

Letter From the Editor

Originality and modernity are wings of Islamic thought

There is a dire need to evaluate the Islamic thought constantly and revise its methodology and mission in order to identify the problems of this thought and its recent developments. This should occur when there are deviations from the approved methodologies and mission just like the case of many extremists and delinquents. Consequently, the title “Islamic Thought: Methodology and Mission” was chosen as the theme of the conference organized by the Muslim World League in Dakar under the auspices of Senegalese President Macky Sall.

Serious talks and discussions took place and resulted in important visions and ideas including the importance of linking the human mind to faith in a way that makes the belief and faith the key reference of the Muslim intellectual. Prophet Muhammad’s Sunnah is the approved methodology that draws up the right path for all Muslims. Such linking is the reason for the strength and excellence of Islamic thought.

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa has stressed the originality of the Islamic thought at the opening session when he said “Originality and modernity are the wings of Islamic thought used to reach the reform, creativity and cultural influence.”

The outcomes of the conference are closely related to the concept of authenticity and modernity. The participants called upon academic, scientific and intellectual institutions to enhance their role in addressing modern legal issues and understanding them correctly in order to reach accurate and correct answers that introduce for all a road map

for the welfare of humanity.

Certainly, universities should pay more attention to the cultural and intellectual publications, which contribute to awareness and guidance of people. This is the most important mission of the university in the service of the community.

The positive effects of the human thought appear in the development of science, culture and businesses. Paying attention to the human thoughts at our universities and institutes leads to the desired development and progress. This approach will lead to putting Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa’s speech into practice, especially the bringing-up of the Muslim youth who will carry the banner of the Islamic thought.

Thought leaders and intellectuals know very well that systematic thinking and consideration are based on goals and purposes including solving problems, interpreting strange phenomena and addressing issues facing communities together with taking positive attitudes towards them.

Nowadays, Muslims suffer from weakness and underdevelopment in all areas and at all levels due to their intellectual backwardness although they were in the past the role models of the whole world in culture and thought. The lack of resources is not the real reason, but departing from the correct thought and path is. Therefore, the only way to progress and development is to reform the systematic approach and abide by the supreme mission of Islam.

By following this approach, demands of the participants in the conference can be fulfilled through removing all the negative effects in the old and modern thought together.



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MWL holds international conference in Dakar



Dakar (Senegal) - MWL

Under the patronage of His Excellency, the President of Senegal, Macky Sall, the International Conference on Islamic Thought, Methodology and Mission wrapped up its activities in the Senegalese capital of Dakar. The conference was organized by the Muslim World League and saw the participation of distinguished African scholars and intellectuals.



Dr. Al-Issa addresses the opening of the conference

Participants stressed the importance of linking the human mind to the faith framework, to be on the path of guidance and vision, adhering to the traditions of civilization and human advancement in its moral context, seeking peaceful and dignified life, and keen to unify the rows and do good to all.

Conferees noted the authenticity of Islamic thought, which is expressed by the qualified and the competent specialists who can consider developments and have the ability to separate the wheat from the chaff in the contemporary intellectual trends.

Conferees called for constructive thought based on the guidance of the

Qur'an and the Sunnah to be able to undertake the Islamic sciences and confront extremist and violent ideas with their entire negative approaches and developments, including terrorist delinquency.

Participants also stressed the need to call on universities and scientific and intellectual institutions to enhance their role in the study of modern Islamic issues and to take cognizance of them in order to come up with correct answers, solutions and perceptions that provide the road map for the benefit of the entire humanity.

Participants expressed their gratitude to the Senegalese president



Part of the opening session of the Conference

and his government for their generous care and hospitality. They also thanked the Muslim World League and its Secretary General for their commendable efforts in disseminating the tolerant principles of Islam and confronting extremism, violence and terrorism and calling for more activism and programs that provide wise intellectual guidance in the contemporary issues that are necessary for the Muslim nation and the entire humankind.

The conference's activities kicked off with a speech delivered on the behalf of the Senegalese president by Speaker of Senegal's Parliament, Mr. Moustapha Niassé, in which he

welcomed MWL's Secretary General His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and the attendees. He expressed his pleasure at holding this conference hosted by the Senegalese government and people and thanked the Muslim World League for organizing the conference as part of its programs aimed at promoting the scientific and intellectual communication with different nations and cultures.

His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa delivered a speech in which he thanked the Senegalese President for his generous patronage of the conference, asserting that the importance of its



A huge numbers of participants in the Conference

theme lied in the distinguished African scholars' presence.

His Excellency stressed the MWL's constant keenness to express the truths of Islam and its tolerant principles and its positive openness to a number of cultures and civilizations, its dedication to the establishment of moderation and confrontation of exaggeration and extremism and its call to make the scientific and intellectual meetings of Muslims express their unified word, away from labeling and exclusion under any slogan other than the slogan of Islam and its name and collective description. He stressed the importance of absorbing others with the supreme manners of Islam.

He added, "The Islamic thought has illuminated the world with its mercy, humanity, reform, justice, openness and tolerance within the guidance of Islam, as well as the realities of the bright Islamic history which is attributed to Islam, and not those who misuse its name for their material and political interests and their ideological ideas. Those are fully attributed to their greed and misguidance. We all know that the Islamic law has not preserved anyone from sinning or falling a prey to misguidance or darkness but the only preserved and perfect is our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him." His Excellency indicated that authenticity and modernity are the



The attendees of the conference are the excellencies, researchers, scientists, scholars

wings of Islamic thought, hovering in the horizon of reform, creativity and cultural influence. He stressed the importance of the Islamic moderation in the face of the intellectual deviation.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed the importance of understanding the significance of the texts of the Shari'ah and exploring its purposes and rules. He underscored the importance of understanding the jurisprudence of priorities, balances and consequences as well as spreading awareness of the rules of Shari'ah in changing the fatwas and rulings, by the change of times and places, conditions, customs, intentions and people, and contributing to the shaping of the

Islamic personality, especially the young people to hold an enlightened Islamic thought that is helpful for them, the nation, the homeland and all humankind.

His Eminence Sheikh Al-Hajj Imam Emai Anayang, Minister of Religious Affairs, delivered a speech in which he said: "The Islamic thought, which we are discussing some of its theses today, is marked by open and flexible characteristics and innovations, but they are guided by Islam and follows its course.

His Eminence said that the law of Allah Almighty is concerned with organizing the life of humans. In this sense, it is a comprehensive thought that deals with everything that exists



Senegal's Speaker of the parliament receives Souvenir from the SG of the MWL

in life. It does not overlook any aspect and no aspect has primary over another. It embraces the issues of life with integrated and balanced totalitarianism.

He pointed out that the Islamic thought is keen on the careful balance between one's innate desires and the growth and development of normal life. They should not limit themselves to one thing in particular, as they can't have political or economic thought without a system of ethics and values, or a system of ethics and values without wise political, social and economic arrangement.

He pointed out that the conference came in a global context char-

acterized by the escalation of violence in its various forms, and many scholars and researchers attribute this to the growing intellectual crisis that has resulted in extremism and terrorism.

Dakar's Mayor Mrs. Seham Wardini delivered a speech in which she thanked the MWL for organizing this international conference and its pivotal role in enhancing the values of moderation, especially in the face of extremist ideas. She emphasized that the Islamic thought extends bridges of communication with everyone confidently and aptly.

On the sidelines of the conference, a Memorandum of Under-



Dakar's Mayor Mrs. Seham Wardini receives Souvenir from the SG of the MWL

standing (MoU) was signed between the MWL, represented by His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, and the Supreme Authority of Senegalese Endowment represented by Her Excellency Mrs. Halima Joub. The MoU included cooperation in activating endowments to contribute to the promotion and development of charitable work culture in Senegal, particularly the implementation of mutual endowment, social and investment programs, as well as exchanging experiences in the field of charity and cooperation and coordination with other endowment organizations and institutions in the Arab and Islamic worlds.



Part of the audience during the conference

President of Senegal decorates Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa with State Greater Medal



Dakar - MWL

President of the Republic of Senegal Macky Sall has decorated the Secretary General of Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa with the State Greater Medal in Dakar in recognition of his international efforts of disse-

nating religious values of moderation, boosting cooperation among the followers of cultures and religions, and his initiatives and humanitarian programs around the world.

The honorary ceremony took place during President Macky's meeting



*Senegalese President mimics Sheikh Al-Issa
and the Order of the largest state*

with Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa at the Palace of Government in the Senegalese capital of Dakar. President Macky praised Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa for organizing the international conference and for the great efforts made by the Muslim World League all around the world and in African, especially in Senegal.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa thanked the

Senegalese President and expressed his pleasure for visiting Senegal, stressing that the services of the Muslim World League around the world especially in the African continent represent an Islamic and humanitarian duty ordained by the values of the Islamic religion, especially the promotion of harmony among followers of religions, cultures and ethnicities.



Ghanaian Vice-President opens MWL conference in Accra



Accra (Ghana) - MWL

His Excellency Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana Dr. Mahmudu Bawumia inaugurated the International Conference organized by the Muslim World League (MWL) in the Ghanaian capital under the title “Religious and Ethnic Minorities ... Rights and Duties”, with the participation of His Excellency Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and a number of selected Excellences and Eminences.



Dr. Al-Issa addresses the opening ceremony of the conference

Dr. Bawumia stressed the paramount importance and seriousness of the theme of the Conference, saying he was heartened by his presence and participation in the discussion of an important issue seeking to achieve national and social harmony and peace through the consolidation of the culture of preserving the minority rights and their performance of duties.

He pointed out that faith is the element and the driver leading most of humankind and forming life systems, and this is why the topic discussed in the symposium is very important. He said that granting religious minorities their full rights, status, positive integration into society, their full participation in all matters of their homeland and ensuring performance of their full national duties honestly are the best way to build just and equal

societies where holistic shift is achieved and national and religious discrimination is eliminated.

His Excellency the Vice-President spoke of the MWL's initiative to bring these important issues to the discussion table. His Excellency also commended His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa's ceaseless desire and willingness to provide all support and help required to promote dialogue, peace, coexistence and positive national integration, and take part in supporting the humanitarian and development work targeting the poor, the needy and the orphans.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed that the MWL is pleased to organize this significant conference and always wishes to be a forum collecting the shared values, which Allah Almighty has granted to the humankind so life would



Part of the Opening Session of the MWL Conference on Minority Issues

go on a straight path that pleases everyone in their harmony, peace, rise and development.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa asserted that achieving that hope would only take place when everyone lives under the umbrella of love, tolerance and understanding the Almighty Creator's way with regard to difference and diversity, and when open brotherly dialogue prevails.

He added, "We will not find the harmony and peace that we seek and will not eliminate the suffering of many poor, disadvantaged, persecuted and oppressed people around the world, unless when we vanquish the brutality that is still dominant in some hearts. Besides, we will not reach the true happiness in its world unless when we take into account bringing joy to others and keeping evil away from them."

The Secretary General continued, "In Islam, our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, says: 'No one of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself', and Allah commands us to be kind, good and fair to everyone, regardless of their religions and races." He asserted that today's world is in a dire need to activate the humanitarian commonalities, some of which are sufficient to bring the desired peace and harmony around the world.

He added, "We say this in the face of the greedy materialistic view, which sees only its own interests to the detriment of the rights and the pain of others, and then developers of this theory come to blame on the religions for the clash of civilizations. While the fact is that religions disavow that, because religion is primarily based on bringing joy to humans



Ghanaian vice-President receives Souvenir from H.E. Dr. Al-Issa

in the worldly life and the hereafter, but the values of religions unmask that theory and face its immoral challenges.”

