

# THE MWL JOURNAL



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**Fiqh of Emergency Conference**  
**addresses pressing issues of COVID-19**







## Letter From the Editor

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### Fiqh of Emergency International Virtual Conference



The Muslim World League (MWL) and the United Arab Emirates Council for Fatwa and Shari'ah organized the Fiqh of Emergency International Virtual Conference on 18-19 July 2020, under the theme "Features of Fiqh post the Coronavirus Pandemic". The event was attended by elite and leading scholars, muftis, juristic councils, and a number of intellectuals and academicians.

The importance of this conference came amid the unprecedented global crisis caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic, which has left its toll on people's health, life and worship practices.

The Fiqh of Emergency Conference focused on studying the issues and areas that are affected by the coronavirus pandemic in order to reach a Fiqh opinion that takes into consideration today's reality, based on the objectives of Shari'ah, mainly protecting the interests of the public. This opinion will be applied in the case that the pandemic lasts for a longer time and its impact on different fields increases.

The conference held ten sessions, focusing on various issues such as laying the foundations for the Fiqh of emergency, discussing matters related to worship practices including the delay of prayer in the light of the pandemic conditions and the temporary closure of mosques. Various issues were explored as well, including the delay of Zakat payment, the Shari'ah rulings of

fasting for people infected with COVID-19 and healthcare teams, the rulings of Hajj for those who are able to perform it despite the existence of the pandemic and its spread among people.

Moreover, the participants discussed the field of beliefs and how humankind deals with and explains disasters and crises (the issue of good, evil, righteous and most appropriate). Regarding transactions, the conference presented the Shari'ah opinion on the various contracts that were delayed due to the pandemic, how to pay debts and due amounts in the case of an economic inflation, and the emergency theory from the perspective of the civil transactions law.

The participants of the conference highlighted the field of health and Shari'ah morals, focusing on five issues: dealing with the corpses of COVID-19 victims, using vaccines to prevent the disease, and socializing between a COVID-19 patient and health persons, and whether an infected person who transmits the virus to others should be regarded as a felon and should be prevented from visiting his parents and relatives and shaking hands with them for fear of infection. The participants discussed also whether the implications of the material and psychological impact of the pandemic should be taken into consideration when handling family disputes.

In conclusion, the conference commended the distinguished efforts of Islamic countries in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.





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## CONTENTS



Figh of Emergency Conference commends KSA  
measures to restrict Hajj and suspend Umrah

4



The return of the Messiah: a theological  
story with a taste of fantasy

32

Epidemics and crises have disrupted Hajj throughout history.....	20
Hajj: An enlightening and interactive sojourn.....	24
Health sciences must now look to Islam to set things right .....	38





MWL and ISESCO organize Forum of Role of Religious Leaders in Confronting Crises

14



Adhan allowed across Europe amid the Coronavirus pandemic

46

It was one of world's oldest universities but few heard of it.....	50
Internet: A modern tool for introducing people to Islam.....	54
Charity to repair Society.....	58
Egypt mourns its 'doctor of the poor' .....	64

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# Fiqh of Emergency Conference commends KSA measures to restrict Hajj and suspend Umrah

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Makkah - MWL

” The international virtual conference “Emergency Fiqh: Features of the Post-Coronavirus” has concluded its activities after thanking the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the measures it has taken to restrict the number of pilgrims and suspend Umrah as precautionary measures against COVID-19 spread.





***Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa: The pandemic has placed a major responsibility on the Shari'ah scholars to face confusing and perplexing questions.***



The conference held sessions stressing the importance to unify the efforts of the nation's leading scholars, muftis, bodies of senior scholars, advisory opinion, and fiqh councils in the Islamic World as well as Islamic academicians and thinkers around the world.

Organized by the Muslim World League and the United Arab Emirates Council for Fatwa and Shari'ah, the conference saw the participation of the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation to explain the provisions of the urgent Shari'ah issues that arose because of this pandemic.

His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance in the United Arab Emirates appreciated in his opening speech the great keenness of the important conference, highlighting the role of the Shari'ah, as an engine for the general social system. He expressed his thanks to all for their endeavors to crys-





***UAE Minister of Tolerance:  
The conference confirms the  
role of Shari'ah as an engine  
for the general social system***

tallize its importance continuously, as a bulwark for safety and security in society, and even as a correct way to direct the lives of Muslims, to achieve with it and through it, the interests of the individual, and the protection of the interests of society.

He said, “We are a state, praise be to Allah, that is proud of Islam as a religion, and very happy with it, in this way supporting this conference, which seeks to provide solutions and proposals that enrich the life of the nation, renew its reality, and guide its future”.

He added, “As the best nation produced for humankind, and we, praise be to Allah, a country that is very happy to contribute to the achievement of interconnectedness and intellectual and real communication among yourselves, for you are the scholars of the nation, and also among the Muslim people everywhere”.

His Excellency the Minister of Tolerance pointed out that the new coronavirus has had unprecedented effects on all aspects of life as well as on the relations between nations and people, and on the relationship of humans to Allah and the relationships with others. He added, “This conference clearly declares that faith in Allah and holding responsibility, determination and joint efforts in facing challenges are, in their entirety, the sure path to success”.

He noted, “You are in this conference, but you also emphasize the role of the nation’s scholars in supporting the efforts of society and facing emergencies and crises, and you focus on this on the need for the scientific method and human progress to be a basic



way to confront this epidemic. As your presence together in this conference is also an important call for regional and global cooperation, in order to overcome problems and preserve public health everywhere”.

Al Nahyan emphasized that the Shari’ah of Allah calls for unity, fraternity and cooperation in order to achieve the interests of the people, and provides Muslims with an intellectual increase, a legal system, and a spiritual gift that guarantees the individual and society a good and safe life. Islam prefers easiness to hardship and the Shari’ah is flexible in its nature, developed in its composition, based on diligence and the implementation of reason, and the introduction of the causes of knowledge, within the framework of the spirit of Shari’ah, and the essence of religion.

