics is enforceable at all times because the Creator is closer to each one of us than his/her jugular vein, and

has perfect, eternal knowledge. The Noble Qur'an and Sunnah use a set of ethical terms to describe the concept of goodness such as: Sidq (Truth), Khayr (Goodness), Birr (Righteousness), Qist (Equity), 'Adl (Equilibrium and Justice), Haqq (Truth and Right), Ma'ruf (virtue), Amanah (Honesty), Ikhlas (Sincerity), and Taqwa (Piety). Pious actions are described as Salihat and impious actions are described as Sayyi'at.

Significance of Ethics:

Allah the Almighty says, “You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind...” (Surat Al-Baqara, Verse 110)

In this sense, Allah the Almighty has labeled Muslims as the best Ummah or nation who enjoins what is good and forbids what is wrong. Thus, the best Ummah does not only have and promote personal virtues but also leads others to the right path of virtue. This has been indeed the practice of the prophets and their successors. After achieving their own perfection, they helped others to achieve the same. There is no doubt that Islam really stresses on the aspects of having noble characteristics.

Moreover, ethics can be considered as the basic pillar of a healthy nation. A society or nation which is devoid of ethical values would always suffer from problems. Therefore, all scholars and philosophers agreed on the importance of ethics in every individual and society and considered ethics as the foundation of every society. According to most scholars, the first step in promoting an ideal human society is to advocate a refined morality system. Indeed, each prophet brought the same message to urge people to uphold good morality.

Islamic Ethical Responsibility for the Social Networking Sites:



The Islamic ethics inspire the people to abide by work ethics as well as the ethics of using social networking sites. Users should focus on whether they are violating any ethical issues such as use of the time, honesty, and integrity, privacy, security, etc.

Use of the time:

Grzegorz Mazurek and Jolanta write in “The Impact of the Digital World on Management and Marketing” that the huge and constantly growing popularity of social networking sites makes virtual networks replace traditional forms of human interaction, becoming the most important means of exchanging views and expressing opinions. This goes in hand with the increasingly more common phenomenon of addiction to social networking, given that participation in the life of virtual communities may be a form of escape from

one's own life and responsibilities, as well as a way to kill time. In the Noble Qur'an, we find these verses, “By time. Indeed, mankind is in loss. Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.” (Surat Al-Asr, Verses 1-3)

Verily, time is very important for our success both in this temporary world and the eternal world to come. If we waste time and abuse it, then we would be wasting and abusing our lives. In the Life Hereafter, we will be among the losers, who will suffer the torments in the Hellfire if Allah the Almighty will not forgive us. Therefore, if we really give value to our lives then, we must give due value to the importance of time.

Honesty:

Michael Cross mentions in “Social Media Se-

curity: Leveraging Social Networking While Mitigating Risk”, that the social networking sites give a false impression of anonymity, and many people use them to create an artificial persona. Many people will tweak their age to look a little younger or change minor details to appear more interesting. Others will go farther. A person may provide false information about their experience, education or personal details to misrepresent themselves to potential employers, clients or romantic partners. Omitting information or providing some misleading information may be used as a defensive measure. For example, rather than providing the city you live in, you might exclude that information from your profile or say you live in a nearby larger city. However, there is a difference between protecting yourself and creating a façade. If you use social networking sites to meet others, you will want to stay honest. The Noble Qur'an says, “Woe to those who give less [than due]; Who, when they take a measure from people, take in full; But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss; Do they not think that they will be resurrected; For a tremendous Day.” (Surat Al-Mutafifeen, Verses 1-5)

A Muslim should not make a product or provide service by cheating others through false information using the Internet as it is easy and less costly. Allah the Almighty will, without doubt, see that and He will judge accordingly.

Privacy

In their book “Privacy online: Perspectives on Privacy and Self-Disclosure in the Social Web”, Sabine Trepte and Leonard Reinecke point out that privacy protection in the online social networking sites seems to be an oxymoron. After all, the main purpose of partici-

pating in social networks is the exchange of information, most of it highly personal, and the maintenance and expansion of one's social relationships. The informal character of online social networking and the possibility to communicate casually with few words through wall posts and status updates enable users to manage a large number of rather superficial contacts with relatively little effort -a phenomenon discussed in network sociology as “weak ties in the flow of information”.

The pervasiveness and user-friendliness of social networking sites provide additional motivation for users to post frequently. Thus they voluntarily disclose large amounts of personal information and contribute continually to the creation and maintenance of extensive dynamic user profiles. However, social networking sites pose many privacy risks for users, ranging from unauthorized use of their information by government agencies and businesses to attacks by hackers, phishers and data miners. Risks can also result from harmful activities by other users, such as cyber stalking, harassment, and reputation damage.

Without the permission of the owner, any information cannot be accessed. Information may be the property of an individual, organization or data of national or international interest, which can be used against humanity or spread terror in the society. Allah the Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an, “O you who have believed, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded.” (Surat Al-Noor, Verse 27)

So from the perspective of Islamic principles you cannot access the properties of others without their permission. One cannot

disclose other privacy, this is the Islamic approach to the rights of privacy. Allah the Almighty says also, “O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.” (Surat Al-Hujurat, Verse 12)

No person should come (physically) into one's property without permission or digitally into one's computers resources for curiosity or to look at their contents without a prior permission of the owner. He should be aware of the limit of the given permission.

Security:

In their book “Physical Security: 150 Things you Should Know”, Lawrence Fennelly and Marianna Perry write that once information is posted to the social networking site, it is no longer private. The more information you post, the more vulnerable you may become. Even when using high-security settings, friends or websites may inadvertently leak your information. Personal information you share could be used to conduct attacks against you or your associates. The more information shared, the more likely someone could impersonate you and trick one of your friends into sharing personal information, downloading malware, or providing access to restricted sites, predators, hackers, business competitions, and foreign state actors to restricted sites. Predators, hackers, business competitors and foreign state actors troll social networking sites looking for information or people to target for exploitation.

In Islam, breaking one's security system, such as computer security, is prohibited. The Noble Qur'an says, “And let there be [aris-

ing] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.” (Surat Al-Imran, Verse 104)

Furthermore, In Islam punishment is the best way to safeguard society against crimes and is considered a social necessity. Allah the Almighty says, “...Whoever does a wrong will be recompensed for it, and he will not find besides Allah a protector or a helper.” (Surat Al-Nisaa, Verse 123)

There are strict penalties for criminals according to Islamic law and these penalties are essential for peace, security disruption and frightening innocent people in society.

Conclusion:

The Muslim input on the Internet is currently modest. Certainly, the dissemination of the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah outweighs any other content. This presence must be celebrated as the greatest event this medium has produced as far as Muslims and human beings, in general, are concerned. Nonetheless, much remains to be done on how to reproduce Islamic knowledge and ethics in different aspects of contemporary cultural, sociopolitical and economic life of society in general.