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa pointed out that this materialistic conception lacking values and principles recognizes that religions are the threat to its reputation and entity. Throughout its history, this conception tried to distort its image and hold it the responsibility of any extremism or terrorism dressed in a fake religious cloak. He highlighted fabrications experienced by the religions throughout history. He also underscored dark ages in which the Enlightenment in the West had been hindered for decades because of the religious extremism having no relation with the correct religion, injustice and persecution suffered by followers of religions including Muslims, Christians, Jews and others.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed, “We are all aware that the absence of the correct and accurate piece of information would lead to misunderstanding or deliberate negative interpretation due to the rooting of hatred and

racism together with fearing others and the possibility of the civilizational clash.” He also stressed that the countries of coexistence and religious and ethnic harmony could overcome these evil orientations and extremist ideas and took the path of religious, political and intellectual moderation and temperance that is the key base for any stability and development. He concluded his speech by extending gratitude to the Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana for attending the conference. Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also thanked the Ghanaian leadership and people for their generosity.

The Secretary General of the Conference of Ghana Catholic Bishops Pope Lazuris Anund stressed the importance of holding this conference in Africa that is characterized by a wide variety of religions and cultures, confirming that the leaders of religions represent the hope to achieve harmony and peace away from differences and clashes.

Pope Lazuris Anund pointed out that the coexistence between the Islamic traditions



Ghanaian Catholic Bishops Pope Lazaris Anund

and rituals from one hand and principles and rituals of Christianity would result in peace and prosperity among different peoples. He said: “Cooperation and understanding are required things to achieve harmony and peace among peoples with different faiths.”

Pope Lazaris Anund made clear that leaders of religions should work together to get rid of the hassles of the past and present. They also should work on common human denominators to be able to confront all policies of corruption, forms of extremism, violence and negative competition with the aim of achieving the positive integration and fruitful partnerships that would lead to prosperity, peace and stability. Director of the Islamic Center of Education and Development of the Republic of Ghana Sheikh Ibrahim Kudjo Kwai confirmed that the MWL led by Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa has come a considerable distance in the path of peace and global harmony.

Sheikh Ibrahim Kudjo Kwai said, “The theme of the symposium was carefully cho-

sen. This coincides with the outspread of manifestations of religious extremism that violated the rights of all people without exception. Consequently, we seek to contribute to discussing of the problems of minorities and stopping violence together with achieving sustainable development for all people without discrimination.”

Advisor of the President of the Republic of Burkina Faso Dr. Abu Bakr Abdullah Dakhouri praised the human goals of the symposium calling for abiding by the humanitarian brotherhood necessitated by Islam.

It is worth mentioning that high-ranking religious, media and political figures of various affiliations attended the conference. The symposium discussed a raft of pressing minority issues, most notably national and common denominators, the cultural rights of multi-religious communities and the role of religious education and bodies in achieving citizenship and promoting coexistence among religions together with elements and obstacles to social peace.



Dr. Al-Issa meets King of Ashanti and launches food aid campaign in Ghana

Kumasi (Ghana) - MWL

King of the Ashanti Kingdom Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, in the province of Kumasi the capital of the province in Ghana, received the Sec-

retary General of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa who paid an official visit to the Republic of Ghana



King of the people of Ashanti receives Sheikh Al - Issa

during a tour that included a raft of African countries.

The King of the Ashanti welcomed the delegation of the Muslim World League, headed by the Secretary General, praising the arduous efforts of the Muslim World League in the humanitarian sphere that cover the entire Africa.

Many Africans belonging to different religions, races and ethnics make use of these efforts without discrimination. The Secretary General of the Muslim World League put spotlight on the deeply rooted history of the Ashanti people and its wide impact all over Africa.

A number of senior and high-ranking government officials at-

tended the meeting. It is noteworthy that the population of the Ashanti Kingdom reaches several millions in whole Africa.

During his visit, Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa inspected a raft of educational facilities. He also launched a food aid campaign provided by the Muslim World League for hundreds of thousands of residents of the province.

The Secretary General arrived in the Republic of Ghana on an official visit. He was received by Grand Imam of Ghana Sheikh Osman Sharoboto, a number of high-ranking governmental officials, senior religious figures and scholars in Accra International Airport.



Al-Issa inaugurates developmental and orphan sponsorship in Ghana

Ghana - MWL

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa has inaugurated a package of developmental and orphan sponsorship projects in the Republic of Ghana, a move which was supported and welcomed by state officials and religious figures in the country. Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa started the projects by participating in the International Festi-

val of Orphans organized by the Muslim World League and attended by thousands of orphans in El Wak Stadium, in the presence of the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection. He announced the MWL sponsorship of thousands of orphans and the establishment of a vocational and technical center under the supervision of the Government of Ghana.



Dr. Issa with a group of orphans during the celebration of the MWL orphan sponsorship

The MWL spokesperson Abdulwahab Al-Shehri said this is part of MWL's mega program in the African continent aimed at supporting affected and needy people and victims of crises and disasters in the continent. The program is adopted by MWL for its benefit serving all targeted needy segments in the societies with no religious, ethnic or political discrimination. It includes projects to provide potable water, baskets

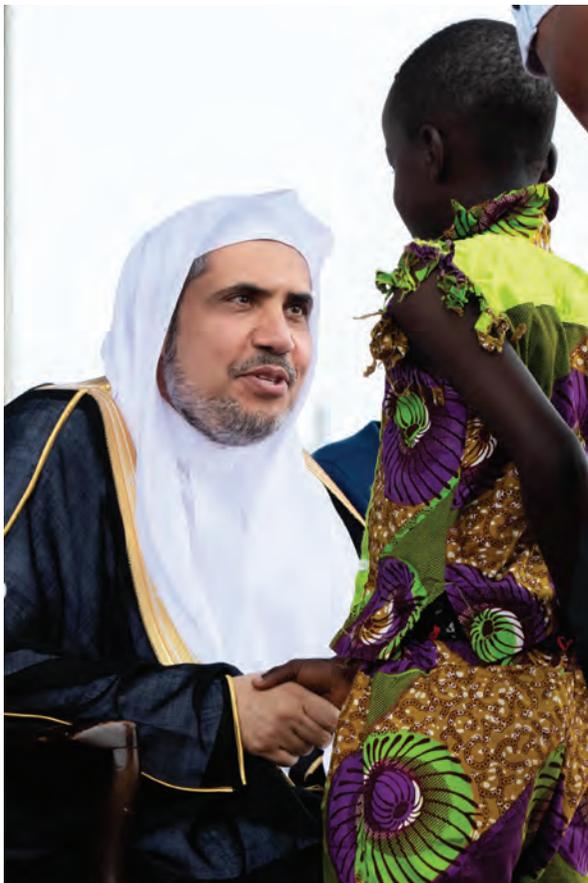
of food, medical services and orphan sponsorship, and projects of mosques that serve Muslims in the African countries.

Al-Shehri added that this festival comes within the framework of the special program approved earlier by Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa to contribute to bridging the gaps in the needs of Africa, where the Africans are targeted with a package of various projects covering the most important weaknesses and need





Group photo of Sheikh Al - Issa with a number of students



points, through a comprehensive range of health, development and training initiatives. In addition to the housing projects, food baskets, orphan sponsorship, water supply and many others for Muslims and non-Muslims, MWL's humanitarian and religious work is not based on religion, color or ethnicity.

Al-Shehri stressed that MWL pays special attention to orphans as one of the needy segments vulnerable to various types of problems from an early age, especially in poor communities, due to the absence of one or both family sponsors. The MWL has previously launched its Global Humanitarian Project for the Orphan Sponsorship to sponsored thousands of orphans in many countries around the world and provide them with financial, health, social and educational support, and share their own joys and international occasions.

He said Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa launched



SG of the MWL, reassuring the conduct of the medical program for beneficiaries

the project of distributing food baskets for the poor and needy in Ghana, aiming to provide hundreds of thousands of poor people with basic foodstuffs for long periods, based on a periodic plan adopted by MWL to help the needy.

He launched a project to provide potable water to a large segment of those who are deprived of having access to water supplies to where they live, as they have to travel long distances to get drinking water. MWL is one of the largest international organizations that has dug thousands of wells and connected water networks to homes of the beneficiaries, as well as provided purification plants and launched awareness-raising programs on the importance of conserving the water resources.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa inaugurated one of the biggest mosques established by MWL to serve the Muslims in Ghana and thousands of the members of the Muslim community there. He launched the medical campaign

to combat eye diseases, seeking to treat hundreds of beneficiaries as part of MWL's medical project to combat blindness in the African continent.

These projects are part of programs and initiatives offered by MWL in Africa, which are based on its belief in its global humanitarian role in standing with the poor and the affected in their countries. To achieve its Islamic slogan "There is a reward for every one with a moist liver", the MWL enhanced its presence and positive impact on the African continent and consolidated its long-standing alliances and agreements with official bodies, civil society organizations and humanitarian organizations.

MWL affirmed its intention to continue exerting greater efforts in Africa towards a humanitarian and development activity that is orderly and sustainable. MWL's work focuses on coordination with government agencies in the countries targeted by its programs.



Islam is a moderate approach that does not emphasize or exaggerate

Mohammad Zakir Hossain

Dr. Hakan Gülerce is the director of the Migration Policy Application and Research Center of Harran University in Turkey. He is also a lecturer on Religion, Modernity, Social Movements and Migration at the Department of Sociology. He has been to several countries in the world conducting conferences and seminars. He is also Secretary General of International Federation of Social Science Organizations (IFSSO). Mr. Hakan was recently in Makkah to attend an international conference on “The Values of Moderation and Centrism in the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah’,” which was held under the auspices of the Muslim World League (MWL). Mohammad Zakir Hossain, the MWL editor, interviewed him on the sidelines of the conference on a range of issues concerning Islam and Muslims all over the world as well as the Ummah. Following are the excerpts of the interview:



Dr. Hakan meets with H.E. the Secretary General of the MWL during the conference

1. How productive and effective did you find the international conference on ‘The Values of Moderation and Centrism in the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah’?

First of all, I would like to thank MWL for inviting me to this very important conference in Makkah Al-Mukarramah. I believe it is more than a conference where many scholars around the world come together, meet and discuss several issues related to the Muslim world in particular and humanity in general. The topic, “The Values of Moderation and Centrism in the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah”, is very timely

and needed by the Muslim World today. I believe today the Muslim World needs this understanding of “wasatiyah” more than ever. What we can call as “Positive action” or “meaningful action”, based on revelation and faith, is an important way of approaching life which needs to be discussed both in theory and in practice. It is a Faith Service Through The Guidance Of The Qur’an and Sunnah. So, serious discussion is required to explore how this concept can give meaning to all aspects of life and human relationships, and how it can provide sustainable solutions for humankind’s problems.



A large number of scholars attended the Makkah Declaration Conference

So, I believe that this conference helped to achieve/contribute to this mission a lot.

2. Instability and disunity are harming the Ummah. What could be the reasons for this growing phenomenon and how do you see these should be controlled?

In these difficult times, the Muslim World and in general humanity is suffering from the problems which threaten both our spiritual and material well-being. Not only instability and disunity, throughout the world, hunger, poverty, social injustice, oppression, war, enforced migration, anarchy, violence, terrorism, climate change, environmental pollution and a host of other negative trends are on the increase. Despite numerous efforts to better the human situ-

ation, lasting solutions to these problems have not been found. How can the happiness of humanity be obtained both in this world and in the next? What kind of approach is needed in order to solve or, at least, reduce these problems? Is reconstruction possible without further spiritual and material harm being done? Can a universal and sustainable solution be found that targets these problems at their very roots? The need for answers to these kinds of question is more urgent than ever before. I believe the enemies of the Muslims are “ignorance, poverty, and conflict”. Muslims should fight against these three enemies by the weapons of “education, work/science, and unity”.. In general, this is the faith service through

the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah and MWL is a good example to implement this mission in our lives.