Al Nahyan continued, “We are putting our trust and optimism in this conference, and we expect it to lead to a number of key fatwas, and to set out mentoring programs that will make Muslim societies able to deal with the effects of this epidemic. We also



***Bin Bayyah: Hajj precautions are a correct discipline in Shari’ah standard***

want you to direct the Muslim individual towards formulating his life affairs in light of the virus according to a rational Islamic approach, and come up with appropriate proposals in the areas of worship, beliefs and transactions, and how to achieve success in managing this emergency crisis in the economic, health, and social fields in general”.

His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League delivered a speech in which he emphasized that this conference discusses an essential topic





## ***Juma'ah: We need a correct understanding of the context***

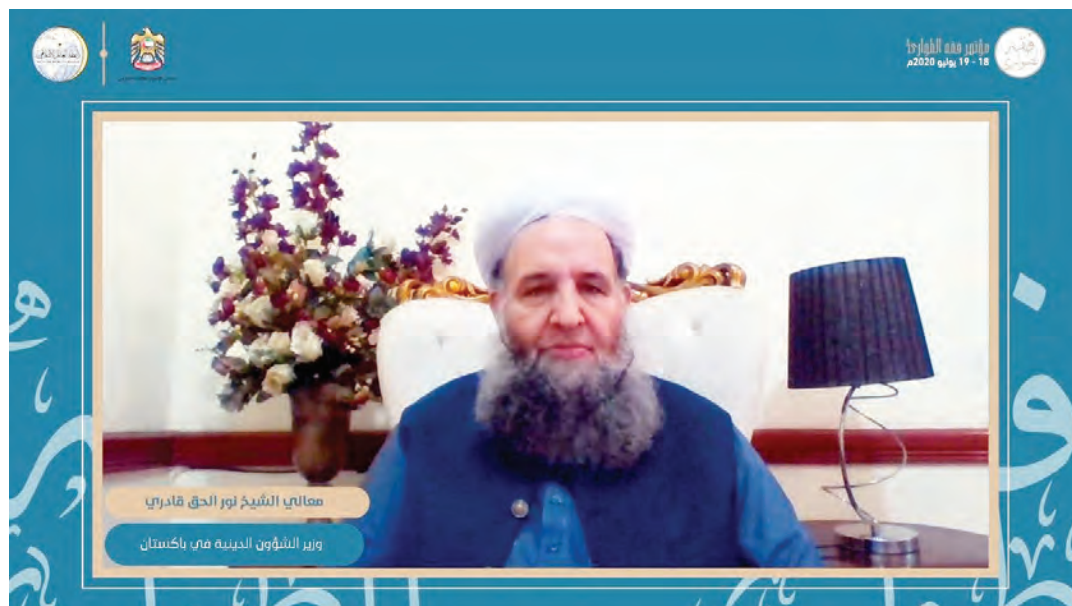
related to the features of the post-corona pandemic fiqh. Because of the multiple aspects of this fiqh to include important Shari'ah issues, which the latest developments and catastrophes insisted on, and at the forefront, and even the main motivation for holding this conference is the emerging pandemic.

His Excellency said, "Urgent matters of Shari'ah have emerged from worship, personal status and transactions. The pandemic has placed a tremendous responsibility on the Shari'ah scholars in addressing the com-

mon confusion that people have because of the pandemic. He pointed out, "And while everyone was happy with the agreement of the scholars under the umbrella of scholarly councils, our happiness is indescribable, and I have decided that these councils are determined to meet here on one word in matters of affairs and issues".

His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League continued, "The motivation of this conference was those urgent questions, outstanding issues, and multiple answers which perplexed many. The scholars of the Islamic nation should address these jurisprudential developments, through this forum, explaining the legal ruling in its main issues and branches, in carrying out the legal responsibility, where Allah Almighty chose them to carry the trust and its performance, and they were more worthy of it".

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa explained that the conference also addressed, with this exceptional great gathering, other pressing Shari'ah laws issues within the Islamic context.



His Excellency concluded by saying, “This pandemic, along with its suffering, carries benefits for people; it has opened up horizons and opportunities that have not occurred to them”. Then he thanked Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, for his active and distinguished contribution as well as his efforts towards the success of this conference. Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, Chairman of the United Arab Emirates Council for Fatwa and Shari’ah, delivered a speech in which he said, “We meet today while the world is going through a crisis due to the outbreak of the new pandemic of coronavirus. Millions were infected by covid-19 that claimed the lives of many thousands, and it continues to spread and threatens countries. It has been classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization”.

He added, “We are meeting today and our bodies have diverged, but our hearts converged. We meet in the first juristic conference of this kind to study the results of



***Qadri: The diversity of fatwas has a great value and importance in developing the Islamic fiqh***

the crisis and its effects”. He stressed that the view of this conference stems from the awareness that there is a party should not overlook or left out what is going on, and it is the point of fiqh, which consists of classes, laws, philosophy and spirituality.

His Excellency Sheikh Bin Bayyah continued: “Indeed, you scholars in the official fatwa institutions, in your mosques and schools have confronted the new developments that the new reality imposed by the established mechanisms of fatwa and curricula, and in accordance with local



contexts”. He pointed out that the Muslim World League, led by His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, was the first in every unifying and renewing effort. As His Excellency spared no effort in gathering the nation’s scholars and inviting leaders of opinion and thought to deepen unity and enhance closer ties for the benefit of the Islamic and human nation.

He said, “In this matter, we have had an effort in the United Arab Emirates Council for Fatwa and Shari’ah to issue a set of fatwas and statements to clarify the legal position on a number of key practical and contractual issues. The Council also played its guiding role in keeping up with the general policy of the United Arab Emirates and its pioneering practical vision in addressing the crisis”.

Sheikh Bin Bayyah praised the measures taken by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, describing these measures as Shari’ah-based and aim to protect the Two Holy Mosques, which are the holiest places. The Kingdom, he added, implemented measures to avoid disasters and sanctify sanctity in the face of crisis, stressing that it is necessary to adhere to and abide by the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, based on its sovereign and Shari’ah responsibility to care for pilgrims and visitors, and to help them in preserving the health and safety of all.

Sheikh Bin Bayyah noted, “The decision issued to restrict Hajj this year to domestic pilgrims and reduce the number of pilgrims is in the interest of Muslims because they may face the risk of disease spreading among them in light of the continuance of the corona pandemic. Hajj precautions are a correct discipline in Shari’ah standard and the correct scholarly methodology.