The Lost Muslim Heritage in the Americas

By: J. B. Lardjane
(Algerian Researcher and Translator)

Contrary to conventional knowledge and popular belief that the history of Islam in America began with the early Muslim immigration in the 19th century or with the advent of Muslim African slaves, it strikingly goes back some centuries before Christopher Columbus.

It was prevalent among early European

explorers to use Muslim craftsmanship and knowledge for their travels, for example, Vasco de Gama was assisted by the eminent Muslim navigator and cartographer Ahmad bin Majid. This fact is acknowledged by Christopher Columbus himself, who further wrote in his diaries that he had been deeply influenced by Muslim writers and their sci-

entific knowledge. Even if we assume Christopher Columbus the de facto discoverer, he still remains a controversial figure who was directly or indirectly aided by Muslims in the discovery of the new world. Therefore, Muslims should be considered a part of this historical legacy.

Not only was the presence of Muslims in the Americas known to the early Spanish and Portuguese explorers, but Muslim geographical and navigational information was actually the bedrock of European explorations, as the British orientalist De Lacy O'Leary pointed out that Muslims definitely had the sufficient scientific knowledge and skill to make journeys across the Atlantic Ocean. However, unfortunately, the Spanish inquisitions and interior problems prevented the permanent expansion of Islamic civilization to the new world.

Christopher Columbus originally believed he was heading to India before mysteriously landing in the Bahamas Islands where he noticed a mosque on the top of a beautiful mountain. This explains that Muslim people had previously taken risks to cross the Atlantic to see the unknown lands and as the return was difficult and dangerous, some of them decided to stay there and settle down.

It has been established that the West African Muslims of the Malian Empire had permanent settlements on the other side of the Atlantic. At that time. It was only Muslims who owned advanced marine technology, geographical knowledge, and the largest fleets in the world, so it was no miracle for them to be aware of the existence of far lands. Therefore, Christopher Columbus attempted to find out what the Muslims were talking about. He also believed he could cross to India by circumambulating the

round earth, a fact that was only known to Muslims.

Despite the secular stance and scientific outlook of the west, they still regard Christopher Columbus as the legitimate discoverer of the new world. When Christopher Columbus sailed for the first time, he wishfully aimed to reach India and to pave the way for a new crusade from the far east to capture Jerusalem. There is also another evidence which suggests that Christopher Columbus was following the Muslim Moors who were escaping to the far lands from the Spanish Inquisitions. This explains why early European explorers of the Indian Ocean called the Muslim inhabitants of Sri Lanka and Indonesia the "Moors".

In this brief exposé, I will try to provide evidence from both western and eastern resources in the hope that it contributes to ending centuries of Islamophobia.

The Arabian Historians and Seafarers

Many Andalucian writers wrote about the dark sea and the far lands. Some accounts were meticulously described. This interest in the "Beyond the Sea" existed since the early Islamic conquests of North Africa when the eminent Uqba bin Nafe, the opener of North Africa said once arriving at the edge of eastern Moroccan coasts: Oh God, if I knew there is land beyond this sea, I would go and conquer it.

Abu Al-Hassan Ali Al-Masoudi, one of the most eminent Muslim geographers and historians reported in his book Muruj-Al-Dhahab wa Maadin Aljawhar "(translated as Meadows of Gold and Quarries of Jewels" (956 AD) an account of a sailor known as Khishkhash bin Said bin Aswad Al-Qurtubi who sailed in 889 AD from the port of Palos in Muslim Spain and reached a land in

the West (Atlantic sea) and came back with an incredible amount of wealth. Another historian known as Muhammad bin Omar Al-Qutiyah wrote in his chronicles that in 999 AD, bin Farrukh, a sailor from Granada (Gharnata in Arabic) landed in Gando (Great Canary), visited King Guanariga and continued his journey westwards till he found two islands (in the Caribbean), and that he arrived back in Spain that year full of treasures.”

A common remark by Arabian historians is the wealth brought back by the sailors, a fact shared by both European and West African explorers. This was confirmed by the Empire of Mali’s gold trade and settlement in Latin America that made its ruler Mansa Musa one of the wealthiest individuals in history. In fact, the treasures were a motivating factor for the European colonization of the new world.

There is no doubt that the Spanish explorers were accustomed to Arabian geographers and historians such as Al-Sharif Al-Idrisi (1097-1155), the founder of modern geography and cartography who worked in Sicily for the court of Italian King Roger, and whose writings were known and widespread in Europe. In his most important work *Kitāb Nuzhat Al-mushtaq* (translated as The Book of Pleasant Journeys, Latin Version: *De Geographia Universali*), he writes about a group of North African sailors who set foot in far lands behind the Atlantic sea. One of the interesting things he mentioned about their encounters is the abundant flocks of a different breed of wild sheep described as big, highly woolen and of bitter meat. This description may correspond to the native American breeds of sheep.

A linguistic and historical study con-

ducted by the Algerian historians Ibrahim Fekhar and Sulayman bin Daoud, published at the Seeker magazine, found that the word “Brazil” does not originate from Spanish and Portuguese or any other languages but its roots come from the Arabic language and that it has been named after a famed Andalucian Arab family known as Al-Barzali who had immigrated to Brazil prior of Columbus in order to escape the Spanish persecutions.

The African Expansion

Despite that less or more evidence may exist in other fields of study, the West African travels of the Malian Empire and their settlements are some of the most substantial arguments that have been presented by Western historians. Before Columbus started his trans-Atlantic trips, he was actually a well-known trader in West Africa. This is why historian and linguist Leo Weiner of Harvard University acknowledges that Christopher Columbus was well aware of the West African presence in the new world. In his book in 1920 “Africa and The Discovery of America”, he demonstrated that the West African Mandinka people were present in the Americas and had spread throughout the Caribbean, Central, South and North American territories, including Canada, where they were trading and intermarrying with the Iroquois and Algonquin Indians.

In 1960, Giles Cauvet, a French anthropologist introduced in his “Les Berberes de l’Amerique” (The Berbers of America), an ethnographic comparison between Africans and South Americans, and he stated that Muslim Berbers from present-day Morocco set foot in America as well as other Bombarda and Mundinca people from the Malian Empire. Later in 1976, Ivan Van

Sertima, another anthropologist from Harvard University, in his “They came before Columbus” outlined evidence of early west African contacts and settlements in the American continent during the reign of Mansa Musa the Ruler of the Malian Empire. A supportive manuscript from Tombouctou that belongs to court Mansa Musa Abu Bakari reveals interesting accounts about the dynasty’s extensive travels in the 13th and 14th century to the country which would later be renamed Brazil.

These facts were endorsed by German historian Alexander Von Wuthenau’s book “Unexpected Faces in Ancient America” (1975) where he affirms that the ancient and early Americas were filled with an international mélange of peoples from Africa, Asia, and Moorish Spain. His evidence reveals that Islamic peoples were clearly a prominent group within it. He analyzed many artifacts including a group of carved heads sculptures with Moorish-looking features resembling the Arabian Fez.