3. In your opinion what are the major issues facing the Muslim Ummah?

As I mentioned above, the major issues facing Muslim Ummah are “ignorance, poverty, and conflict” and for these issues, we should struggle with “education, industry, and unity”. In addition to this, I would like to use the metaphor of six sicknesses that we all see in contemporary Muslim culture and then reach into our “bag of medicines” for six cures for these six illnesses. These “diseases” of the social life of Muslim Ummah include despair, ignorance, hatred, disunity, despotism, and selfishness. The cures for these six sicknesses are all in the “pharmacy of the Qur'an and Sunnah” These cures are all to be found in the very word of God Almighty, as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is important to point out that MWL is mainly addressing the ills of society and I believe these conferences should continue with workshops and discussions organized by several institutions.

4. Can you please elaborate on these other issues? Some of them are as follows:

a. The image of Islam today stands tarnished; a faith of peace, love, and moderation is being equated with violence, poverty, and indignity. Both the external forces that are out to damage Islam and a minuscule extremist group within the community are responsible for this;

c. Western media is doing much harm by linking Islam to so-called “Islamic terrorism”. This is accentuated by the vulnerability of Muslim youth to extremist ideas, especially through social media;

I have mentioned this in my early writings. For example; about the so-called Islamic State that appeared a couple of years ago in the Middle East, I said, Islamic State is not Islamic and is not a state. So, I think we cannot use a term called “Islamic Terrorism”. Because terror has no religion. No Abrahamic religion in the World promotes terror or violence I believe. But here again, our living for Islam and sincerity has a lot of importance about the growing Islamophobia in the world. So, If we were to display through our actions the perfections of the morality of Islam and the truth about faith and facts about its beliefs, without doubt, the followers of other religions would enter Islam in whole communities; some entire regions and states, even, would take refuge in Islam.

5. The MWL initiative on the religious and civilizational dialogue has received great attention in the West. How better can we build up a global culture of dialogue among civilizations?

The great attention (MWL and the WEST) expresses the need to explore levels of peace and the principle of the Qur'an and Sunnah through a series of activities by MWL. Under the circumstances of our current times with continuous struggles around the world, there is an increasing feeling of insecurity and fear. The question of how to succeed in achieving peace as an individual, as a society and internationally triggered a series of lectures on this subject. I believe MWL will have more responsibility to work on this mission to present the true Islam and its principles, provide humanitarian aid, extend bridges of understanding and cooperation with all, engage in positive openness to all cultures and civilizations, follow the path of centrism and moderation to realize



MWLJ editor interviewing with Dr. Hakan

the message of Islam for a better world full of peace, justice and coexistence.

6. Critics of political Islam consider Shari'ah law as a threat to their society. How can we change this stereotyped image of Islam

and its vital institutions?

One of the often-voiced frustrations of Muslims is how some specific terms from their religion have been taken over by the Western press and their meaning substantially altered.

Shari'ah is such a term.

The demonization of Islam via a subjective reconstruction of political Islam as a movement pushing for the implementation of Shari'ah law must know two things:

1. Shari'ah law is a dynamic law to be reinterpreted in accordance with the needs of Muslim Societies. It is not monolithic and ahistorical.

2. Shari'ah law is humane and open to multiplicity. Its position on such controversial issues as human rights, women rights, political pluralism, and some penal codes are open to discussion and need to be freed from "demonizing" biases.

3. Shari'ah law is based on the consent and is not something unilaterally and via state imposition.

In short: A major part of Shari'ah is concerned with morality, worship, after-life, and virtue, which fall under the freedom of conscience and has no connection to state affairs or politics while some parts deal with state affairs and politics. This does not mean that religious and moral values, such as abstaining from lying and bribery, will be completely left out of politics and governing. It only means that such values can be incor-

porated after being adopted as universal or moral values once it has been filtered through common sense, reason, sciences, and conscience. One's intentions need to be pure, sincere, and free from ulterior motives for his message to echo in the minds and the hearts.

7. What could possibly be the best global mechanism to create a congenial atmosphere that can facilitate civilizational interactions and bring about peace and security in the world? What role the MWL can play in this regard?

I would like to start with a very well-known issue. It is in human nature to hate the unknown. Many psychologists today agree that human beings are quick to judge, fear and even hate the unknown. If we do not know something, we feel afraid of it. Once we get to know something, if we encounter the good names and attributes of that thing then we can embark on the path towards loving it. The more we learn about it, the more we love it. This analogy may also work for human beings. If we do not know someone we may simply choose to not love or sometimes even hate. Sometimes we know some-

one or something in a wrong way, which also can lead us into hatred. Usually, when people get confused they look for someone or something to blame. This damaging attitude puts up enormous barriers in relationships. So even if it is just a matter of confusion, such confusion created barriers in cross-cultural connection. We can say that to have peace and reconciliation in the world, we must love each other; to be able to love we must know each other; to know we must have the willingness to engage different cultures. For me the thing most deserving of love is love, and that most deserving of enmity is enmity. It is love and loving others that make a person's social life secure and lead to happiness. For this purpose, to strengthen communication between cultures and each other, and to increase understanding and respect, the MWL should put more effort to bring people from different cultures together as it is doing now at this conference.

8. How do you see the practical implementation of those resolutions?

I think, in addition to this conference, facilitating the participation of young people from different countries

in mutual workshops, conferences, visits, many activities and day trips with a view to solving the problems in our respective countries. By strengthening the connection between us, we will be able to have a more detailed and intimate understanding of the problems affecting our countries. We also believe we can develop and increase the level of cross-cultural communication among Muslim Ummah. There are some attitudes and skills to make cultural adjustments and cultural interactions that should be applied. These attitudes have three dimensions, which are openness, acceptance, and trust. These are the attitudes that we need to adopt as we approach another culture. They get us started in the right direction and help us stay on the right track towards building positive connections with people who are different.

9. What are your suggestions to the MWL to build peace and security all over the world?

I strongly suggest keeping the good work that MWL is currently doing and look for the ways and means to improve it. Not only MWL should keep serving the faith, sincerity, and fraternity for a better world.

Freedom in Islam: Including Choice of Religion

By Ahmed Kamal El-Din Izzeddin

Despite much controversy and several misconceptions about the extent of personal or public freedoms allowed in Islam, the ceiling of Islamic liberties is higher than depicted by most poorly informed narratives. While 'Islam' itself connotes total submission to God the Almighty, this by no means erodes any part of the space allowed for the individual to exercise her or his freedom. The intended submission to God is a matter of personal belief and conscience which is itself subject to the will of the relevant individual.



The Temporal and Divine Spheres of Existence:

There are basically two broad intertwining spheres of action in Islam. The first is a temporal, worldly one, which is determined by human will and social covenant. It includes the organization of the political society, under a social pact and a system of governance based on popular consensus. Human actions in the political society are governed by the promulgated rules of law, to which all members of the society are subject. Wrong doing is sanctioned by preordained punishments exacted by judicial officials and executed by law enforcement officers. In sum, it is the quintessence of the nation state.

The second sphere is more directly dominated by the divine will, under which the deeds of man are judged, subject to reward or punishment by God, in the hereafter, or the Day of Judgment. While the first, mundane sphere depends on human covenant and design, this divine sphere is a conceptualization of utter faith. Only those who believe in God consider themselves as being subjects of His dominion, including His rewards as well as His punishment, depending on the deeds of the believer.

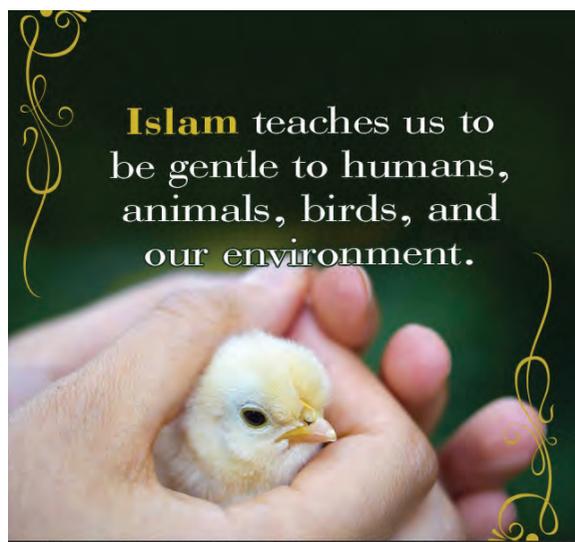
The systems in both spheres can operate simultaneously in complete mutual synergy and coordination, free of any collision or contradiction. This enduring harmony is made possible due to the fact that the divine sphere has no physical existence which could collide with the temporal sphere. Rather, its effect is demonstrated through the actions of the believer, which are in turn governed by her or his conception of the world.

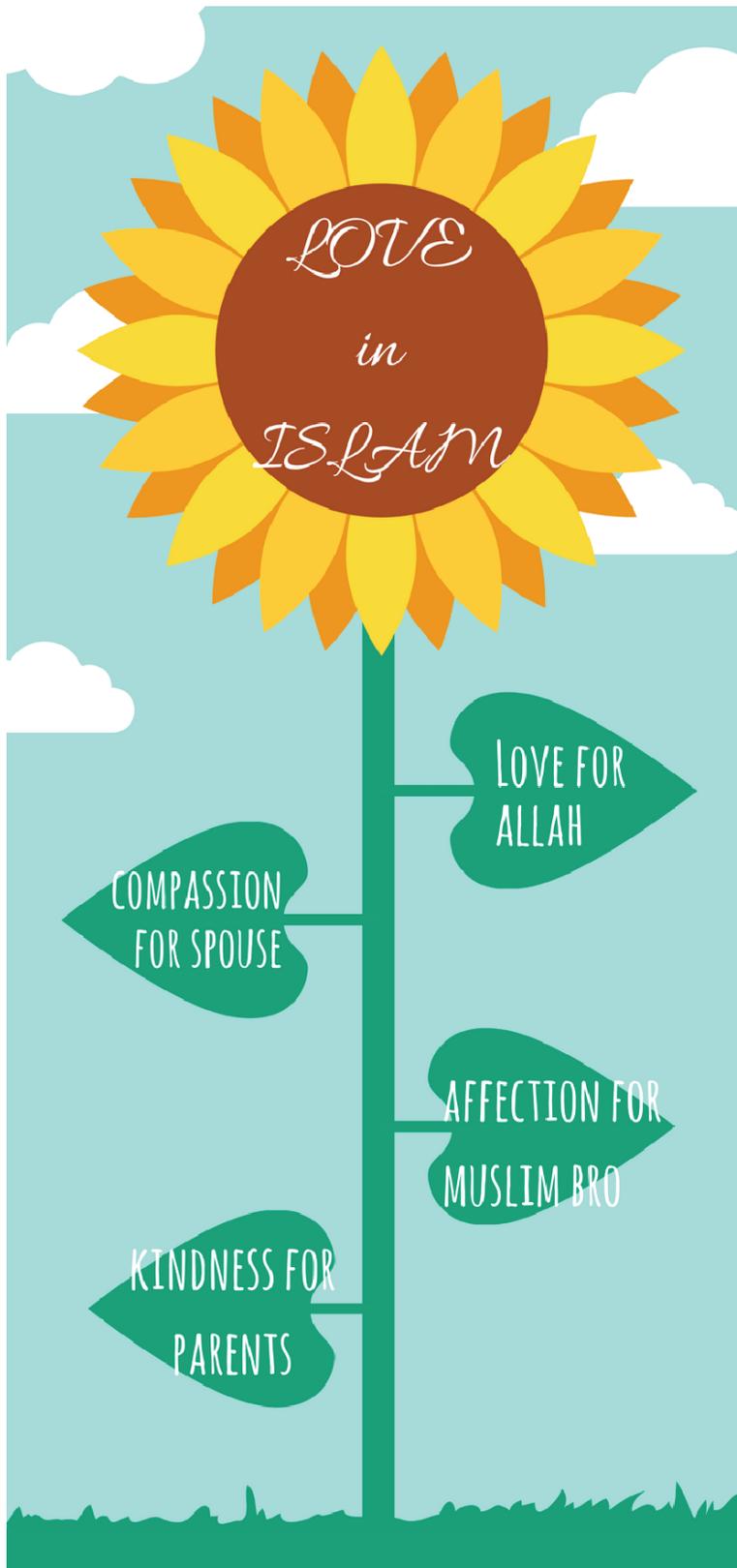
Duties and Freedom:

To what extent do the Islamic obliga-



tions fetter the freedoms of the believer? This is a rather tricky question. On the outset, duties may denote the existence of some kind of limitation on the human freedom, since one has to do certain things under the compulsion of religion. Well, while the options may be narrowed as a result of the imposition of such duty, freedom is not necessarily squeezed or suppressed in consequence. An honest believer will





have willingly submitted to the relevant duty to such an extent that it becomes part and parcel of his freedom! This seemingly ironical concept can easily be found in sufi or mystical literature and mythology. The well-known sufi poet and devoted worshipper, Rabiaa Al Adawiyah, expresses some of such meanings in one of her famous poems, where she surreptitiously and solemnly appeals to God: "I have known love since I have experienced your love, and closed up my heart to all, other than You." The Prophet of Islam used to ask his caller for prayer, or muazzin, Bilal ibn Rabah, to 'bring comfort' and ease to him and his companions by calling for prayers. Without a high level of conviction and purity of faith, it is not always conceivably easy to see divinely ordained duties as a source of comfort, serenity and relaxation. And it is this delicate juncture of total human assimilation with divine duty which is missed by researchers into the tenets of Islamic faith, especially when



relating it to modern concepts of human rights and liberties.