He continued: “The vision of our country,

the United Arab Emirates, in facing this crisis, was marked by the anticipation of planning and firmness in its application. It is a vision based on the value of human dignity and generosity, as it raised the matter of human life, health and comfort, and did not spare any effort or saved money for that. This vision is also based on the value of innovation, so the UAE participated with the world in developing advanced treatments and taking advantage of the latest experiences, so it benefited citizens and residents from the most advanced treatments and the most advanced tests”.

His Excellency Sheikh Noor Al-Haqq Qadri, Minister of Religious Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, delivered a speech in which he addressed the repercussions of the coronavirus worldwide.

He said, “Muslims in the Islamic world and elsewhere do not do anything except based on the fatwa of scholars and jurists, and since the outbreak of this virus in the world, the centers of fatwas, juristic councils and senior jurists have worked to clarify the Shari’ah laws of various emerging issues about the Corona pandemic. These fatwas, as issued by official institutions or by independent muftis, or by Islamic religious parties and societies that took it upon themselves to issue fatwas to their followers. These fatwas varied according to the diversity of Islamic schools of thought, the difference in ijtiḥad and its origins within these different schools of thought, but all of them have a great value and importance in developing Islamic fiqh”.

He said, “The beautiful thing that we have seen is the commitment of the majority of Muslims to orders. They realized that the one, who issued the fatwa prohibiting something, wanted the good for all the Muslims”.



His Excellency Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Juma'ah, Minister of Awqaf in the Arab Republic of Egypt, affirmed that the jurisprudence of dealing with the corona pandemic showed the urgent need to get out of the narrow horizons, which were represented by some of those affiliated with the religious discourse in preserving the provisions of some issues without consideration in the Islamic fiqh of purposes and fate, taking into account the circumstances of time and place, the conditions of people and the developments and trends of every era.

He noted, "We have become more than ever in urgent need of reason to properly understand the text through Shari'ah and logical rules. Moreover, the transition from the approaches of memorization and indoctrination to approaches to understanding and analysis, in our curricula, programs, scientific writings and media discourse. Stressing at the same time that it is indispensable to return to our scientific roots in the principles of jurisprudence and fundamentalism and

also benefit from modern science, while emphasizing that useful science is the absolute science that benefits people in the affairs of their religion and their lives. As the people of knowledge in every science and art are the people who are specialized in it".

In the closing statement, the conferees praised the rational decisions taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding Umrah, visiting and praying in the Two Holy Mosques and commended its precautionary measures for restricting Hajj this year to domestic pilgrims (30% of Saudis and 70% of resident expatriates).

The scholars commended the Kingdom's pioneering role in the international relief related to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic and its efforts to combat this scourge and mitigate its effects through King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief). They said the Kingdom has provide financial, medical, nutritional and specialized aid for all beneficiaries, regardless of their gender, color or religion, in compliance



with the teachings of Islam, which came as a mercy to all humans.

The efforts of the United Arab Emirates were highlighted and praised for facing the crisis and providing relief to all humans regardless of religion, color, race, or location.

The participants thanked the Muslim World League for all the support and aid it has given all around the world to address the pandemic and mitigate its economic and health impact. Millions of people in 25 countries benefited from this aid. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation was thanked for providing medical and humanitarian assistance to different countries.

The participants spoke highly of the sacrifices made by the medical staff and their dedication to saving lives, treating and caring for the patients of this pandemic, and the efforts of all workers, individuals and institutions, in combating this scourge, noting that these efforts are a reminder of the great reward promised to everyone who revives and preserves a living soul.

The participants recommended the formation of a committee to write and state the valuable fiqh judgments contained in the sessions of this conference, broadcast the conference sessions and publish its papers and outcomes in order to benefit fiqh councils, scholarly institutions, Shari'ah researchers and bodies related to the fiqh research.

The conferees affirmed the necessity of activating the role of juristic councils and advisory institutions in order to face such crises through the fiqh of emergency, noting that contemporary Islamic fiqh can solve society's problems and bring benefit to all humankind at all times and places.

The conference underscored the importance of complying with all decisions, regulations and precautions issued by the health and

security authorities in order to face this pandemic, indicating that these decisions achieve interests and eradicate public and private corruption, describing violators as sinners.

The recommendations called on all Muslims to continue to perform their Islamic, humane and legitimate duty to provide the required support of zakat and donations, and work to satisfy the needs of those affected, compassion and cooperation with their societies, and to show selflessness and solidarity, and embody the ethics and values of Islam in times of crisis and adversity.

In their closing statement, the participants called on imams, preachers and intellectual and Shari'ah bodies to perform their role in guiding people and supporting them spiritually and culturally by modern means of communication, and also adopt a global human civilizational discourse, spreading a spirit of hope and optimism.

The participants pointed out in their closing statement that one of the central values that this crisis has demonstrated is the value of solidarity between humankind to face the dangers that do not differentiate between people, races, colors and homelands, but rather affect everyone. They agreed that charity in times of adversity should be extended to all people regardless of their religions.

The conference warned against the danger of hate speech, including the voices of rejection of the expressions and slogans of unity among the followers of religions. The participants stressed that Muslims, Jews, Christians and others are brothers in humanity and in citizenship, quoting the Quranic verse which says that saving the life of one soul is like saving the lives of all human beings. The participants said human sympathy in crises renews their feeling of belonging to the human family.

## MWL issues statement on World Day against Trafficking in Persons

### MAKKAH – MWL

“ The Muslim World League (MWL) said in a statement issued on the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons that it has been following closely and carefully the growing rate of human trafficking and the repercussions of this practice on the regional and international level.

A signatory to numerous international organizations and a representative of over 1.8 billion Muslims from all over the world, the Muslim World League stressed that it attaches great significance to its cooperation with the international community to combat and curb this dangerous and grave phenomenon. The MWL has participated effectively in many relevant international conferences and forums as well as endorsed and signed a number of humanitarian agreements and partnerships with various governments, international entities and humanitarian organizations. His Excellency the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, explained that the phenomenon of Trafficking in Persons has become a serious threat to humanity, representing a major problem for societies because it has turned into a global organized crime.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa added that this unfair practice blatantly exploits and violates human dignity, one's rights and fundamental freedoms in an era where civilization has reached advanced stages of progress and prosperity.