Dr. Barry Fell, a prominent anthropologist from the University of Harvard, came with new and surprising findings in his 1980 book *Saga America*. He discovered scientific evidence purporting the arrival, settlements and cultural interactions of Muslims with natives between 650-800 AD. He went as far as claiming that perhaps Muslims from the time of the Rashidun caliphate put their feet in the Americas around the year 650A.D.

After testing, he discovered the existence of various Muslim schools ruins in places as far as Canada and California. Columbus himself admitted in his papers while his ship was sailing near Gibara on the north-east coast of Cuba, he saw a mosque on top of a beautiful mountain. Coincidentally, the

ruins of mosques and minarets with inscriptions of Qur’anic verses discovered by Dr. Barry Fell were located in the same areas mentioned by Columbus.

One of his surprising discoveries can be found in Inyo County, California, where exists an early American petroglyph (rock carving) which stated in Arabic: “Jesus, Son of Mary”. This was in California, Western Side of North American continent, how Muslims reached there is still a hidden secret of history, or perhaps had it been the Chinese Muslim explorations and settlements which instilled their imprints there.

The Chinese Connection

Chinese researchers discovered an ancient manuscript known as “the Sung document” which dates back to the Song Dynasty of China. A study of this manuscript was published at the Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies (the 1960-61 issue, Volume 23) by Hui-Lin Li of Pennsylvania University under the title “Mu-Lan-p’i: A Case for Pre-Columbian Transatlantic Travel by Arab Ships”. This manuscript was authored by two Chinese historians Chou and Chao in 1178 and is thought to record agricultural settlements and many trade harbors of Muslim Arabs in the new world that was named by Chinese chroniclers Mu LanPe. Many Chinese and western scholars analyzed the document and assumed that Mu LanPe might refer to a place somewhere between South and North America.

In addition to this, Gavin Menzies, a controversial British marine commander and historian published a book entitled 1421: The Year China Discovered the World in which he argues that Chinese-Muslim Admiral Zheng He (his original Muslim name: Hajji Mahmoud Shams Al-Deen) led expe-

ditions which discovered the Americas in the same year indicated in the book title. In China, Zheng He is celebrated as one of its greatest generals and the greatest sea navigator. Meanwhile, Indonesia recognizes him as the one person partially responsible for the implementation of Islam in the archipelago. He lived during the Ming Dynasty which had a particular tolerance and cooperation with the Muslim minority that was well respected and had high scholarly and political positions within the courts of its rulers.

The Ottoman Voyages

The renowned Ottoman admiral Piri Muhyidin Reis Bahriye (d.1553, known as Piri Reis in the West) made extensive travels around the globe in the early 16th century. He produced very interesting maps of the two American continents which he presented to Sultan Salim The First. Although Columbus had been in the Caribbean by then, the Piri Reis maps accurately depict most of the Americas that were not yet visited by Columbus and European explorers whose discovery was limited to few islands of the Caribbean. Yet, there has not been found any original map drawn by Christopher Columbus or his fellow sailors.

Another Turkish map-maker, known as Haci Ahmet (Haji Ahmed) made a map of the globe including the two American continents in 1559 by following the footsteps of Piri Reis. They were mapped so well that it is hard to believe that anyone could have drawn without having adequate marine access and technology. This shows us how the Ottoman Empire, the world's greatest superpower at the time, had a particularly advanced and unchallenged marine technology and power. This was demonstrated

by the maps of Piri Reis and Haji Ahmed which were of such sophisticated exactitude and projection that strikingly put the maps about two centuries ahead of the cartography of that time. Interestingly, in the year 1627 and 1660, Ottoman fleets succeeded to lay temporary sieges to Southern Iceland.

Scientific evidence

There is a minority in the south eastern United States known as the Melungeons. Despite the claim that they are the descendants of mixed race pairings natives with white Europeans in the 17th century, genetic and medical studies by the Melungeons DNA Project demonstrated significant similarities between Melungeons and populations of Morocco, Libya, Syria, Northern Iraq, and Northern Iran.

Moreover, research and DNA testing conducted by professor Evan Uriasco of Rhodes Island University on corpses found on the eastern coasts of America prove that they date back to the 11th and 12th century and might be of Arab bloodlines. These corpses were found in same regions described by Arab historians, European accounts, as well as recent archeological findings of Muslim settlements.

In the year 1970, Algerian historian Muhammad Salah Seddik reported in one of his books the biological findings of a team of American biologists about plants in North America which are endemic to the Middle East. This finding suggests that those plants had been brought and cultivated by the Arabian or West African seafarers.

The Revelations of Early European Explorers

Divine justice may want it to prevail. Upon sailing near the Cuban coasts, Columbus no-

ticed a mosque with a white minaret on the top of a beautiful mountain. He also noticed black people who actually settled there during Atlantic-African exchanges. He noticed similarity between garments and language of some native inhabitants and the Moorish or Arab people. As previously mentioned, the renowned American historian and linguist Leo Weiner, who studied linguistic, agricultural, and cultural aspects of the Native people of America with analysis of writings of the early European explorers, concluded that Christopher Columbus was well aware of Muslim African presence in most of the Eastern sides of American territories.

In the third Book of Travels of Christopher Columbus, a biography written by Fernando, reveals their use of Moorish craftsmanship and materials in order to reach the Americas. According to him, Columbus was accompanied in the first voyage by one Muslim and two Moriscos navigators. In the same book, Fernando Columbus writes that the "First" Christian to see the American land from the crew of Columbus was Rodrigo de Triana or Rodriguez de Lepe, who on his return to Spain became a Muslim after Columbus had not given him credit nor the King any recompense. This information was confirmed by historians Cyrus Gordon in his work "Before Columbus" (1971) and by William Least Heat-Moon in his work "Columbus in the Americas." (2002)

The Post-Columbian Heritage

Today, thousands of towns and places across the American continents have the Spanish and Portuguese names of Arabic roots. This suggests that earlier Muslim settlers had given Arabic/Islamic names to those places that were later distorted by the Spanish and

Portuguese explorers or that it proves the lasting cultural and scientific impact of Islamic Spain on European explorers.

In 1995, Jaime Caceres Enriquez, a historian and former Peruvian ambassador to Algeria, published a book about the Andalusian presence and impact on the South American continent in general and on Peru in particular. One of the things he said is that Lima, the capital of Peru, has long been a hub for Moorish refugees and immigrants and it was described by European visitors as Al-Andalus of America.

Many historians estimate 130 to 200 million natives perished due to European colonization and around 20 million black Africans were subjugated to slavery during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, of which only 4 million survived after the abolition of slavery.

There is an urgent need to increase awareness and win the recognition of the Muslim discovery of America or at least their major contribution to the European discovery of America, and how it could have been different if Muslims stayed there. This comes at a time of growing Islamophobia and in order to avoid the same plight faced by natives and Afro-Americans. History can be valuable for Dawah purposes to the peoples of the two Americas as the Qur'an teaches us:

"O mankind, indeed We (Allah) have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."

Surat Al-Hujurat, Verse 13.