When Rabei ibn Aamir, back in the year 14 A.H, approximately, 636 A.D, was asked by the then Persian monarch about the Islamic message carried by Prophet Muhammad he said: “God sent us to relieve people, whom God so wills, of worshipping slaves [of God] to the worship of God, of the narrowness of the world to its spaciousness, and of the injustice of religions to the justice of Islam”. The context tackled in the previous paragraph is essential to comprehend the meanings conveyed in this message carried by Rabei ibn Aamir on behalf of the Prophet.

The Quran is quite clear

about the essence of freedom of faith. A few quotations from the Muslim Holy Book, the Quran, may help illustrate this indispensable conviction:

(1) “Say, ‘The truth is from your Lord’: Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject [it]”. Reference to the Lord, or God, as the ultimate source of truth is crucial here. No human being should attribute to her or him the origin of truth, not only because man continues to be fallible, but also because such attribution of truth to man would bestow upon him a measure of authority and control over other human beings. And if that would be the case, then man would avail an opportunity to im-

pinge upon the freedoms of other humans, which would be an encroachment upon the oneness of God the Almighty who – alone - has the ultimate power and control over all humans. His dominion is shared by none, absolutely.

(2) “Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things”. This should be quite natural, since by definition ‘faith’ should be a purely willful exercise. Once belief is ‘forced’ or coerced it becomes shorn of its core attribute that endows it with its essen-



RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD



CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM	HINDUISM	BUDDHISM	JUDAISM	SHINTO
Christian cross	Star and crescent	Om	Wheel of Dharma	Star of David	Torii
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore.	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore.	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore.	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore.	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore.	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore.

tial meaning. If someone is compelled into embracing a religion, the result will be void. No religion would be embraced at all.

(3) “Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men’s) affairs”. The word

‘manage’ (corresponding to the Arabic ‘yudeer’) in this translation of the versed-enotes a lighter weight in meaning than that carried

by the original Arabic word ‘musaytir’, most appropriately meaning ‘controlling’. Therefore the proper meaning of the second verse should go as follows: “Thou art not one to control (men’s) affairs”. Again, this is because if the acts of man are controlled by any person other than the doer of the act, then the whole of such act becomes void. Prophet Muhammad says: “verily, acts are based on the intentions. And verily, every person gets what he [or she] has intended.” The word ‘intention’ here, from the Arabic ‘niyyah’ denotes free will. Once the component of freedom is stripped from the intention, the corresponding act becomes void of its content. Should it be an act of worship, it goes unaccepted by God. Should it be an evil act, not freely intended, it will not incur punishment by God. This is due to the ultimate divine justice.

(4) “If it had been thy Lord’s will, they would all have believed, - all who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel humankind, against their will, to believe”! Again, God reminds his apostle of the human freedom of faith, and that human beings may not be



compelled to believe. In other words, it is a contradiction of terms to speak of ‘compelled belief’, since such element of compulsion would negate believing, an act which should only be deliberate and freely expressed.

In conclusion, freedom is placed in a uniquely high place in Islam, not just as a decorated icon but as an essential ingredient of human action. Only willful, freely exercised acts are

considered in Islam, be they good or bad deeds, for the purposes of rewarding and punishment alike, because without his freedom man is relieved of all responsibility. Suffice it that from inception, the religion of Islam itself cannot be embraced except with full freedom and unfettered will. Consequently, respect for the freedom of the individual in Islam is fundamental and cannot be compromised.



Hong Kong Muslims - Keeping Islamic ethos alive amid multi-culturism

Aftab Husain Kola

Islam today is an intrinsic component of Hong Kong's dynamic hybrid culture as it was 100 years ago and serves as a fine example of peaceful cultural co-existence. AFTAB HUSAIN KOLA charts out the Islamic community's history and developments of the vibrant city-state comprising of a cluster of 263 islands.

Hong Kong became the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China on 1 July 1997. With a population of 7,213,338 as on 2018 with Chinese 92%, Filipino 2.5%, Indonesian 2.1%, others 3.4%, Hong Kong is one of the world's leading financial centers.



Religion-wise, Buddhists or Taoists form 30%, followed by Christians 12 % and Muslims 4.2%, and rest others. Out of the nearly 300,000 Muslims in Hong Kong, most are of Indonesian origin (150,000). Ethnic Chinese Muslims number 50,000 and there are 40000 South Asian Muslims, most of whom are Pakistani and the remaining population include Indians, Bangladeshis, Malaysians and others.

Muslims make Hong Kong their home

Muslims in Hong Kong are fully integrated in civic society since the first Indian lascars (merchant sailors from, mainly, the Indian subcontinent employed on European ships) arrived on East India Company ships in the 1830s. The East India Company's trade with China reached its peak in the early 19th century and thereafter it opened the gate for the early Muslims making Hong Kong as their home. Prior to these Muslims, Islam was already introduced in China from the northwest along the overland caravan routes

across Central Asia, and from the southeast through the ancient trading ports on the South China Sea. Guangzhou (formerly Canton), at the mouth of the Pearl River and a short train ride from Hong Kong, has always demonstrated more willingness to foreign influence than other Chinese cities, and its Huaisheng Mosque constructed in the Tang Dynasty is recorded to be the oldest mosque in China.

China started receiving Muslims after the rise of Islam in the seventh century, mainly as ambassadors or merchants. They took the land as well as the sea route, along the Silk Roads through Central Asia, and by sea, over the Indian Ocean via the Straits of Malacca. We learn from historical sources that in 651AD, an envoy representing the Islam's third Caliph Uthmanbin Affan, came to the Tang court at Changan in central China. As Islam spread in the Central Asia coupled with the conversion of the Turks to Islam, cities in the western province of Xinjiang became important centers of Muslim

HONG KONG BUCKET LIST

Welcome to Hong Kong – a vibrant city with something for everyone! From bustling shopping streets to delicious halal local food, and urban hikes with spectacular views, you will never run out of things to do in Hong Kong. Let us help you get started with these top 10 things that should be on your Hong Kong bucket list!

- HUNT FOR ICONIC STREET ART AT OLD TOWN CENTRAL**
 - These murals are perfect for your #OOTD shots!
 - Tip: As there are 3 routes to explore, find your way by downloading this walking map!
- FEAST ON HALAL (& MUSLIM-FRIENDLY!) LOCAL DELIGHTS**
 - Must-do: Don't forget to try the golden brown Bûn (Bûn is the Cantonese name)
 - Christy Inn
 - 118-120 Fooking Street, Causeway
 - Itomic Centre Confection
 - 118-120, Queen's Range Street, Causeway, Causeway, 40 to 50 Causeway
 - Woo Chee, Hong Kong
 - Kwan Kee Store
 - This red bean pudding is an authentic traditional Hong Kong snack!
 - Tip: The shop is right outside Shau Shui Po MTR Station (Exit B2)
 - 22-23, 137 Fooking Street, Shau Shui Po
- CROSS THE VICTORIA HARBOUR ON A STAR FERRY**
 - Must-do: Catch the ferry ride at 8pm to view the "Symphony of Lights"
 - Price: From HK\$2.00
- EXPLORE HONG KONG'S INTERESTING STREETS**
 - FOR WING STREET (Toys)
 - APLILU STREET (Electronics)
 - TAI WAN STREET (Leather)
 - YU CHAO STREET (Beads)
 - PEI HO STREET (Ribbons)
 - Found in Sham Shui Po
 - FLOWER STREET
 - GOLDFISH STREET
 - SNEAKERS STREET
 - Found in Mong Kok
- CONQUER A HIKE UP DRAGON'S BACK!**
 - Tip: If you don't want to start from the bottom of the trail, take Bus 8 up to the 8-hour trail mark (to Tai Wan)
- GO BARGAIN HUNTING AT THE TOP NIGHT MARKETS**
 - Bargain for the best price with these Cantonese phrases!
 - How much is that? – Gey do-cho?
 - Too expensive! – Ho gwa-cho!
 - Can you give me a discount? – Cheung gwa-cho!
 - Periy-ah!
- TAKE IN HONG KONG'S GORGEOUS SKYLINE AT VICTORIA HARBOUR**
 - Enjoy the view from The Promenade or Ocean Terminal Deck!
 - Tip: You can view the 8pm "Symphony of Lights" show from here too!
- IMMERSE IN RICH CULTURE AND HISTORY**
 - Must-do: Visit the Kowloon Walled City, which stood as one of the most densely populated places on Earth.
 - Observe the locals praying for well wishes at Wong Tai Sin, a popular temple known for "making every wish come true!"
- RIDE ON A DING DING**
 - Travel like a local by hopping on one of these colourful trams on Hong Kong Island!
 - Price: From HK\$2.60
 - Fun fact: Did you know that these trams carry an average of 200,000 passengers daily?
- COMPLETE YOUR PRAYERS AT KOWLOON MOSQUE**
 - This is Hong Kong's largest mosque!
 - 100, Hakkim-e-Mulla, Kowloon, Hong Kong

culture as early as the 10th century.

The words Hong Kong translate into 'Fragrant Harbor', aptly named because of its deep-water harbor, which has contributed to Hong Kong's great success as a center for international trade and finance. Naturally, the early seamen mostly came from the shores of Malabar (India), Bay of Bengal, Campbellpur (north of Pakistan's Punjab Province), Hazara (Abbottabad), Lahore, and Gujarat. Besides those others came from Shanghai, Aden (Yemen), Java, Sumatra, Malacca, Malaya (now Malaysia), Sarawak, South-Sea Borneo, Brunei, Port Said (Egypt), Turkey and Zanzibar (Tanzania).

With Hong Kong's trade firming up more and more Muslims landed here from India (principally Punjabis) filling most of the post as Hong Kong Police Constables, Marine

Guards, Prison Guards, Dockyard Guards, Watchmen, Bank Clerks, Royal Naval Dockyard Police, Ferry Supervisors, Post Office Mail Launch Guards, Sanitary Foremen and Government Servants. The diamond merchants from South India, especially Muslims, also arrived in good numbers.

Organizing into a community

When the Muslims maritime traders began settling in Hong Kong during the early 19th century getting proper accommodation was a big problem they encountered. Moro Kai (streets of the people of the Moros) in an area known as Lower Lascar Row in the Central area was the locality they somehow managed to stay. The Muslims organized themselves into a Jamat (organization) for social and welfare development of the com-

munity and used to meet often at Lower Lascar Row. As Muslims managed to grow in business hundreds of the Muslims and their families vacated their shops and residences for elsewhere in Hong Kong, their shops were taken over by Chinese traders selling Curios, Souvenirs, Old Scrolls and Relics and these streets of Lower Lascar Row are now better known to many tourists as the 'Cat Street.'