Dr. Al-Issa pointed out that the safeguarding

of one's dignity and a decent living are two key needs for human beings in all times and eras and are based on a number of values. This includes the preservation of legitimate rights and freedoms and the achievement of peace and harmony among all human beings. “Unfortunately, today's human beings still, despite all massive and rapid technologies, suffer from economic pressures that treat humans as if they were a commodity and consume them without any regard to values and morals,” he noted.

The world is surprised by the emergence of the new form of slavery and servitude, which is the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. It is, in fact, an unjust exploitation of human beings and their circumstances, and a flagrant violation of their legitimate rights. This practice transforms humans into cheap commodities and is led by merciless and brutal gangs that oppress the victims and force them into servitude and an unknown future.

His Excellency pointed out that the phenomenon of trafficking in persons has become today a transnational and cross-border crime, a new form of today's slavery that human beings have not known before. It constitutes a clear violation of human dignity and humanity, a fact that led the United Nations to consider it the most serious crime threatening today's world second to drug trafficking and arms trade. Therefore, the United Nations designated July 30 as the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons in order to raise people's awareness about it and warn them against falling victims to it.





# MWL and ISESCO organize Forum of Role of Religious Leaders in Confronting Crises

## The Global Forum of Religious Leaders issues the Declaration of Moral Solidarity

Report: Zakaria Ayoub Dola

“ The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), in cooperation with the Muslim World League (MWL) and the World Muslim Communities Council (WMCC), held the global virtual forum, “The Role of Religious Leaders in Confronting Crises” on July 21, 2020, with the participation of His Excellency the President of Chad, Idriss Déby Itno, and a group of prominent international religious and intellectual figures.

The forum came under the slogan “Towards a Global Ethical Solidarity for Religious Leaders”, in which the participants emphasized that any global model for comprehensive and sustainable development should be based on a spiritual moral system, starting from two basic pillars: the necessity of global ethics, and the need to preserve human dignity.

The Forum opened with a speech by President Idriss Déby Itno, the President of the Republic of Chad, in which he said, the daily dramatic crises and conflicts and the high level of violence and hatred undermine the development of our

countries and threaten our values. He added that all conflicts undermine efforts to peace and security in the world, calling for the need to resolve conflicts in the region through the efforts of religious leaders.

The Chadian President stated that the comprehensive approach to the topic is sufficient on its own to mobilize efforts and achieve the desired goal. He noted the prominent role that religious leaders play in bringing peace and stability and rejecting violence and hatred, and that all heavenly books teach us the values that make us live a harmonious life. He also underscored the importance of

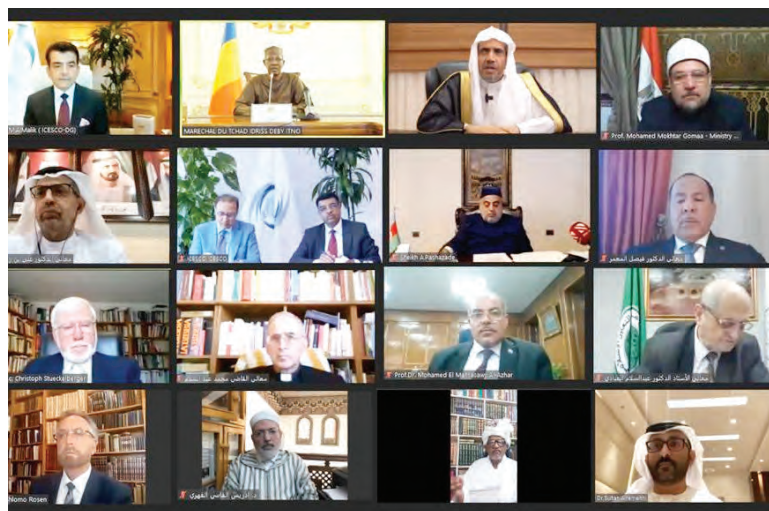
organizing this conference by ISESCO, which aims to reach a comprehensive vision in the face of crises.

The President said, the corona pandemic posed a challenge to all societies and threatened our health and economic systems in all nations, and facing it requires a lot of work to contribute in protecting our world. Moreover, the religious leaders play an important role in resolving conflicts and spreading awareness of precautionary measures in the face of crises, especially “Covid-19”.

His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the Secretary General of the Muslim World



**Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa:**  
*Religious leaders’  
response to develop-  
ments is a religious,  
moral and humani-  
tarian obligation*





League said that there is a great role for religious leaders in facing crises, especially in emergency incidents related to the articles of Shari'ah, which require a firm scholarly decision, whether in the jurisprudence of the Shari'ah text or research survey, taking into consideration the full perception of the incident with an enlightened Islamic discourse framing the scholarly subject with the beauty and majesty of Islamic Shari'ah.

His Excellency affirmed that the Islamic nation, and indeed the whole of humanity, needs the enlightened world's horizon, adding that corona pandemic came upon everyone, so "we all must share the solutions, and the Islamic contribution is very important."

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed that religious leaders' response to developments is a religious, moral and humanitarian obligation. However, this contribution must be in its competence and not to exceed it because the competence must be respected.

His Excellency Dr. Salem bin Muhammad Al-Malik, the Director General of The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)



***Chadian President: All conflicts  
undermine the efforts towards  
peace and security in the world***

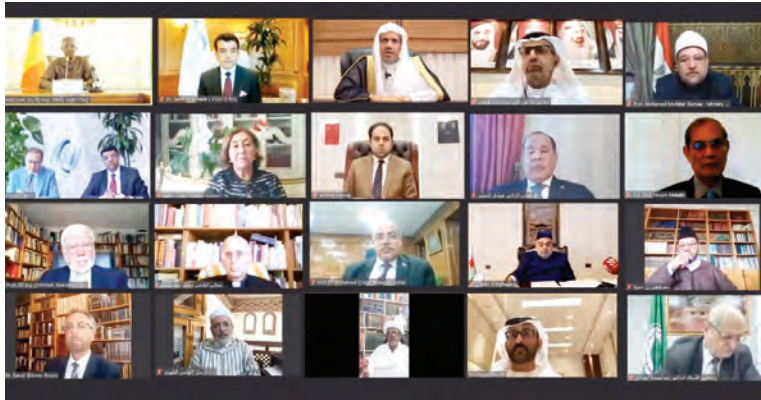
said the conference aims to emphasize the role of religious leaders in facing crises and aspire to agree on a document of global moral solidarity, and that the true Islamic religion is a source of wisdom that establishes the values of tolerance.