"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge." Surat Al-Rum, verse 22

Global Politics for a Globalized Economy

Global markets are now more important than national markets for small and medium-size countries, and approaching that status for large economies.

The emergence of such a truly global capitalism means that more and more economic activity will no longer be embedded in the politics or regulatory systems of various nation-states, says a new study run by Brookings Institution.

Market Capitalism

From the end of World War II to the mid-2010s, economic globalization progressed relentlessly through expanded trade, proliferating

capital flows, faster (and cheaper) communication, and, to a lesser extent, human migration. Yet, even as these linkages have deepened and multiplied, the global economy has remained fundamentally a collection of national economies, each embedded in national politics. This is now changing.

In the democratic countries that have built the market capitalism that dominates the world today, the building blocks of the economy – taxation, public spending, and regulatory frameworks – are enacted by the legislature and interpreted by the legal system. This lends legitimacy to them and the



economic activities they facilitate.

But a shift is occurring: global markets already are more important than national markets for small and medium-size countries, and they are approaching that status for large economies. In less than a decade, it will be the huge world market, rather than national markets, that allocates capital, finance, and skilled labor. Many firms will be truly multinational, with headquarters located in one place (probably where tax liabilities can be minimized), production and sales happening largely elsewhere, and managers and workers sourced from all over the world.

The emergence of such a truly global capitalism – a process that, to be sure, is far from complete – means that markets will no longer be embedded in the politics or regulatory systems of various nation-states. If they are to produce desirable outcomes, they will need to be embedded more deeply in – and regulated more effectively by – global institutions.

Of course, international economic institutions – from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to the economic bodies of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization – already exist and have long served as platforms for member states to adopt shared rules. The IMF and the WTO, in particular, have acquired some real regulatory authority in macroeconomic and trade policy, respectively.

Emergence of a Global Market

Domestic politics were largely eschewed in establishing and sustaining these international institutions. Though treasuries, central banks, and trade ministries – especially of the advanced countries – acted politically, they did so with very little public debate. Even today, the average citizen in the United States, France, or India knows little about what the

WTO actually does.

In other words, the emergence of a global market is not embedded in any legitimacy-conferring political process. Multilateral institutions are thus viewed as elitist, making them a political target. This is reminiscent of the European Union's "democratic deficit," which has fueled resistance to further integration.

In fact, resistance to global capitalism is also rampant and rising. In particular, US President Donald Trump espouses a kind of "go-it-alone" neo-nationalism. Far from deepening multilateral structures, he wants to dismantle them, dislodging the global market from the regulatory institutions in which it is already only weakly embedded. At both the national and international levels, Trump believes that the less regulation, the better.

The EU, meanwhile, pursues the opposite line. Despite the internal challenges it faces, it continues to try to regulate markets beyond national borders. This year alone, the European Commission has imposed over (\$5.8 billion) in fines on AlphabetInc, Google's parent company, and Qualcomm for breaching antitrust restrictions. And with its General Data Protection Regulation, the EU has sought to tighten restrictions on the use, sharing, and control of personal data.

Because the EU has such a large market, such actions have a far-reaching impact. But when it comes to setting truly international standards, the EU obviously falls short. This has become all the more true with figures like Trump actively working against its efforts and espousing deregulation at a time when the level of global economic interconnectedness demands just the opposite.

Multilateral Institutions Work

Allowing major multinational companies, which are already reaping massive profits



and crowding smaller players out of entire industries, to avoid paying much tax does far-reaching damage, not least by exacerbating inequality and weakening public budgets. But such firms can be regulated effectively only through multilateral cooperation. Likewise, the only way to make any headway on combating the effects of climate change is for all countries to work together.

The realities of today's global economy demand that we make multilateral institutions work. That means not only increasing the clout of existing institutions – here, reform is a prerequisite – but also establishing new institutions, such as a Global Competition Authority. None of this will be possible without a real global political debate.

Of course, the emergence of a global politics has far-reaching potential implications for traditional ideas about democracy, not to mention national sovereignty. At the same time, however, allowing the global market to function without adapted regulation, enacted by legitimate and effective international institutions, would amount to abandoning the essence of democracy.

Sovereignty and Globalization

The challenge ahead has been presented by Harvard economist Dani Rodrik in the form of a trilemma: when it comes to democracy, national sovereignty, and globalization, we can have any two, but never all three.

Rodrik advocates less globalization and more democracy. Nationalists like Trump prefer strengthening the nation-state, in ways that could weaken both democracy and globalization, at least in the longer term.

In the medium term, however, further globalization seems unavoidable, meaning that it is the nation-state, and national politics, that must be constrained. One way to lend legitimacy to the new global politics would be to ensure that it is grounded at the local level. This will require local political leaders to adopt a narrative that explains how global problems impact their constituents. Climate change is a successful example of this form of localized global politics.

Whatever institutional arrangements are chosen, ensuring that a new global politics strengthens, rather than undermines, democracy is the central political challenge of the twenty-first century. We can no longer afford to shy away from it.

Climate Refugees

Increasing Rapidly

This summer's fires, droughts, and record-high temperatures should serve as a wake-up call. The longer a narrow and ignorant elite condemns Americans and the rest of humanity to wander aimlessly in the political desert, the more likely it is that we will all end up in a wasteland.

Modern humans, born into one climate era, called the Holocene, have crossed the border into another, the Anthropocene. But instead of a Moses guiding humanity in this new and dangerous wilderness, a gang of science deniers and polluters currently misguides humanity to ever-greater danger. We are all climate refugees

now and must chart a path to safety.

Hurricanes Becoming more Frequent

The Holocene was the geological age that started more than 10,000 years ago, with favorable climate conditions that supported human civilization as we know it. The Anthropocene is a new geological era with environmental conditions that humanity has never before experienced.

Ominously, the Earth's temperature is now higher than during the Holocene, owing to the carbon dioxide that humanity has emitted into the atmosphere by burning coal, oil, and





gas, and by indiscriminately turning the world's forests and grasslands into farms and pastures.

A new study revealed by the Center for Sustainable Development and of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, noted that people are suffering and dying in the new environment, with much worse to come.

Hurricane Maria is estimated to have taken more than 4,000 lives in Puerto Rico last September. High-intensity hurricanes are becoming more frequent, and major storms are causing more flooding, because of the increased heat transfer from the warming waters of the oceans, the greater moisture in warmer air, and the rise in sea levels – all made

more extreme by human induced climate change.

Just last month, more than 90 people perished in the suburbs of Athens from a devastating forest fire stoked by drought and high temperatures. Huge forest fires are similarly raging this summer in other hot and newly dry locales. Last year, Portugal was devastated. Many record-high temperatures are being reached around the world this summer.