Also, during their stint in Kowloon Peninsula the Muslim garrison was one of the first groups to make arrangements for prayers for the Muslims. On their request a temporary site was allotted within the Whitfield Army Barracks between Austin Road and Nathan Road, especially for Friday and Eid prayers. The first Mosque in the Kowloon Peninsula was built in 1896. The grand Moorish type Mosque was built entirely by the Muslim garrisons with assistance from their respective commanders.

Though Muslims are found all over the Island State their main concentration is in and around a Masjid; for e.g. near Kowloon Masjid in Tsim Sha Tsui, Masjid Ammar in Wan Chai and Cha Wan Masjid in Cape Colinson.

Active Organizations

Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund, the coordinating body for all Islamic affairs in Hong Kong, is a well respected apex organization. Popularly called among Hong Kong Muslims as 'The Board of Trustees (BOT)', it is recognized by the government of Hong Kong as the main body representing the interests of the Muslim Community in Hong Kong. The powerful 7-member Board, serves as a federation of four founding and oldest Muslim Organizations of Hong Kong. The BOT

manages the present 5 mosques and 2 Muslim Cemeteries, besides madrasas and mak-tabs attached to these mosques. The BOT is also the authority to make all arrangements for funerals and burials of deceased Muslims; to employ Imams, Quran Teachers, Cemetery and Office Staff; to announce the dates and days of Muslim festivals, e.g. beginning of Ramadan and Eids; to buy air-time on Radio and conduct suhoor and if-taar program during Ramadan; to carry out halal inspections and issue halal certificates in Hong Kong and some parts of China; to undertake dawah work for the Muslims and Non-Muslims and carryout any other activities in the general interests of the Hong Kong Muslims and propagation of Islam. The premier organization is also engaged in enhancing better understanding among different religious leaders and conducting interfaith meetings and visiting and educating Muslims held in the prisons.

The Islamic Union of Hong Kong is another prominent organization whose primary purpose for coming to Hong Kong was to enter into trade and commerce with China. Because of their enthusiastic spirit, they finally settled in Hong Kong to pursue their trading activities. With a membership roll of over 700 Muslims of different nationalities such as Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese, Malays and British, the activities of Islamic Union include: to improve the general welfare of Muslims in Hong Kong; to promote and foster the practice of Islamic principles; to spread, expound and propagate the truth of Islamic knowledge; to establish and maintain homes and hostels for Muslims in need; to establish and operate schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics, homes for the aged and any other charitable and educational institute which the Union shall



deem necessary; to prepare, print and publish any periodicals, books, circulars, leaflets or other literature and to distribute among its members and others, etc.

Besides, there are several organizations engaged in working towards the welfare of Muslims. The major ones include Anjuman-e-Mohammedi (Hong Kong SAR) Trustees Incorporated; The Pakistan Association of Hong Kong Ltd.; The Indian Association of Hong Kong; Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association; Hong Kong Islamic Chinese Federation; Hong Kong Muslim Women Association; Khatame Nubuwwat Islamic Council Ltd.; Hong Kong Islamic Youth Association (HKIYA), Dawat-e-Islami, Hong Kong; Idara Minhaj-ul-Quran Hong Kong and the United Welfare Union Hong Kong Ltd.

Muslims in jobs and businesses

Hong Kong is a multi-cultural society where Muslims and non-Muslims live and work together in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. Majority of Muslims work in offices, banks, security services, Halal restaurants,

etc. There is a small percentage of them working for the Hong Kong Government, for e.g. in the Police Force, Correctional Services, Judiciary, banking and finance. With a mercantile past, Muslims also are into businesses like export-import, retail, etc. Thanks to efforts by the Muslim community, there are a number of community kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.

Another important element in Hong Kong's Muslim community is that there is spirit of camaraderie among them. With well-coordinated management of affairs and mutual respect, the Muslims here is saved from the virus of sectarianism.

Hong Kong is a melting pot of varied cuisines but for Muslims they are mostly not permissible. Catering to the needs of Muslim community and visiting Muslim travelers, a number of halal restaurants have come up. At the recent count, around 80 Halal restaurants are doing brisk business in Hong Kong. They are at many places but the prominent ones include Hong Kong Disneyland, Ocean Park Hong Kong, Popeyes, Ebenezers, 27 Kebab House.

Although no financial support is received from the Government but Hong Kong Government permits Muslims to practice Islam. The Government is mindful of the places of worship for Muslims and extends policy support to build new places of worship. The Dawah work is being done by the Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong and the Islamic Union of Hong Kong. Introductory courses on Islam are held twice year for all those who are interested in Islam. Visits to Masjid are arranged for schools, colleges, universities, Hong Kong Police department and for walk in visitors.

Mosques in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is home to five regular mosques and they are: The Jamia Mosque, Kowloon Mosque, the Ammar Mosque, Stanley mosque and the Chai Wan mosque.

It was in 1849, the Jamia mosque was constructed at the mid-level of the famous Shelley Street in Central Hong Kong, also known as the Ladder Street where you can go on the world's longest escalators. Also known as Lascar Temple, the mosque though small but its exquisite, perforated Moorish arches and colorful facade, set in a serene suburban location makes it an important landmark for the Muslims. As Muslim traders began trickling in Hong Kong, a major expansion was carried out in 1915. This structure is protected under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance by the Government of Hong Kong.

Kowloon Mosque is the first mosque on the Kowloon Peninsula. Built in 1896 by the Muslim garrisons of Hong Kong Regiment of the British Army with the patronage from their respective commanders for the Muslims of Upper India, the Kowloon mosque

was built anew in 1984. It has a capacity to accommodate 3,500 worshippers. Besides the five times daily prayers, Fridays and Eid prayers are also held. In Ramadan the mosque is a beehive of activity as iftar and taraweeh are arranged. The Islamic Centre attached to the mosque houses madrasahs for boys and girls, a library and a community hall. The complex is equipped with conference room, management office, two office rooms for Imams and a big kitchen. Dawah Courses (Intermediate Course on Islam) for Non-Muslims are regularly conducted. Located on Nathan Road, today the Kowloon Masjid and Islamic Centre, with its distinctive white marble exterior, is a defining landmark in Tsim Sha Tsui and stands as a true symbol of the Muslim Community in Hong Kong.

The Masjid Ammar and Osman Ramju Sadick Islamic Center in Wan Chai was consecrated in 1981 and now houses the headquarters of Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Islamic Youth Association. The center of the mosque is an eight-story complex which integrates the functions of prayer hall, Chinese restaurant, Halal bakery, medical clinic, classrooms, library and seminar room. The two other mosques are the Stanley Mosque located on Tung Tau Wan Road inside the restricted area at Stanley Prison and a small Mosque in Cape Collinson, Chai Wan.

Hong Kong has at present two Muslim cemeteries, one in Happy Valley and the other one in Chai Wan. Both are managed by the Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong.

Despite being a small percentage of the population yet the Muslims in Hong Kong are living a life with dignity and respect.



Why New Zealand stands out

By M. Nasir Jawed

Conventionally a calm and cool country, New Zealand woke up on March 15 to a terrible news: A far-right terror attack had struck twice that Friday afternoon, slaughtering 50 people in two mosques. It didn't take us long to know the details of the incident including the gunman, who gave us enough reasons to call him a terrorist.

An Australian-born Dunedin resident, Brenton Harrison Tarrant, 28, is a white supremacist. He live-streamed online the massacre and posted images of the weapons to Twitter before the feed was taken down. The weapons were scrawled with white text. An examination of the text revealed his obsession with the history of conflicts between Christians and the Islamic empire. Tarrant has since been arrested and charged by New Zealand Police with murder.

The Rising Tide of Hatred

What happened at Al-Noor Mosque in central Christchurch and at Linwood Mosque that also wounded scores, cannot be seen in isolation. It has been happening for decades. Anti-Muslim attacks have been on the rise in the past few years worldwide, mainly in the United Kingdom, Canada, United States and many other places.

An imam and his associated are killed near their mosque in Queens, New York in August 2016; a man sprays bullets inside a mosque in central Zurich, Switzerland, in December 2016, wounding at least three worshippers; in January 2017, one Alexandre Bissonnette kills six worshippers and injures many at a Quebec City mosque in Canada; in May 2017, Jeremy Joseph Christian, 35, engages in racial slurs at two Muslim women on a train in the north-western US state of Oregon leading to a scuffle in which he stabbed to

death two men who tried to intervene in the matter; a 48-year-old Darren Osborne drives his van into a group of worshippers in London in June 2017 killing one and injuring nine. Osborne reportedly shouted: “I want to kill all Muslims – I did my bit.”

Spain too saw spurt in attacks, some of them deadly, on Muslims in the cities of Barcelona, Madrid, Navarre and Cambrils as also on the mosques of Granada, Fuenlabrada, Logrono and Seville are desecrated and firebombed.

In India, Muslims are being lynched on the streets on flimsy ground by Hindu fanatics.

In Myanmar and Sri Lanka, they are being targeted by radical Buddhists.

These are but just some of the incidents that are happening around the world sparking debates about the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred as also rising tide of far-right politics in several countries.

In the Occupied Palestinian land, terrorists killing Muslims are a common sight with no restraints from the government.

We Stand Together

A disturbing trend indeed, but it is important for the Muslims to remake their approach while dealing with such a situation; and need to think: Are they deeply disappointed and depressed with such incidents; are they angry and getting impulsive when it comes to Muslim response? Are they resigned to their fate, or getting inclined to taking a path of destruction and devastation? Or, they still see a ray of hope; the glimmer of a promising future; and are therefore reasoning out with the saner voice in the society?

If a gunman in New Zealand with his stupid ideology kills 29 people inside a mosque, the shooter’s entire family there, including the 81-year-old grandmother, feels “devastated.”

“We’re all gob smacked, we don’t know what

to think ... We’re so sorry, for the families over there, for the dead and the injured ... [we] just want to go home and hide ... It’s just so much of everything to take in that somebody in our family would do anything like this,” the granny said while speaking to Australian media.

But this is not just all that Muslims got from the New Zealand community in response to the grisly incident that shook them to the hilt. Sample this: Churches in New Zealand opened doors for the Muslims to pray when mosques were closed for security reasons. Mosques received messages of solidarity and flowers. A fundraiser for the victims is nearing \$400,000. And a UK-based national forum for Christian-Muslim engagement is calling on Christians to go along to Friday prayers at their local mosques – a call the archbishop of Canterbury endorsed.

Churches in London such as St. Paul’s Cathedral offered prayers during daily services for those affected by the shootings in New Zealand.

The church tweeted: “We pray too for our Muslim friends (and neighbors) here and around the world.”

A Christian Muslim Forum based in London urged Christians to go to Friday prayers at their local mosques “to stand in solidarity” with Muslims.

The forum announced on Twitter with the hashtag #WeStandTogether: “The devastating attacks in Christchurch bring us together in grief and in our determination to fight hatred with friendship.”

People wrote message using #TheyAreUs to signal that Muslims are welcome in New Zealand.

They Are Us

The message #They Are Us gained traction after New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda



Ardern used the words in a twitter in response to the attack. It soon became viral and people used the messages using the hashtag #TheyAreUs to signal that Muslims are welcome in New Zealand.

In another show of solidarity, the Jewish community in the country shut its synagogues on Shabbat for the first time, according to a tweet by Isaac Herzog, head of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Northlanders turned up en masse to walk and sing alongside the Muslim community in a show of solidarity.

Hundreds of people took out a vigil march from Whangarei's Town Basin to Laurie Hall Park, organized by various faiths and community leaders throughout Northland. The attendees at Laurie Hall Park said the show of support for the Muslim community from people from all walks of life showed bigotry and hatred could not win.