He pointed out that the role of religious leaders is escalating today more than before to achieve the aspirations of humanity as a whole of global moral solidarity that leads to achieving the lofty goals that underpin international security and peace. Pointing out

that the People of the Book represent more than 55% of the world's population while the religions of the Far East represent 31%.

His Excellency clarified that crises require a renewed endeavor by media leaders to urge support for reliable organizations and institutions.

His Excellency Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Jumaa, Minister of Awqaf and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Egypt, noted in his speech that only the righteous people will remain



***Dr. Al-Malik: The role of religious leaders is stepping up further to achieve what humanity aspires to be***

and not of corruption and spoilers. Moreover, human values do not accept double standards or injustice, and that all divine laws agreed on the high human values of justice, tolerance, loyalty, honesty, parental rights, the inviolability of the orphan's money, and the rights of the neighbor at the level of individuals, tribes, groups, and states.

His Excellency said, "There should be a clear distinction between religion, which is a right, and the ambitions of some countries and groups that trade in reli-

gion for political purposes that are incompatible with the true religion. Considering that nations, which are not based on morals and values, bear the factors of their fall in the origin of their construction, and history is a witness to that".

The Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Imam Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb said, "The world today needs to consolidate the principles of human unity, adding that the meanings of unity and peace have become an exception to a total rule governing many regions of the world with

selfishness, hatred and conflict".

He pointed out that the accusation is directed against the religions that came to establish peace between people, emphasize the sanctity of human blood, and provide an ethical environment in which everyone lives. Considering that the relations of people in the Qur'an are brotherhood and acquaintance relations, and there is no place in Islam for the relations of conflict and cultural and economic domination between people.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Tayeb explained that societies suffer from moral and religious imbalance despite the international efforts to preserve them, stressing that corona pandemic afflicted everyone and revealed many crises, especially in the field of ethics, when many raced to exploit the needs of people.

His Excellency Dr. Ali bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi, the President of the World Muslim Communities Council, confirmed that the choice of the topic of the conference is very important, as the world today is going through a crisis that targets human and humanity and does not respect borders, nationalities or races. He added that the confrontation must be

comprehensive and from all, and the world must join hands to face such crises.

His Excellency clarified that all people by returning to religions, they return to the main sources to seek solutions and look to religious leaders as symbols to guide and direct them, adding that no one can abolish the role of religious leaders and those religious leaders

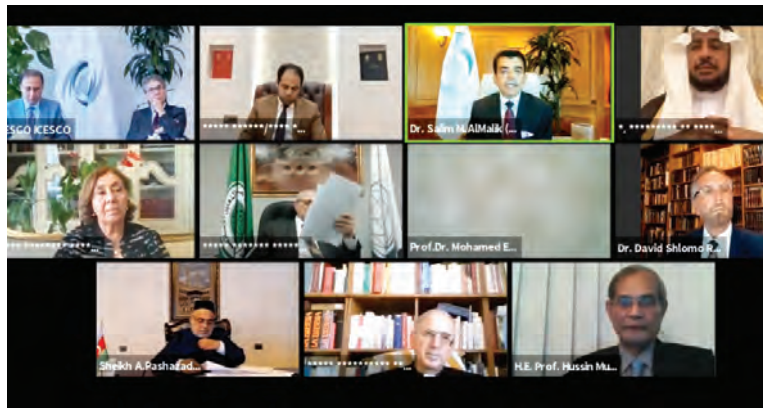
of these responsibilities.

His Excellency also pointed to the need for religious leaders to respect the political decisions issued by various countries in dealing with the crisis as well as commitment to the political framework in each country, because facing the crisis stems from a sovereign decision owned by the leaders of those countries for

thought, the mechanisms of work in investing the gains of crises and dealing with their negative repercussions. The third discussed the prospects for joint institutional work among religious leaders around the world.

Participants in the forum stressed that in order to achieve these noble goals, it is necessary to intensify the efforts of religious leaders to bring views and attitudes closer towards the effective ways of dealing with these crises and also to continue joint work through an implementation plan, practical programs and innovative solutions to the outputs of this declaration. To provide the solutions that the countries and people of the world are waiting for, in a way that fulfills the function of religious leaders in the civilizational range, and enhances the role of faith and moral values and their contribution to addressing global crises.

In its closing statement, the Forum called for the necessity to adhere to five basic principles, (1) the right to be in faith and the respect for religions (2) the right to live and the spread of peace (3) human solidarity and cooperation in building



must take responsibility and make religions as bridges of love and joint action in the service of humanity.

His Excellency said, “All religions have noble values and shared values, and religious leaders should strive to highlight them in order to face crises with each other as one team”, pointing out the need for religious leaders to realize their true responsibilities and the limits

their concern for the life and safety of people.

After the opening session, three specialized scholarly sessions took place, and included enriching discussions and creative ideas. The first session dealt with (the theme of initiatives and best practices of religious institutions during COVID-19). The second session discussed the new and future features of religious



a fair global economy (4) commitment to a culture of tolerance in speech and behavior and (5) equal rights and duties between women and men.

The Forum came out at the conclusion of a valuable set of important recommendations and decisions that were reached through the suggestions of the participants from the scholars and researchers, and the recommendations came, including the following:

(1) Collecting and documenting the initiatives of specialized organizations and civil and religious entities to confront coronavirus pandemic, foremost of which are the specific initiatives launched by ISESCO, and inviting donors and sponsors to support these initiatives to achieve their noble humanitarian goals.

(2) ISESCO should submit the Forum Declaration to member states, regional and international organizations and institutions concerned with joint work.