How utterly reckless of humanity to have rushed past the Holocene boundary, ignoring – like a character in a horror movie – all of the obvious warning signs. In 1972, the world's governments assembled in Stockholm to address the growing environmental threats. In the lead-up to

the conference, the Club of Rome published 'The limit of Growth', which first introduced the idea of a "sustainable" growth trajectory and the risks of environmental overshooting. Twenty years later, the warning signs flashed brightly in Rio de Janeiro, where United Nations member states assembled at the Earth Summit to adopt the concept of "sustainable development" and to sign three major environmental treaties to halt human-induced global warming, protect biological diversity, and stop land degradation and desertification.

Three New Treaties

After 1992, the United States, the world's most powerful country, ostentatiously ignored the three new treaties, signaling to other countries that they could slacken their efforts as well.

The US Senate ratified the climate and desertification treaties but did nothing to implement them. And it refused even to ratify the treaty to protect biological diversity, in part because western-state Republicans insisted that landowners have the right to do what they want with their property without international

meddling.

More recently, the world adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 and the Paris climate agreement in December 2015. Worse is to come. The human-caused rise in CO₂ hasn't yet reached its full warming effect, owing to the considerable lag in its impact on ocean temperatures.

So why does humanity keep plunging dumbly ahead, toward certain tragedy?

The main reason is that our political institutions and giant corporations willfully ignore the rising dangers and damage. Politics is about obtaining and holding power and the perks of office, not about solving problems, even life-and-death environmental problems.

Managing a major company is about maximizing shareholder value, not about telling the truth or avoiding great harm to the planet. Profit-seeking investors own the major media, or at least influence it through their advertising purchases. Thus, a small yet very powerful group maintains the fossil-fuel-based energy system at growing peril to the rest of humanity today and in the



future.

Trump is the latest useful fool doing the polluters' bidding, abetted by congressional Republicans who finance their election campaigns with contributions from environmental culprits such as Koch Industries. Trump has filled the US government with industry lobbyists who are systematically dismantling every environmental regulation they can reach.

The Biggest Tragedy

We need a new kind of politics that starts with a clear global goal: environmental safety for the planet's people, by fulfilling the Paris climate agreement, protecting biodiversity, and cutting pollution, which kills millions each year. The new politics will listen to scientific and technological experts, not self-interested business leaders and narcissistic politicians.

Climatologists enable us to gauge the rising dangers. Engineers inform us how to make the rapid transition, by 2050, to zero-carbon energy. Ecologists and agronomists show us how to grow more and better crops on less land while ending deforestation and restoring previously degraded land.

The biggest tragedy, and this represents a failure of the educated elite, is that we had and still have the means to prevent climate change - nuclear energy. Somehow people still fear nuclear energy despite its far better safety record than fossil fuels and the fact that, unlike renewables, it can replace fossil fuels entirely.

This is the fault of the most highly educated amongst us who have mostly never taken the trouble to learn about exactly what the data is on

radiation and the harms it causes. This has led to safety levels of radiation which are ridiculously expensive and unnecessary. For example the nuclear energy industry is required to spend as much money to save one life as it costs to save 25 million lives with vaccines.

Few people know that after the two worst nuclear accidents ever (Fukushima and Chernobyl) only 40 people have died from radiation (all at Chernobyl). Fear of radiation has done far more harm than radiation, and may, ironically, destroy human life.

Furthermore, the earth's orbit today is less oval than earlier. In other words the earth doesn't move as far away from the sun as it did in the past. That changes the climate. The poles are moving and that changes the climate. Solar activity changes and therefore the climate. Carbon dioxide (one factor of many) changes and that changes the climate.

The Magic Age

Were government simply reduced to doing what government does well, and were we not expecting it to police other nations, give us a free ride when we reach a magic age, lower our medical bills, tell us what to eat, and make our lives totally safe and risk free at all times and in all places, then maybe, just maybe, we could pay attention while government did its best to address the pollution problem, and slap its hand when it performed poorly.

Funny, how one part of entitled global elites loves, just loves to accuse the other part of entitled global elites of being nothing but nefarious, entitled global elites. Some future funny man (or woman, God forbid I would be judged a sexist) will write up the collected works on global warming debate

and produce a book that will tickle the funny bone of many generations to come.

Not droughts, not floods, not hurricanes, not tornadoes. No nothing. Losses might be increasing because people build where they shouldn't (if they wanted to avoid losses), and dumb insurance industry, aided and abated by governments, keeps rewarding their bad judgment. Epic fires get started by reckless people, and there are more of them, and it only takes one.

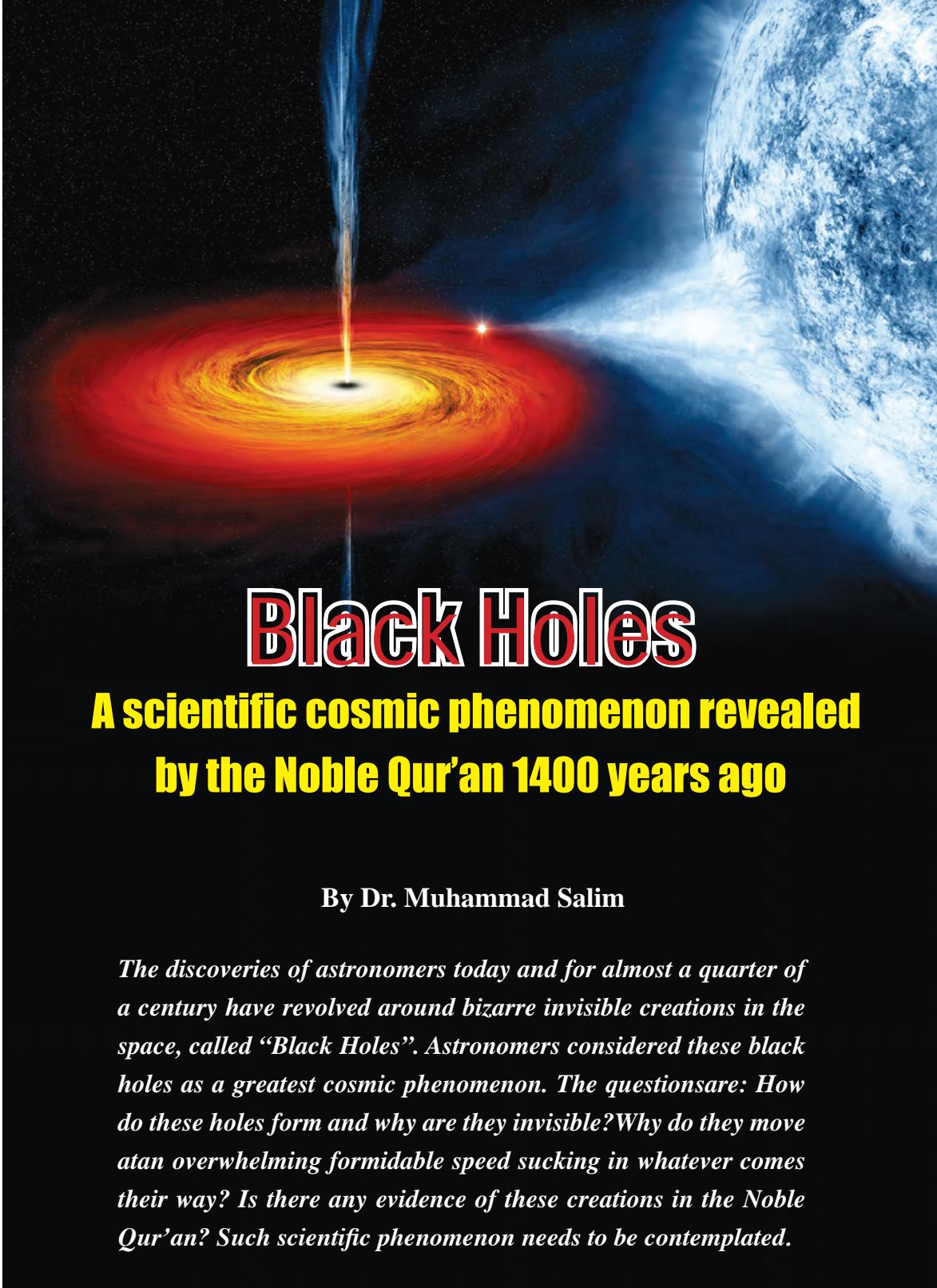
Can we focus on the real problems of the real world, before frightened and confused masses choose fascism over democracy, in the world full of nukes? Please? If fate handed you the floor, do endeavor to use it wisely, and for public good?