They are right. Hatred will never win. These concerns about humanity have never been a one-way track. Muslims have shown similar gestures during incidents of terror attacks

and mass shootings whether in Cairo or in Pittsburg when a 46-year-old Robert Gregory Bowers gunned down in a synagogue. The Muslim-American nonprofit groups Celebrate Mercy and Power Change launched a crowd-funding appeal that raised thousands for the victims.

Recently after terrorist attacks on churches in Sri Lanka, Muslims have taken out procession to condemn the attack and in support of the Christians not just in Sri Lanka, but also in India and Pakistan.

Prince William

Several countries hailed Jacinda for her statesman-like approach during the incident. A few weeks later, Prince William of the United Kingdom visited New Zealand (April 26) and told the New Zealanders: "You stood up (to attacks) and you stood up together."

The prince rightly declared: "The global idealism of hate will fail to divide us." In another inspiring speech at Christchurch's Al Noor Mosque, Prince William addressed the Muslims and called on them all to unite to

fight racism in all its forms.

New Zealand

Located in the South Pacific, New Zealand is a country of about 60 million sheep but only 4.9 million people, of whom about 50,000 are Muslims, who first arrived here in 1868 from China to work in the mining industry, but soon returned as the industry declined. They came again in 1908 and settled in Auckland, but they took a firm foothold in the country from 1950 onwards. Although in small number, they soon organized themselves, gathering in private homes to observe salaah (prayers), conduct Qur'an classes and hold religious celebrations. Later they purchased ordinary houses, converting them into Islamic centers in all major cities throughout the country.

In 1950, they formed a regional Muslim association in Auckland, called the New Zealand Muslim Association (NZMA) and followed it up in the other regions like the Wellington Muslim Association in Wellington in 1962, which later became the International Muslim Association of New Zealand (IMAN). By mid-1950s, every region had set up Muslim associations, which were registered with the government as incorporated societies. They used these bodies mainly for the immediate needs of their communities. In most cases, this meant establishing classes for Qur'an-reading and Islamic studies. Despite the scarcity of educational resource material and adequately trained teachers, these classes filled the need for some form of Islamic education in what was a completely secular environment.

In September 1979, Muslims established a national body called the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand to coordinate with the regional associations and also to represent the interests of Muslims as a whole, at national and international levels.

Today, the Muslims in New Zealand comprise about 35 different nationalities. There

are about 60 mosques in the country.

They have also secured from the local city councils plots of land for burial. Schools and universities send their classes to visit Islamic centers and mosques to get a better appreciation of Islam and its rituals. Universities and other training institutions are visited by Muslims for information on Islam. TV and radio programs are presented, and scholars of international repute are invited for public lectures.

Conclusion

Allah Almighty says: "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.' Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided." (Qur'an, 2:155-157)

In the given atmosphere of hatred and hostilities, Muslims need to play a vital role on global level to encourage the concept of mutual existence – by words and deeds. Damage has been done – both from within and outside – to drive across a wicked message that Muslims can't coexist with others, which is wrong. Muslims' is the most flexible culture that all through the history has been able to adapt to the strangest of strange places in the world. This is one reason why Islam spread so fast and so consistently. Instead of falling prey to the sinister machinations of the preachers of hatred, Muslims need to prove that they abhor terrorism and hatred in all its faces and forms whether they are coming from inside or outside. We need to expose and shame all these preachers of hatred.

We are not alone. In this path of peace and truth, we will always find Jacindas and Williams on our side, enough to frustrate their evil plans.

Religious Policy of Some Prominent Mughal Rulers

Mohammad Dawood Sofi

Introduction

The religious policy of the Mughal emperors was based on tolerance and acceptance. When Babur came into power, Sikandar Lodhi's fanaticism found space in his empire. It was mainly sustained by some of the officials who continued to serve dur-

ing the reign of Babur. In a way, Babur had inherited his religious policy from Lodhis. As an enlightened ruler, he exhibited tolerance towards all religions and had advised Humayun to follow the same policy. In most of the cases the Mughal emperors showed a lot of tolerance towards



other religious groups without losing Islamic character. The Hindus who were in majority were treated liberally by the Mughals. This is evident from the fact that a large number of Hindus were appointed to high posts in the government such as Revenue and Finance, Army, etc. It is because of the official patronage and recognition that the Hindus were well-off socially and economically.

Department of Religious Affairs: Functions

The Mughals had established the Department of Religious Affairs for the administration of various religious matters. It was generally the office of *sadr-us-sudur* that was responsible for the administration of the religious affairs. The person who was to be appointed to the post of *sadr* should possess distinguishing qualities such as faith, wisdom, integrity, truthfulness, foresight, kindness, sincerity, etc. so that he can deal with different religious matters and issues justly and honestly. As the head of the Department of the Religious Affairs, the *sadr* possessed the authority of appointing *qadis* and *muhtasibs*. He was also responsible to appoint the staff of *masajid* and manage their expenses, in case the locals failed to do that. Even the *sadr* had a say in the choice of *Imams* and preachers to different big *masajid*. The Department had, therefore, a stronghold over the religious affairs until Akbar devised new policies that resulted in considerable political and administrative changes. It declined the power and authority of the office of *sadr-us-sudur*. Not only this, the establishment of strong contact between Mughals and Safawids, the immigration of a large number of Iranians to India, the matrimonial alliance with the Rajputs, and the growing influence of both Shi'ah Iranians and Rajputs in the

Mughal court challenged the position of the orthodoxy.

Religious Policy of Akbar

A lot of literature has been produced on how and what kind of religious policy and idea Akbar followed. It is not generally accepted that Akbar abjured Islam; however, it is also true that he deviated from orthodoxy by invoking Sufic and pantheistic notions. He believed that he understood Islam better than others and his policies and principles helped in spreading the power of Islam to a great extent. In the early days of his rule, there used to be serious discussions over various issues between the learned jurists. He used to conduct and supervise such theological discussions regularly with an aim to secure his own supreme position in the Empire. To realize this dream, he in 1579 persuaded many theologians to sign a document called *mahzar* that recognized him as *imam-i-adil* (the just ruler or leader). However, such recognition in the *mahzar* encountered opposition because it was considered that Akbar was not technically *imam-i-adil* or he does not possess such qualities. According to the Muslim jurisprudence, it is the authority of the *imam-i-adil* to choose or apply any interpretation among different interpretations of the sacred text offered by the learned jurists. In doing so, the leader should have sufficient knowledge in order to judge the best interpretation. In the earlier period, the rulers who did not possess such qualifications used to delegate this authority and power mentioned in the *mahzar* to their *sadrs*. The signing of this document, therefore, marked, among other things, the decline of the power and influence of the orthodoxy in the court, the end of Akbar's discussion with the orthodox Islam, and the beginning of the hostility



between Akbar and traditionalist Muslims. Subsequently, Akbar was now determined to break or reduce the influence of orthodoxy. Therefore, he victimized the more prominent religious figures, dismissed sadrs and qadis and replaced them with new sadrs and qadis who would help him in satisfying his desired goals.

Although Akbar proclaimed his strong belief in God in all the circumstances, yet his concept of how God should be worshipped was independent of both Islam and Hinduism. His belief was similar to that of Sufis who believe that each person should realize and worship God according to his individual knowledge. The image-worship of the Hindus and the prayer rituals of the Muslims

were condemned by Akbar. The doctrines and ideas Akbar followed were heavily influenced by the philosophy of Ibn Arabi. God creates visible differences whereas Reality is always the same. Akbar realized that there is a close relationship between the Divine Sovereign and the temporal sovereign and he believed that for the later dispensing of justice and administering the world is the real form of worship.

Akbar's religious policy also represented his efforts at finding out the truth in other religions. According to him, there was no harm in doing so. Further, he hardly worried about limitations that only such features of other religions should be accepted that do not conflict with Islam. He took full advan-

tage of his position as a monarch to bring about various changes in various fields. So his policy of eclecticism and heterodoxy has eclipsed various institutions of Islam and has also damaged the hold of Islam upon the polity. Therefore, Akbar's policy evoked a strong reaction from the orthodox Muslims and most bright name in this regard is that of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. He because of his earnest efforts and endeavors came to be popularly known as Mujadid-i-alf-Thani (The Reviver of the Second Millennium). The title shows the significance of his efforts in restoring the position of orthodoxy to its earlier position and in reforming many un-Islamic practices that had found legitimacy among the Muslims. Indeed, he was highly successful in his mission for he touched the feelings of the majority of the Muslims. It is also reported that Akbar towards the end of his rule showed less interest in religious experiments and speculations.

One of the noteworthy elements of Akbar's policy was his emphasis on the tolerance of men of all faiths, including Shi'ahs. He strongly prohibited Sunni-Shi'ah conflict and worked for the cooperation between the two groups. It is because of this reason that Jahangir used to say with lot of pride that while elsewhere Shi'ahs persecuted Sunnis and vice versa, in his father's empire Sunnis and Shi'ites not only tolerated one another but also prayed in one masjid. It is true that Akbar's policy of eclecticism made the Mughal Empire almost free from various religious controversies but at the same time, it is also true that the same policy is responsible for undermining the various rites and institutions of Islam.

Religious Policy of Jahangir and Shah Jahan

Akbar's son Jahangir, although, pursued the policy of his father and maintained a distance from the orthodoxy, yet, he attempted to restore the rites and institutions of Islam that were otherwise eclipsed or discarded during the reign of his father. Shah Jahan, often pictured as a religious man and an orthodox Muslim ruler, passionately pursued the policy of re-imposing Islamic laws. Despite the growing power and influence of non-Muslims and other sects of Islam in the Empire, it was not easy at all for the Mughal rulers to neglect the voices of orthodoxy. At the same time, these rulers were bound to give due consideration to the feelings and voices of Shi'ahs and non-Muslims because they were holding high positions. Therefore, their cooperation was highly significant to keep the Empire free from disorder and anarchy. It is correct to say that both Jahangir and Shah Jahan made several attempts to reconcile orthodoxy, yet, in this process they neither offended others nor took away any privilege from them. By respecting the feelings of different groups, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, thus, succeeded in maintaining the balance between them.

Shah Jahan exhibited tolerance towards others, despite being regarded as a staunch orthodox Muslim emperor. This fact is proved by the thing that in 1637 there were 35 Rajputs who were holding high posts in the Mughal administration. Moreover, the poet Sundar Kavi Rai being one of his favorite courtiers indicates Shah Jahan's patronage and partiality towards Hindu poetry. However, this balance was somewhat disturbed by Shah Jahan owing to the favoritism for his eldest son, Dara Shikuh. The favored prince was considered as a cynosure of the eyes of non-Muslims because he was proving himself to be another Akbar in the mak-



ing. Being interested in mysticism from an early age, Dara Shikuh was a great admirer of a famous Qadri mystic, Miyan Mir of Lahore. It was followed by his interest in Hindu Vedantic philosophy. In his work, *Majmu al-Bahrayn* (Meeting of Two Oceans), he tried to prove that there was hardly any difference between Islam and Hinduism and if there existed any difference between the two that was merely verbal and speculative (lafzi).

Religious Policy of Aurangzeb

Shah Jahah was succeeded by Aurangzeb Alamgir. He was considered a pure orthodox Mughal ruler who in relation with his predecessors followed a more orthodox policy. The situations Aurangzeb faced were complex as well as challenging. The frequent Maratha slogans of *Hindupad Padshahi* strongly provoked the feelings of Hindus and injected rebellious poison among them. The Shi'ahs started to show the resentment because of the conflict of the Mughals and the Safawids regarding Qandahar and the

war against the Shi'ah Sulatnates of the Decan. Keeping these serious factors in view, Aurangzeb had to devise his policy accordingly. Moreover, his temperament as well as necessity made him to rely on the support of the orthodox. Obviously, because of such attitude, he failed to gain full support and cooperation of the non-Muslims and Shi'ahs. The resentment and dissatisfaction of the non-Muslims was further exacerbated when Aurangzeb decided to re-impose *jizyah* and other regulations which had been discarded by the earlier Mughals emperors. All these reasons prevented non-Muslims to offer the maximum support to Aurangzeb. However, to say that there was complete lack of cooperation from non-Muslims and Shi'ahs is totally wrong. There are reliable reports that many Hindus and Shi'ahs not only showed allegiance but also rendered credible service and support to Aurangzeb. It is important to note that how difficult it was for the Mughal emperors to rule a region full of various po-

litical active groups and religions. Therefore, the success of the Mughal emperors depended upon the support and service of all these groups belonging to various religious-political ideas.