(3) ISESCO should prepare a comprehensive study on the guidelines for the renewal of ethical religious thought to deal with crises, based on the contents and guidelines of this forum declaration.

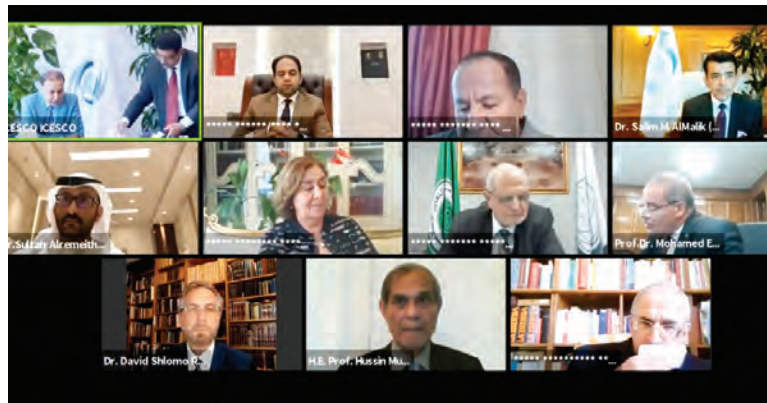
(4) ISESCO should prepare an implementation plan and work programs on the role of common human ethics to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development, and to invite cooperating and sponsoring bodies to finance it.

(5) Emphasizing the responsibility of human development institutions in the need to prepare documents

society organizations.

(7) Elaborating a balanced and humane vision of immigration issues between the countries concerned, and to be considered as an element of enrichment and development among the countries of the world.

(8) Achieving a model of citizenship that accommodates national issues, local particularities and global



for sectoral ethics in the field of scientific research, artificial intelligence, sports, economics, media and communication, and training programs on it; furthermore to be included in the academic and educational curricula.

(6) Formulating a cooperative framework for the foundation for ethical, religious and humanitarian values shared by the legislative and executive entities and civil

humanitarian issues, especially among young people, to enable them to play cultural mediation roles.

(9) Qualifying workers in religious institutions and establishments to enable them to play their role in addressing public affairs issues.

(10) Introducing and inserting the tangible and intangible religious and spiritual heritage of humanity in the academic and educational curricula.

# Epidemics and crises

## have disrupted Hajj throughout history

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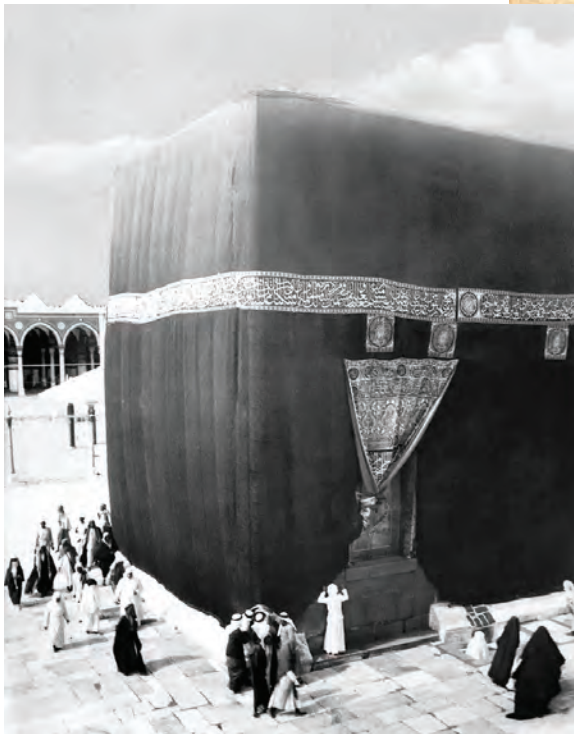
Nizar Abdel Baqi Ahmed

🗨️ *Since Hajj was ordained in the ninth year of the Hijra, pilgrims have flocked every year from all corners of the globe to Makkah in order to perform the duty, which is the fifth pillar of Islam.*





**King Abdulaziz  
secured the  
Hajj roads**



Although Hajj is a must for every adult and abled Muslim, it was not held in some seasons for various reasons, including outbreaks of epidemics and diseases and insecurity on the roads leading to Makkah. In some of these cases the delegations from the countries of the Islamic world were few in number.

Ever since its unification by King Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud, the Kingdom has exerted great efforts and devoted full attention and care to spreading security and stability throughout the country, and providing reassurance to the pilgrims so that they can perform their duty in ease and with safety. The Kingdom has spent enormous amounts of money for this purpose. When King Abdulaziz tightened his grip on the country and won the support and obedience of all people, he declared that he would eradicate the outlaw groups that were infamous for spreading terror among pilgrims, attacking their convoys. King Abdulaziz managed to eliminate the groups. King Abdulaziz's sons followed in their father's footsteps. During their reigns, the Two Holy Mosques have seen huge expansions to prepare them for pilgrims and visitors, and to provide all the requirements





that help pilgrims perform the Hajj rituals. The holy sites in Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah saw huge development as well.

### Historical precedents

In a study published by the official website of the King Abdulaziz Darah, the Islamic history recorded that Hajj season was interrupted 40 times due to various events and

disasters, such as spread of diseases and epidemics, political turmoil and security instability, economic decline in a number of countries, spread of burglars that caused insecurity, to mention but a few. The site mentions the most prominent cases during which the Hajj season was suspended, including: the Carmatian massacre.

According to the site, the first time that the pilgrimage was disrupted happened during the time of the Carmatians, who believed, according to their false beliefs, that Hajj was a return to pre-Islamic times. The site indicates that Abu Taher Al-Qarmatli stood before the gate of the Kaaba on the eighth of Dhu al-Hijjah in 317 AH, and called on his followers to kill the pilgrims and destroy the noble Kaaba. The massacre caused at least 30,000 pilgrims to lose



their lives and get buried on the spot. The Carmatians did not only kill people but they also removed and took away the Black Stone and carried it with them to their capital in Bahrain.

#### **“Al-Masheri” epidemic**

The Darah site indicates that an epidemic spread in Makkah in the year 357 AH, known as “Al-Mashri”, and caused the death of many people including the camels of pilgrims that died of thirst. In fact, most pilgrims who managed to reach Makkah died after performing the Hajj rituals.