Politicians then knew perfectly well what would happen if oil/coal burning was cut back. A recession far worse than the 20s. And no, 'alternatives' don't work.

Unfortunately there is no turning back. The changes that have been made will have their effects for centuries to come. Altering the proportions of atmospheric gases means that as a result, climatic systems will keep on changing until a new equilibrium is achieved, however long that will.

It should be noted that human life, as well as mammalian life and other forms of life on Earth are not useful or meaningful to the universe in any noticeable way, furthermore, what we perceive as higher life forms, e.g. humans, are apparently just derivatives of bacteria-like creatures, themselves just derivatives of random atomic processes.

In other words, what we regard as life is, in a purely materialist model, simply an unintended expression of the properties of matter and to destroy life one would have to destroy matter itself, a daunting project by all measures.

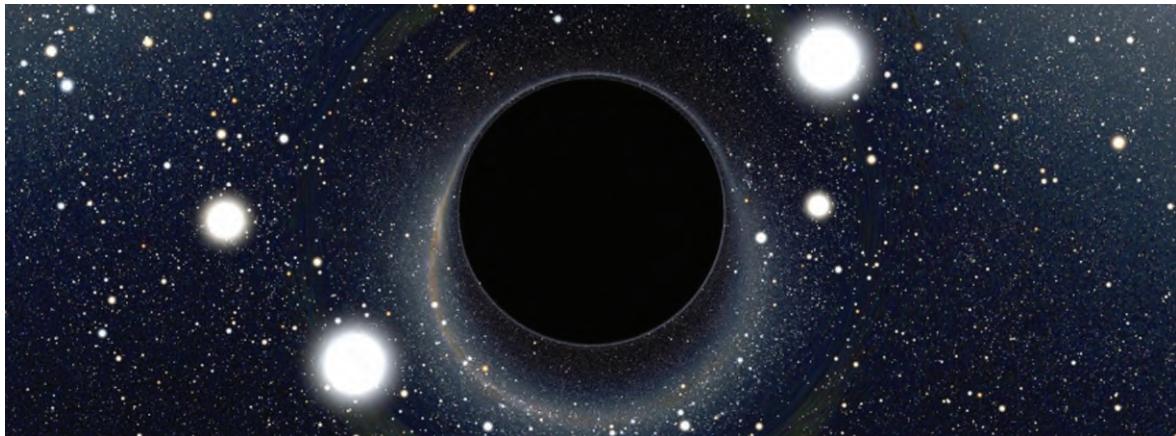


Black Holes

**A scientific cosmic phenomenon revealed
by the Noble Qur'an 1400 years ago**

By Dr. Muhammad Salim

The discoveries of astronomers today and for almost a quarter of a century have revolved around bizarre invisible creations in the space, called "Black Holes". Astronomers considered these black holes as a greatest cosmic phenomenon. The questions are: How do these holes form and why are they invisible? Why do they move at an overwhelming formidable speed sucking in whatever comes their way? Is there any evidence of these creations in the Noble Qur'an? Such scientific phenomenon needs to be contemplated.



The Phenomenon of Black Holes:

The black hole is a region of space so compressed that matter is drawn towards it in a very high density. Once inside, nothing can escape even light. The black hole forms when a big star collapses due to losing its nuclear fuel. Although the black hole is invisible, however, it has an immense gravitation pull that sucks in all bodies around it.

Background of black holes:

In 1790, John Michel, British, and Pierre Simon, French, proposed the existence of invisible stars in the sky. In 1915, Albert Einstein of the General Relativity Theory predicted the existence of these objects in the sky and their impact on time and space. Finally, in 1967, the American astronomer John Waller talked about black holes formed as a result of star collapse. In 1994, astronomers confirmed by Hubble Space Telescope the existence of an invisible object in the center of the galaxy M87 surrounded by gas in a clear whirlpool. The weight of such an object is estimated to be three thousand millions times heavier than that of the sun. The x-rays emitted from these objects helped substantiate their existence later.

It is proved that any star weighing twenty times the weight of the sun can transform

at the end of its life into a black hole as a result of its big gravity field and its huge mass. However, if a star is small and loses its nuclear fuel, its gravity force and small mass are not enough to compress it into a black hole, in which case it is transformed into a white dwarf, i.e. a dead star. Therefore, to become a black hole, a star must enjoy a huge mass at the end of its life. For example, the sun at the end of its life will consume its nuclear fuel and darken quietly. It won't transform into a black hole because its weight is not quite enough to do so. In the Noble Qur'an, we may find a good reference to the case of the sun. Allah the Almighty said: "When the sun (with its spacious light) is folded up." (Surat Al-Takweer, Verse 1). Therefore, the sun won't collapse but darkens slowly.

The black hole has immense gravitation; therefore, any gas passes close to it will be sucked in by it and spinlike a strong whirlpool, generating intense heat due to this whirling which spins as fast as a rapid hurricane. The heat emits X-rays continuously. With their tools, astronomers can easily spot these X-rays and decide if a region of space contains a black hole.

Escape velocity is the minimum speed needed for an object to escape from gravi-

tational influence of a massive body. As for earth gravity, an object needs to be thrown at a speed faster than 11.2 kilometers per second. However, in the case of a black hole, the escape velocity must be higher, and no object can reach such speed, even the light which travels at a speed of 300,000 kilometers per second cannot escape from the gravitational pull of a black hole as the light speed is not enough to do so; and that is why a black hole is invisible.

To realize how great these stars are, imagine that you have thrown a stone up while you are standing on the surface of the earth, such a stone will come back down due to the effect of earth gravity. Now, imagine that the escape velocity on the surface of a black hole is faster than light speed, i.e. over 300,000 kilometers per second, thus even light cannot escape from the gravitational pull of the black hole as it is quite dark and invisible. It is hidden behind the event horizon which is the boundary around the mouth of the black hole where light loses its ability to escape.