There has been gross exaggeration by many writers about Aurangzeb and his policy. For instance, many modern writers are painting Aurangzeb as a model of intolerance, especially against the Hindus that is not correct. There are many charges, in this regard, leveled against him such as demolition of temples, discontinuation of festivals, and subjugation of Hindus. Facts and evidences prove that he only sanctioned the demolition of those temples which were built or repaired without official sanction and discontinued only those festivals, like Holi, that caused inconvenience to the others. It cannot be doubted at all that these and some other measures had proactive effect on the majority of Hindus. There are many documents like Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings 1946 that record various grants of land to different temples and their priests, list of Hindu officers holding high positions, Hindu employees admired and acclaimed for their support and service to the Empire, etc. during the period of Aurangzeb. All this confirms the claim that Aurangzeb was intolerant ruler is not supported by the facts. The discussion shows that Aurangzeb received support, service, and loyalty of many non-Muslims, still many of his decisions and policies, disliked by the non-Muslims, made the situation more complex for him.

On the other hand, Aurangzeb was deeply interested in Muslim jurisprudence as he himself was a learned jurist. He rendered his service in the compilation of *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri* in Arabic. Based, especially on the Hanafi School but also drawing on other



schools of jurisprudence, *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri* is regarded as the largest compendium of Muslim jurisprudence prepared in India. Moreover, he showed minimum inclination towards mysticism.

From the whole discussion, certain conclusions can be drawn. The Mughal emperors firmly established as well as followed the policy of religious tolerance. Nevertheless some of them deviated from orthodoxy like Akbar, yet, none of them abjured Islam. It was Akbar who showed more generous attitude towards non-Muslims than the other Mughal emperors. Among other things, he greatly reduced the influence and power of the orthodoxy, discarded many Islamic traditions, and introduced many new religious experiments. The emperors who followed him, particularly Jahangir and Shah Jahan, tried to restore the orthodoxy to its previous position and maintain the balance between the between various entities. Aurangzeb's endeavor is most vital for he showed maximum determination in restoring the power of orthodoxy and reintroducing various laws of Islam. Some of his measures, without any doubt, created resentment among the Hindus but they were not brutally implemented. Nevertheless, his policies, according to Ishtiaq Husain, were "far more tolerant than those of any non-Muslim monarch of those days."

The same is true in the history of Buddhism to some extent. The education that was disseminated through Nalanda University was based on fundamental teachings of character building and on the basic ethical values taken from the teachings of Buddhism. They had also incorporated other streams of knowledge prevalent in India at that time.

If we analyze the primary phases of the Hindu religion, it will be clear to us that the basis of acquiring knowledge was the Veda. Veda itself means Knowledge. The basis of their ancient philosophy was also Veda. In other words, Veda was at the center of their education culture. Alongside it, military science, diplomacy, financial studies/economics and other scriptures were added according to the need of the time.

Historically, the Christians' education system was also based on the Church. Every church was used as a college or an educational institution. Whatever was taught there, the basis was the Bible, i.e. the Old Testament and the New Testament. This only proves that prior to the end of the 18th century – when the Enlightenment Movement began and gave birth to Secularism – education was based on religion. The result of this education culture was that human life was more or less governed by certain ethical and moral standards. As a result, most of the people, whether they were Hindu or Buddhist, were charitable. As regards fundamental human values, they were better than people now. They were not inhuman.

Prior to the enlightenment movement (that supposedly advocated free thought) initiated at the end of the 18th century, there had been two more revolutions in Europe. The first was Renaissance. This occurred in areas of Art and Literature; it was not based on religion or politics. The second revolution was

the Reformation Movement. A dispute arose from the Christian Church itself over whether the Pope was the sole interpreter of the Bible. Without going into too much detail on this issue, this resulted in the Church being divided in multiple sects. For example, the Lutheran Church under the leadership of Luther, the Calvinist Church under the leadership of Calvin, the Angelical Church led by the British Priests, the Baptist Church and others. This was called the Protestant Movement which was the result of the Reformation Movement.

There was a third revolution which had occurred in France. It had started in the name of 'Free-thought'. The influence cut through the end of the 18th century and before & after the French Revolution. Whatever the reason was, majority of the leaders of these revolutions were openly atheist or inclined to atheism or secularism. In the history of mankind, this was the first time that they came up with the philosophy that religion needed to be excluded from activities of the state and society. That is, religion will have no role to play in issues of the state or society. If religion exists, it has to exist only in the hearts of the people – if anyone wants. Religion will be absent in areas like Economics, Culture, Politics, Legal system, and other mundane matters. The main argument of this movement was that logic, and not divine revelations, will be the basis of life; and there will be no establishment of religious or divine law.

The first bad consequence of this was that education was separated from religion. As a result, the schooling systems that developed made people selfish. They became commercial. Respect for religion decreased. The greatness or dominance of ethics/morals was reduced. Man became more accustomed to immorality and selfishness. This schooling gave rise to generals, politicians and scholars.

In their inner self a predisposition was imprinted that for the greater society there was no need of religion – whether in parliament, markets, stock exchanges, or banks. This individual thought process that developed became the basis of their social attitude.

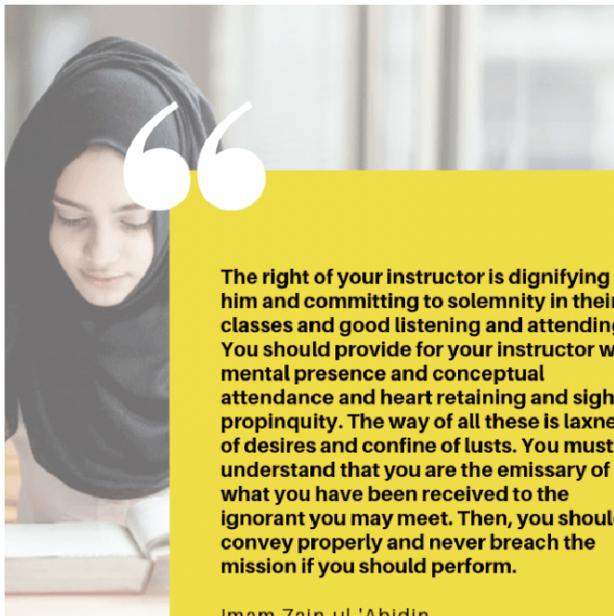
Consequently, this thought influenced all sectors of human life. Social Darwinism became a norm in economics and the theory ‘Survival of the Fittest’ was acquired as the theme. Only the capable will survive. Which meant: those who are not capable will one day be destroyed. Why would we obstruct the natural process? In this fashion, if any nation whether in this sub-continent, Africa or China does not prove itself as the fittest, it is bound to lose out. There is no need for morality or pity in such cases. It is only logical that ‘we are pushing the fittest forward’. This was Social Darwinism which was against Christianity and against Islam. Christianity asks you to love your neighbor, it asks you to give charity. And Islam talks about ‘Infaq Fi SabiliLlah’ or ‘Spending in the way of Allah’, Zakah. This is a serious matter. It puts especial emphasis on the duties towards near relatives. Secularism or the Free-thought movement



initiated thinking about the Economy with the exclusion of God. Even capitalism that started 500 years ago was not so unethical in reality; Christian morals had moderated its activities. However, they had started a completely competitive market system. Prior to the Free thought movement the horrific face of capitalism had not shown itself.

But when capitalism combined itself with secularism, the laborers in Europe started facing oppression to such an extent that they were left only in the state of being alive – as resources for market production. Communism came in as a reaction to this very aspect;

Socialism was given birth. The result of the imposition of Free-thought or secularist ideology on Economy was that inhumanity and immorality established itself and it was considered positive science; economy was a unique science; there will be no question of morals; no ethics. Just as we don't give any thought of ethics in the flow of air or water, there will be no ethics on the flow of the economy. It will run by itself. Such notions resulted in many ills. Needless to say, such economic theories were the result of excessive greed and the urge for too much wealth. Interest operations



The right of your instructor is dignifying him and committing to solemnity in their classes and good listening and attending. You should provide for your instructor with mental presence and conceptual attendance and heart retaining and sight propinquity. The way of all these is laxness of desires and confine of lusts. You must understand that you are the emissary of what you have been received to the ignorant you may meet. Then, you should convey properly and never breach the mission if you should perform.

Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin

made the situation worse. If interest was not there this may have never happened.

I have explained above the nature of the enlightenment movement (or the free-thought movement or Secular movement). The other result of these movements was that man at home spoke of independence, democracy, brotherhood while at the same time the children educated in the secular education system went out to conquer the world. People in France, England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Holland and few other European countries conquered almost the whole

of the world: the two Americas, Australia, New Zealand, almost 100 percent of Africa and almost 70 percent of Asia. In trying to do so, they became involved in wars with each other and with the natives of those countries.

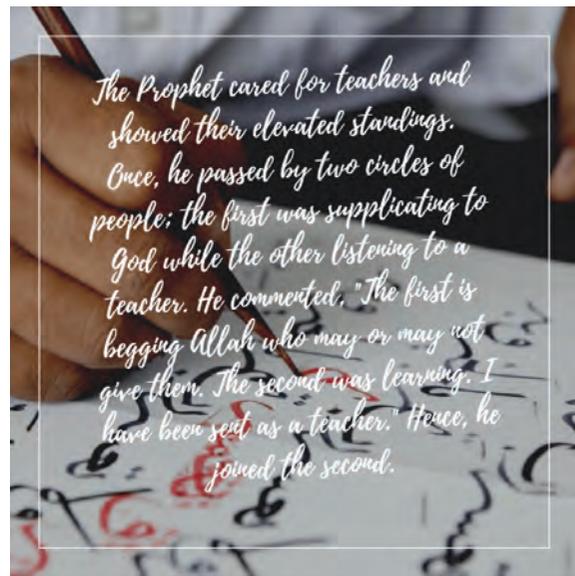
The followers of the enlightenment movement or 'Free-thought' of the 18th century managed to conquer the whole world. Their sense of immorality was behind this great win. No moral society/state can attack or capture another state. But they looted the world. They looted iron ores and various minerals, gold, diamond – they looted everything. The Spanish looted South America. The

British looted our region, as they looted Africa. Looting was their main activity. That means: men educated in the secular education system started oppressing people severely. Then they announced that their objective was to civilize people. How can such uncivilized people civilize others?

At the time when they arrived as traders in the court of Mughal emperor Jahangir, the culture, the refinement, the etiquette that the Mughal possessed were much superior. What I'm saying is that colonizers' political attitude was based on immorality. They fought against each other. France and England tried to take the control of India. In the end, England occupied this region solely. Similarly France, Britain & Spain fought in America. In the end South America went to the hands of Spain. North America went to the hands of the British. The British, French, Italians, Germans and Portuguese fought in Africa. Portugal took over the region of Mozambique. The Dutch took some parts including South Africa. Maghreb or North Africa was taken over by Italy and France. This very incidence is portrayed in the film of Omar Mokhtar.

What we noticed that the Free-thought movement that abandoned religion produced very bad examples of humans. These men went on conquering the world. These men plundered foreign countries and then fought among themselves. The result was that they could not give any peace to this world. They fought the First World War and the Second World War. Four very harmful doctrines were given birth by the Western Civilization: Fascism, Communism, Capitalism and Secularism. Except for democracy, they seem to have given nothing good at all.