#### **Security reasons**

According to the Darah, events occurred in the year 429 AH and caused Muslims to lose security in large parts of their lands and prevented them from reaching Makkah to perform the rituals of Hajj.

#### **War**

The sources also documented a number of wars that prevented the pilgrims from reaching Makkah between 654 and 658 AH, with the exception of the people of Hejaz.



***The Carmatians were  
behind the suspension  
of Hajj for the first  
time in history***

#### **French campaign**

The Darah website mentions a hiatus in the Hajj season in 1213 AH due to the “French campaign” that existed at the time, which caused insecurity on the roads to Makkah.

#### **Indian epidemic**

In another article on the epidemics that caused the disruption of the Hajj, the site indicated that the year 1246 AH witnessed an outbreak of an epidemic that came from India, which killed at least three quarters of the pilgrims in that year.



# Hajj:

## An enlightening and interactive sojourn

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Fatima Taneem Ruknudeen

🗨️ *Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Makkah, is one of the largest gatherings in the world. It unifies tens of thousands of Muslims of diverse backgrounds to perform a series of prescribed rituals during the specified days (7th to 13th) of Dhul-Hijjah, the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar.*





Hajj is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam, compulsory on every Muslim who is capable of undertaking it at least once in their lifetime. A Muslim performs this obligation in order to redeem oneself of sins



***The origins and tradition  
of Hajj date back more  
than 4000 years ago to  
Prophet Ibrahim's time***

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and gain the reward of Paradise.

Hajj comprises of a series of rituals which pilgrims undertake re-tracing the journey which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself undertook more than 1400 years ago replicating and commemorating the legacy of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). These rituals help the pilgrims to come closer to Almighty Allah and also foster unity, harmony and brotherhood among different Muslim communities.

The entire journey of Hajj constitutes an extensive form of worship signifying total submission to the Will of Almighty Allah. It not only denotes the outer physical travelling but also implies the inner journey of the self towards Almighty Allah by moving away from the baser human instincts towards lofty divine characteristics. Therefore, this journey involves the body, mind and soul of a believer and entails sacrifice of many worldly assets such as money, pleasure, comfort etc. coupled with a display of exemplary character, all for the sake of Almighty Allah and His pleasure. Thus, the entire being - body, mind and soul has to be alive and witnessing the events of Hajj to reap its profound benefits.

There are many lessons to be learned from the rituals of Hajj and these 'moments' of religious insights increase the understanding of religion as well as mold a person to live one's life according to the commands of Almighty Allah. The ultimate goal of Hajj is for Muslims to be true servants of Almighty Allah and also for the different Muslims to unite and live together as a single global community (Ummah).

The following article sheds light on the essence of Hajj rituals both from a historical and psychosocial perspective:



### **The noble Qur'an states-**

“And proclaim to the people the Hajj (pilgrimage), they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every distant pass.” (Surat Al-Hajj, Verse 27)

The word ‘Hajj’ literally means ‘to set out for a place’. The origins and tradition of Hajj dates back more than 4000 years ago to Prophet Ibrahim’s time. The above-mentioned Quranic verse is Almighty Allah’s command to Prophet Ibrahim to invite people for pilgrimage to Makkah after he had built the Kaaba along with his son, Prophet Ismail. And since then hundreds of people have been flocking to Makkah annually to perform Hajj. However, it was only after the advent of Islam that the idolatrous beliefs and corrupted rituals that had seeped over the centuries into the pure monotheistic religion of Prophet Ibrahim were completely abolished and the Kaaba was purified of idols by Prophet Muhammad.

Ever since then, countless number of Muslims have performed the Hajj following the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad who was himself re-enacting the actions of Prophet Ibrahim and his family.

### **ORIGINS OF HAJJ**

The origin of Hajj is rooted to the life of Prophet Ibrahim. The rituals of Hajj revolve around the life of Prophet Ibrahim, his wife Syeda Hajar and son, Prophet Ismail. The story elucidates the true meaning and significance of Hajj and is as follows-

Prophet Ibrahim was born into a family of idol-worshippers in present-day Iraq over 4000 years ago. As a child, he tried dissuading his family and society at large from polytheism and reasoning the worship of only One God. However, his family and society not only rejected him but persecuted him and threw him into fire for his belief in One God. However, Almighty Allah saved him and he decided to migrate away from





***When Prophet Ibrahim  
laid down his son and was  
about to strike his neck,  
Almighty Allah stopped him  
and ordered him to sacrifice  
a ram instead***



his people. He left home with his cousin, Prophet Lut and Syeda Sara and wandered through Arabia, Palestine and Egypt for years before settling in Palestine; preaching the Oneness of Almighty Allah wherever they went.

As his wife Syeda Sara was barren, she persuaded Prophet Ibrahim to marry her maid, Syeda Hajar, who bore him a son when he was 85 years old. But soon thereafter, on Almighty Allah's Command, he took the mother and baby and left them alone in the forsaken valley of Makkah and returned to Palestine. After a while, Syeda Hajar started frantically searching for water in the deserted valley to quench her infant's thirst. She ran back and forth between the nearby hills of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa, climbing on top of each of them in the lookout for passerby and invoking Almighty Allah to help them. At her seventh attempt, she saw Angel Jibreel near her son striking the earth and watched as water started miraculously gushing. She immediately tried to contain it;

fearing the water would disappear. Thus, the well of Zamzam sprang at Makkah enabling Syed Hajar and her son to make settlement at Makkah with the Arab tribe of Jurhum.

Years later, Prophet Ibrahim returned to Makkah when Prophet Ismail was a young lad and informed him of his vision of slaughtering his son at the Command of Almighty Allah.

Young Ismail immediately agreed to it reassuring his father of his full cooperation. Then both the father and son set out to carry the task ordained by Almighty Allah. However, the Satan tried to dissuade Prophet Ibrahim from his obligation at three different locations; but he pelted the Satan away; remaining committed to his task. When Prophet Ibrahim laid down his son and was about to strike his neck, Almighty Allah stopped him and ordered him to sacrifice a ram instead.