To imagine the hugeness of these creations, an astronomer conducted an experiment for weighing a black hole. He found that a teaspoonful of a black hole weighs

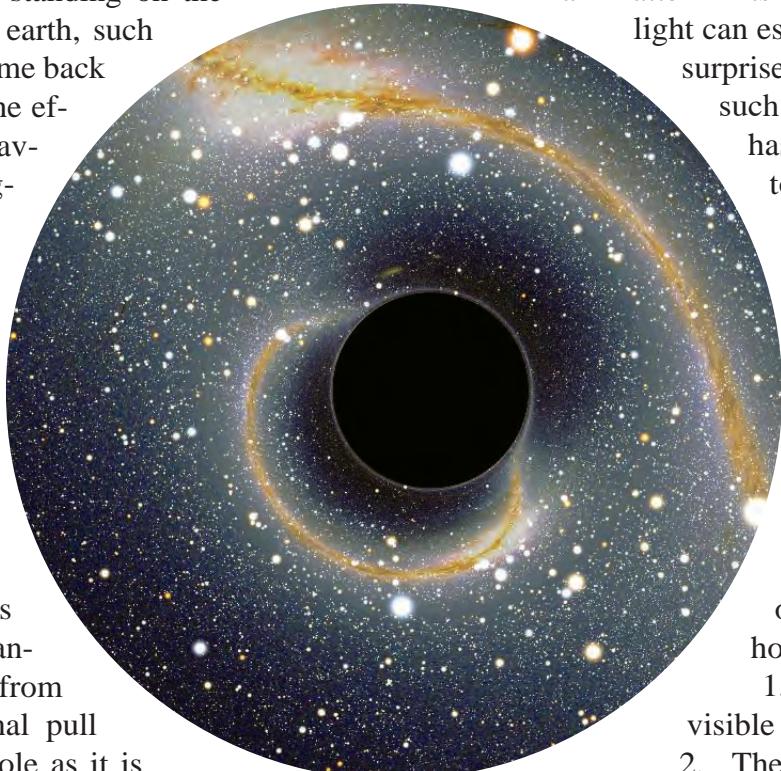
more than four thousand millions tons. Also, scientists found black holes with a mass ten thousand million times greater than the sun's. The black hole mass is over one thousand million times the sun's.

The Noble Qur'an clearly explains the phenomenon of black holes. Allah the Almighty says: "So verily I call to witness the planets – that recede. Go straight, or hide." (Surat Al-Takweer, Verses 15- 16)

A black hole creates an immense gravitational pull, not unlike an invisible cosmic vacuum cleaner. As it moves, it sucks in all matter in its way- not even light can escape. One gets surprised to know that such scientific fact has been rhetorically stated in the Noble Qur'an since the seventh Gregorian century. The above-mentioned verses refer to three characteristics of these black holes, which are:

1. They are invisible objects.
2. They enjoy an immense gravitational pull that works like a vacuum cleaner sucking in every matter, radiation or light that comes their way.
3. They move constantly.

This means that since the seventh century, nobody could have imagined that there are invisible stars that move and enjoy an



immense gravitational force that works like a vacuum cleaner in the space. However, the Noble Qur'an has told us about these bizarre creations in a scientific astounding precision. This is to deduce that the Holy Qur'an has foretold such cosmic facts. These creations are but a great witness of the omnipotence of the Creator of the universe. Moreover, it is further proved that this Noble Qur'an is a sacred Book of Allah and not a book authored by a human being. Allah the Almighty said: "Do they not ponder on the Qur'an (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy." (Surat Al-Nisa's, Verse 82).

The formation and development of black holes:

It is previously mentioned that the American physicist John Waller was the first one who gave this phenomenon the name of "black holes" in 1967. Black holes form when a gigantic star explodes at the last stages of its life. Such an explosion is called "Supernovae" where parts of the star are scattered in the space. Although they are invisible, these black holes represent 90% of the content of the universe. There are three kinds of black holes:

1. The small black hole known as basic

and primitive; it is the size of an atom, but its mass is huge.

2. Intermediate black hole, which is called "stellar black hole", it is more common. Its mass is twenty times bigger than that of the sun. It can be put in a ball of 16-kilometer diameter. There are ten million to billions of stellar black holes with masses roughly three times that of the sun. They are found in the Milky Way Galaxy.

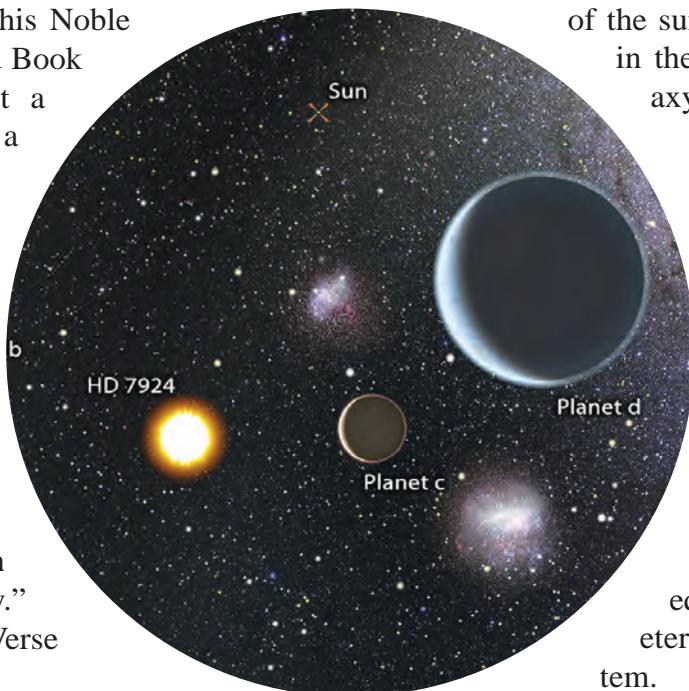
3. The big black hole which is known as "Supermassive".

The mass of this big black hole is million times greater than the mass of the sun. It can be put in a ball of a diameter equal to the diameter of the solar system.

It is scientifically proved that each big galaxy contains a supermassive black hole in its center. The supermassive black hole in the center of Milky Way is called the arc. Its mass equals the mass of four million suns and it can be put inside a ball of a diameter equal to that of the sun.