The ones who didn't want to give any room for God in their consciousness showed animal behavior in issues of family and gender. They thought that there was no need for family and that it was merely an institution to subjugate and enslave women. They preferred living like animals. Even if anyone grew a family, that Muslim Ummah: 20 Contemporary Issues and Challenges would be merely to produce children, which is another animal attitude. There was also an idea of 'Communes'. These communes would have 100 men and 100 women, and the identity of the fathers of the children was not known. Everyone would take the responsibility of child rearing. They also came up with the thought that an animal looks after (or rears) its young only until it can eat by itself. The tiger or the dog rears the young cubs until they are capable of standing on their legs. Man will also have to do the same. The attitude is: 'Why shall I strive for 30 years? Why shall I sacrifice so much? The child has been born as a natural phenomenon and he/she is grown up now. Let him/her do his/her duty. I have no more responsibility. Why shall I give up my self-interest? Why shall I give up my happiness & pleasure?' The deplorable state of families was largely



due to the secular mind-set. This could have become worse. However, the little influence of Christianity (wherever applies) that exists today has prevented it from going to that extent. Whatever good is there has been possible entirely due to people adhering to their religion of Christianity. And the moral degradation has happened largely due to this Free-thought movement; due to the secular ideology of separating life and ethics.

What's the solution to this problem? As far as my knowledge goes, this can be solved in two ways. One, as Muslims we take seriously the directions given by Allah (SW); in other words, we need to submit to Him completely. The root cause of all problems is the false display of Free-thought. Their statement is: Leave God! On the contrary we should keep Him near to us. We have to follow Him all the time. We have to lead our lives keeping faith and trust in Him. We are bound and indebted to Him in all aspects. We cannot do without Him. This is our duty as Muslims. People of other religions have to go to the Creator, go to moral values, and return to religion. So as

a solution we're saying – whichever way possible – the education system based on morals/ethics needs to be brought back. For moral education there is no other basis other than religion. In a Muslim State, Islam should be the basis for the Muslims, and other religions for their adherents. In non-Muslim states a moral education system needs to be established with their religion as the basis. We hope alternatives will be there for Muslims.

If the education system grows in this manner, then we can hope that the process of developing good human beings will start. If good human beings are created, wellbeing will spread in all sectors. Good people will be created everywhere, in politics, economy, family. We cannot do with just theories. And the change will not happen with only what I am saying. However, we do have to start to work for the revival of humanity. We know that such a revival is not impossible.

There are some other relevant issues that need some discussion. There is a claim that Christian Churches are opposed to Science. I don't know how much of it is true and how much is propaganda. This needs to be delved into. If anything of that sort has happened, then that is a mistake. Science has flourished in India and China. Here, scientists were never penalized.

Science has flourished in the hands of Muslims. We know of no incident of scientists being tortured or oppressed in Islamic history. Who can claim that in any movement, whether Communist or democratic, no mistakes were made? Removing Christianity completely is an over-reaction.

I would like to mention here a comment made in the book 'Tawhid' by Isma'il Al Razi. He said, 'God is not against Science, nor an enemy of science'. It's just because Allah exists that He has established an order.

It's because of this existence of order that it has been possible to conceptualize scientific theories. If Allah didn't Exist, there would have been no order; neither would science have been created.

No religion has interfered in the development that has occurred due to science. The one or two examples that are found in Christian Europe were mistake. But Christian leaders or the Pope are not against Science.

We understand that humans were basically religious (God-fearing). They need to be reverted to religion and God-consciousness. They need to be reverted to being Islamic. What's the difference between a person who is religious and a person who is secular? An Islamic person looks for a solution to any problem in the Qur'an and the Sunnah; and then to other areas. The same is applicable to other religious people. On the other hand, a secular mind doesn't think about what's there in Allah's Book. He/she thinks and looks for what secular scholars say; what political leaders are saying or what Russia, China, America, or Canada are doing. They have taken the world from religious thought process to secular thought process. That is why our duty is to bring back the whole world into the frame of morality/ethics, to bring it back to the religious thought process.

The use of the word 'secular' was started after the Free-thought movement in the 19th century. By accepting the ideology of enlightenment, educated society has become more or less secular. Unfortunately, we have numerous people who pray but claim to be secular. They don't look for solutions in Islam. These secular minds need to be reverted to Islam completely. For this, they need to be given some basic books to read. There is no other way. I hope, if we try our best, we will succeed insha Allah.

The Great Women of Islam: Sumayyah bint Khabat

Dr. Sumaiya Ahmed

Women companions were very active in religion as well as in politics and business. They were courageous in the battlefield and provided services like giving medical aid to the soldiers, nursing the wounded and providing food and water to the needy in a manner which has no parallel in history. They spread the message of Islam and it is proved by many instances that their conduct converted many disbelievers to Islam. There are many more stories like this that will encourage our Muslim sisters to acquire more knowledge about such great women. The Sahabiyat (Prophet Muhammad's Women Companions) were the noble women who were the contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).



They were honored during the very lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) with the prediction that they would live forever in Paradise in the hereafter. Their achievements and influence are found in every sphere of that momentous period in the history of the world, which transformed the whole of humanity forever. They were as active in religion as in politics, as courageous in the war in the peaceful and persuasive propagation of the teachings of Islam. These noble, selfless women could be found in the battlefields among the foremost ranks of those taking part in jihad. They were to be found in the political area, in the field of education, in the interpretation of Shariah. The collective body of laws as revealed by Allah the Almighty in trade and commerce, in agriculture, in medicine, and in nursing. In short, there was no sphere that did not benefit from their intellect, their wisdom and their gentle yet firm strength of character. The history of the Muslims is full of material about Muslim women taking leading roles in religious and intellectual fields. Thus we find that Sumayyah bint Khabat.

Three brothers set out from Yemen to go to Makkah. They heard about this city and wanted to experience its culture and to partake of its various social activities. One was named Yasir and the other two were named Harith and Malik. The latter two left to return home to Yemen after some time, but Yasir liked living there so much that he decided to stay on permanently. According to the custom of the time, he got the sponsorship and support of Abu Huthaifah bin ‘Abdullah Makhzoomi, and became his companion and partner. As they got to know each other better, they took a liking to each other. Abu Huthaifah had a very intelligent and sensible slave girl in his house, Sumayyah. In

due course of time, she got married to Yasir. It was a happy marriage and soon they had a son whom they named ‘Ammar. Abu Huthaifah was a very kind, loving and generous man and he liberated the family from his bandage, but he continued to keep good terms with them and very often helped them with cash as well. Yasir had two more sons, whom he named ‘Abdullah and Hareeth’. He later was murdered before the advent of Islam and with this tragedy, it seemed ill fortune started to haunt the family. Sumayyah bint Khabat was one of the seven people to be enlightened by Islam and swear allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). She is among the foremost of the greatest women companions. Islam is unique in the sense that a person's value does not depend on color, race, language, gender or nationality. The norms are purity of heart and good will towards all. As Allah says, “Verily the most honorable of you with Allah is that believer who is most pious” (Surat Al-Hujurat, Verse 13).

Thus, a person who wishes for his fellow human beings what he wishes for himself, who is kind to his fellow human beings for the sake of Allah, is the one who fulfills the conditions of the test set by Him. The seven people who first accepted Islam were the following:

1. Abu Bakr Siddique
2. Ali Bin Abu Talib
3. Khadijah
4. Zaid bin Harith
5. Sumayyah bint Khab
6. Ammar bin Yasir
7. Bilal bin Abi Rabah

The Quraish of Makkah could harm the Prophet because of the power and position of his uncle Abu Talib, Abu Bakr Sid-



dique was also a very powerful man because of the wealth of his tribe and his own personal influence. But the common Muslim, whether man or woman was not spread any imaginable torture or torment. Sumayyah bint Khabat, her husband and her son ‘Ammar were very often the targets for the cruelty of the Quraish on one occasion as the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was passing by the marketplace he saw all three members of the family being put through the worst form of torture possible. But he was so helpless, that there was no way he could rescue them. He could only console them and said, “Be patient O family if Yasir: for your final destination is Paradise.” Othman also narrated that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) used to say these words to comfort the family. Once ‘Ammar managed to escape and reach the Prophet. He then asked him when this

persecution of the innocent. Muslim would end, and when they would be able to beat him peacefully. He said that things were going way beyond all limits. The prophet then comforted him with a prayer to Allah to protect and save the family of Yasir from the fire of Hell.

Abu Jahl gave Sumayyah the worst kind of punishment, but she did not waver even for a second and remained as steadily as a rock. He tried to pressure her, cajole with her and threaten her to recant, but she bluntly refused. He could not accept the fact that she could resist him. So stubbornly, and in out of rage he thrust his spear into her. This proved to be a fatal blow and she died. Thus, Sumayyah had the distinction of being the first women martyr of Islam. This incident took place seven years before the Hijrah. Then her husband also fell victim to the torture of the Quraish and he also died. After

the martyrdom of both parents, ‘Ammar took a special place in the affections of the Prophet. He used to address him lovingly as bin Sumayyah. He often spoke of the family of Yasir in the highest terms of praise. Abdullah bin Masood says the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) once said that when dissensions and disputes appeared among the people Ibn Sumayyah would always stand by the right and just. The family sacrificed their lives, all in order to nourish the truth and also to earn rewards for the Hereafter. It is about people like these that Allah, “Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties for (the price) that theirs shall be the paradise. They fight in Allah cause, so they kill (others) and are killed. It is promise in truth which is binding on Him in the Taurat and the Injeel and the Qur’an. And who is truer to His covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain that you have concluded. That is the supreme successes (Surat At-Tawbah, verse 111).

The Noble Quran in several places and the traditions very specially address only the women though more often both men

and women. Everyone knows that in Islamic Law, there are many commands only for women and many more for both men and women. It is the responsibility of both to propagate religion and its practice. Women have given many sacrifices to this end. History has recorded that the first martyr for Islam was a woman Sumayyah bint Khabat, ‘Ammar’s mother who was struck down by Abu Jahl a spear.

The hustle and bustle of this world are not only because of men, women to play a great part in keeping it inhabited and running. Every man and women look upon acquiring. The things of this life as his or her duty, according to one’s understanding, intelligence and courage; houses, shops, property, children and family; although these things are mortal and bound to part Religion and its knowledge are also a Muslim’s personal asset, an asset that is everlasting and the effort for which never goes waste, just as men and women make their effort for this world and cooperate with one another for it, similarly it is, their responsibility indeed more so, to keep religion and religious books alive in their lives.



Letter to the Editor

Dear Brother Qais Bajaeifir
Assalamu Alaikum Wa-Rahmatulla-
hi Wa-Barakatuh

I read your article titled “Why do Muslims Christians and Hindus coexist peacefully in Kerala state?” in the MWL Journal. I Am a native of this wonderful land, Kerala.

My heart tears with pleasure when I read your article. I know these words are less to express my gratitude.

I congratulate you and the writer of the article as a representative of Kerala people.

Thank you very much.

Nazer Basheer Usman

Saudi Arabia

Studio Maghrabi, Makkah, Alsalam
mini market Makah

To the Editor

MWL Journal

Rajab1440H/April 2019

Dear Sir,

Hope you are fine, and with prayers.

I came to read one wonderful article

about my homeland Kerala in your Journal titled “Why do Muslims Christians and Hindus coexist peacefully in Kerala state”?

The article is quite thoughtful and inspiring. Kerala is one and the only example of coexisting of a human being without any difference of religion, caste, and politics.

The reasons for the peaceful living of Keralites are those the article mentioned. The high rate of literacy, common language, and government policies, and implications.

I wonder how a Yemen citizen can write such an article like this.

I congratulate from my bottom of heart for your article. Any giving claps for beautifying my land with your beautiful words.

Once again thank you very much.

With love,

Shamsudheen Mubarak

Senior sub-editor

Malayala Manorama

(The largest regional daily in Asia)