The Scientific Miracles of the Noble Qur'an:

In a seminar on the scientific miracles of the Noble Qur'an, Clare Forestier, the BBC seasoned journalist, reporter, presenter, producer and online journalist, recorded



a videotape in YouTube highlighting the phenomenon of black holes and its relation with what was revealed in the Noble Qur'an 1400 years ago. Allah the Almighty said: "By the star when it goes down" (Surat Al-Najm, Verse 1). However, the BBC journalist put the previous verse in this way: "By the star when it falls". Actually, stars do not fall to the ground; they just move fast leaving their places at the end of their lives. They collapse, get compressed to form a black hole. Surat Al-Najm gives us a detailed description of black holes. Although the Noble Qur'an mentioned the phenomenon of black holes 1400 years ago, astronomers only came to record it in 2011. In 2016, they recorded three cases of stars falling into black holes. Astronomers found many clues in the heavenly trip arranged for Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from the Grand Mosque in Makkah (Al-Masjid Al-Haram) to Jerusalem (Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa), and then he was made to ascend up until he reached the finite jujube tree in the company of the Archangel Gabriel. It is a miraculous trip because at the time there were no planes or rocket ships that could have taken him to such a remote place.

These black holes are dark, nothing is darker than them. Light cannot travel in straight lines into black holes. According to astronomers, one cannot look directly into them because they are very dark. However, the Noble Qur'an has drawn our attention to a very important fact as it told us that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had visited the black holes and could see directly into them. Allah the Almighty said: "Near the Lotetree beyond which none may pass. Near it is the Garden of Abode. Behold, the Lotetree was shrouded (in mystery unspeakable!). (His)

sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong! For truly did he see, of the signs of his Lord, the greatest! (Surat Al-Najm, Verses 14-18). Although astronomers believe that this region of black holes is infinite, yet the Holy Qur'an revealed and confirmed that it is finite as it leads to the Garden of Abode.

Conclusion:

Finally, astronomers have come to admit that the area of black holes is finite. Astronomers like George Polin, Rodolfo Gambini, and Gerard t' Hooft proved that power can escape from a black hole. So black holes are considered to be an entrance to another world which is the Garden of Abode as it is revealed in the Holy Qur'an (Surat Al-Najm). Stephen Hawking, the famous physicist supports the claim that one can find a way out of the black hole. At last, scientists have come to agree that the area described by the Noble Qur'an is the area of black holes.

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After Hajj, What Next – A Nigerian Overview

Busari, K.K.

Hajj is a rare opportunity to refine one's soul and have one's sins forgiven with a promise by Allah to reward Hajj Mabroor (the one accepted by Allah) with nothing but paradise as reported from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).



However, the performer of holy pilgrimage is supposed to set an example for others after Hajj and should always look in retrospect at the unique experiences gained during the journey. Those who are favored by Allah to perform Hajj and Umrah, should be thankful to Allah for the golden opportunity as they have been chosen from among Allah's servants for these acts of worship. They should pray to Allah to accept their good deeds and count their Hajj as Hajj Mabroor. This is really a favor that deserves gratitude to Allah.

At this juncture, we have to remind ourselves of the importance of travelling to the city of Madinah after Hajj to visit the Prophet's Mosque where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was buried as well as other ancient mosques and many historical battlegrounds and graveyards like Baqi'a. Pilgrims visited Madinah – a city that provided refuge to the early Muslim community, when they were being persecuted by the disbelievers of Makkah, as a center for the growing Muslim community and the dwelling place of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers for many years.



Family and community members often prepare a celebration to welcome pilgrims home and congratulate them on completing the Hajj journey. It is recommended to be humble in such gatherings and to ask the ones returning from Hajj to pray for your forgiveness, as they are in a strong position to do so.

In Nigeria, especially Yorubaland, this practice is delayed till Friday when members of family will gather and follow the pilgrim to a central mosque and the Imam will offer a special prayer in honor of the new pilgrim. Some often delay the attendance of Jumat (Friday) Service till a Friday when all and sundry will be ready to follow them to the Mosque for the spe-

cial celebration. They may even appear in the same attire purposely because of the occasion. This is called a Bid'ah (heresy) in religion. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "When you meet a new pilgrim, greet him, shake hands with him and ask him to beg forgiveness of Allah on your behalf before he enters his home. His prayer for forgiveness is accepted, as he is forgiven by Allah for his sins".

After returning from the Sacred Land, a pilgrim has to keep his mind and soul attached to Allah, remembering Him constantly because Almighty Allah says, "... And when you have completed your rites, remember Allah like your [previous] remembrance of your fathers or with [much] greater



remembrance....” (Surat Al-Baqarah, Verse 200).

The new pilgrim should be very keen to avoid evil and shameful deeds, especially after Allah has obliterated them and forgave all his sins, as a reward of performing Hajj.

This is based on the hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “The reward of Hajj Mabroor is nothing but Paradise”. He also said, “(The performance of) Umrah is an expiation for the sins committed between it and the previous one” (Sahih Muslim).

Therefore, it is expected of every pilgrim to express due gratitude to Allah for being chosen to perform those acts of worship and, at the same time, to ask Him for acceptance.

We advise such a person, upon returning home, to be conscious of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He)

when performing all what Allah has obligated him to do of the other worships such as prayers, Zakah, fasting, dutifulness to his parents, visiting kith and kin, being charitable and benevolent to Allah’s creatures, following the etiquette of Islam, taking the morals of the Noble Qur'an as a model and the like of what the Muslim should do and abandon what should not be done.

The reason for all what we have said above is that the more Hajj is considered an honor and a blessing, the more it entails responsibility on which man will be asked on the Day of Judgment in case he misbehaves after returning from Hajj. Almighty Allah says, “Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you

will be reminded. And fulfill the covenant of Allah when you have taken it, [O believers], and do not break oaths after their confirmation while you have made Allah, over you, a witness. Indeed, Allah knows what you do.” (Surat Al-Nahl, Verses: 90-91).

The message we can infer from this is that Hajj is compulsory once in a lifetime. So, the pilgrim should take that as a golden opportunity which he will make use of for the rest of his life. Remembering sacred places and all rituals of Hajj will strengthen his faith in Allah.

For a person returning from Hajj, it is often a bit of a shock to return to the old bad habits and temptations and one must be vigilant in changing one’s life for the better and remembering the lessons learned during the pilgrimage. It is the best time to turn over a new leaf, nurture a life of faith, and be extra vigilant in fulfilling Islamic duties. Those who have performed Hajj are often called by an honorific title, “Hajji” (one who has performed the Hajj) and some pilgrims, to date, are fond of adding the title “Al-hajj” to their names without any hesitation.

Child nurseries a first for Hajj



Makkah, (UNA-OIC)

Children's nurseries are available for Hajj pilgrims for the first time following the launch of a nursery service inside Makkah and Madinah.

The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, launched

the nursery service to provide a safe and educational environment for children under the supervision of qualified staff.

Nurseries offer shelter from large crowds and limit children's exposure to illness or potential accidents in the holy sites. Pilgrims can perform their ritu-

als in peace, knowing their children are in good hands, a ministry spokesman said.

Worshippers with children register for the service during their completion of the Hajj permit application via the ministry's electronic services.

The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Development, and Tatweer Co. for Educational Services are also involved in the initiative.

Children are received during Hajj season starting from Dhu Al-Hijjah 7 until the 13th. They are divided according to their age groups.

Five languages are available to teach children: Arabic, English, French, Malay, and Turkish.

Grand Mosque in Rome