Some time later, Almighty Allah commanded the father and son to rebuild the Kaaba on its original foundations. While

building it, both of them invoked Almighty Allah and prayed for peace, prosperity and divine blessings around it. The Black Stone was sent from the Heavens to be laid at one of its corners. After the Kaaba was built, Almighty Allah then gave the Command of Hajj and ever since then Hajj has been the annual affair of the people.

Thus, these life events of Prophet Ibrahim and his family signify sacrifices and sincere submission to Almighty Allah coupled with their unflinching trust and faith in Him alone. The Almighty Allah was so pleased by their actions and attitude that he legislated the structure, sites and actions associated with them to be considered as the ‘Symbols of Allah’ (ShaairAllah) and the Rituals of Hajj (Manasik).

### SYMBOLS OF ALLAH

“...And whoever honors the Symbols of Allah - indeed it is from piety of hearts.” (Surat Al-Hajj, Verse 32)

‘Symbols of Allah’ have been designated by Almighty Allah in the Noble Qur’an and these ‘symbols’ and the people, places, animals or things associated with them serve as reminders of Almighty Allah and His attributes.

These ‘Symbols of Allah’ are only to be respected and honored and not to be worshipped in any form or degrees.

The greatest ‘Symbols of Allah’ are the Kaaba, the Noble Qur’an and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Other ‘Symbols of Allah’ include the hills of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa, the standing place of Prophet Ibrahim, Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah.

#### • KAABA -

It is also called the House of Allah and is



### *After the Kaaba was built, Almighty Allah then gave the Command of Hajj*



the first House of Worship established on the Earth since Prophet Adam’s time. It was replaced by Prophet Ibrahim and his son, Prophet Ismail who prayed for its security, prosperity and divine blessings. It represents the direction all Muslims face in their prayers (Qiblah). It is the center of faith, existence, unity and love. The ritual of circumambulation around the Kaaba is called Tawaf.

#### • HILLS OF AL-SAFA AND AL-MARWA -

These are the two hills between which



Syeda Hajar ran back and forth in her quest for water for her son Prophet Ismail climbing on top of each of them seeking Almighty Allah's help. The ritual of walking and seven times running between these hills is called Sae'e.

#### • **MAQAM-E-IBRAHIM-**

The Standing Place of Prophet Ibrahim - It is the place where Prophet Ibrahim used to stand at the time he built the Kaaba. The place is signified by the impressions of his footprints, which are enclosed in the vicinity of the Kabah. After Tawaf, two-unit voluntary prayers are offered around this place along with supplications.

During Hajj, these 'Symbols of Allah' are the Signs of Allah as He is remembered when the pilgrims offer prayers while carrying out instructions and observances that are attached to them; doing such deeds as Acts of Obedience to Him and seeking His pleasure.

### **RITUALS OF HAJJ**

Hajj is made up of a series of prescribed duties and rituals at specific locations at and around Makkah, which have to be sequentially followed based on the Noble Quran and the Practices of Prophet Muhammad.

The main Rituals of Hajj and their significance are outlined below -

#### • **IHRAM -**

It is the 'sacred state' that a pilgrim must enter before performing Hajj. A pilgrim enters this state by performing cleansing rituals after which the men wear special 'Ihram' clothing symbolizing purity, unity and equality; transcending class, nationality or race.

#### • **TAWAF -**

It is the circumambulation around the Kaaba seven times in counter clockwise direction. This ritual of 'Tawaf' demon-





***Other ‘Symbols of Allah’  
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strates love, devotion and servitude towards Almighty Allah symbolizing the believers entry into divine presence, re-enacting as it were the movement of Angels around the Heavenly ‘Bait-al-Mamoor’. This ritual also reminds the pilgrims that their lives should revolve around the Almighty Allah alone.

• **SAEE -**

It is the ritual of walking between the two hills of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa replicating Syeda Hajar. It demonstrates optimism and complete trust in Almighty Allah. It also serves to remind pilgrims that while striving in this world they need to trust and rely upon Almighty Allah Alone.

• **HALT AT MINA, ARAFAT AND MUZDALIFAH -**

These are the sacred sites around Makkah in which the pilgrims perform their Hajj rituals.

The camping at Mina for three days is a reminder of the transient nature of this world.

Arafat reminds the pilgrims of the past as well as the future. It was in Arafat that our

father Prophet Adam and mother Hawwa were united, after their descent from Heaven, and had prayed for forgiveness for their sins at the hill in Arafat -Mountain of Mercy where Almighty Allah forgave them. It was also here at the foothills of Mountain of Mercy that our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) delivered his ‘Farewell Sermon’ during the ‘Farewell Hajj’. Arafat also reminds the pilgrims of the Day of Judgment when all of humanity will be gathered together. The night stay at Muzdalifah serves as a reminder for the reality of grave.

• **THROWING PEBBLES AT JAMARAT PILLARS IN MINA (RAMI) -**

The symbolic stoning ritual re-enacts Prophet Ibrahim’s rejection of Satan’s temptation to dissuade him from his obligation to sacrifice his son depicting Absolute Obedience to Almighty Allah.

• **SACRIFICE OF AN ANIMAL (UDHIYA) -**

This ritual commemorates Prophet Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his beloved



son for the sake of Almighty Allah. This ritual symbolizes Absolute Devotion to Almighty Allah and commitment to help the poor and needy.

Thus, by performing the rituals of Hajj, pilgrims demonstrate deep spiritual connections and gain profound religious insights.

### LESSONS LEARNED DURING HAJJ RITUALS

Each and every ritual of the Hajj is historically significant and meaningful; the lessons learned during these sacred Hajj rituals amongst the sacred relics are manifold.

The noble Quran states - ‘...That they May witness benefits from themselves.’

‘And whoever honors the Sacred Ordinances of Allah- it is best for him in the sight of his Lord.’ (Surat Al-Hajj, Verses 28 and 30)

Some of the lessons learned during the Hajj rituals are as follows -

- Spiritual Awakening in the pilgrims leads to establishment of closer relationship with Almighty Allah and strengthening their concepts of Oneness of Allah (Tawheed), total submission and surrender to His Will (Islam), Absolute Devotion, Obedience and Servitude to Almighty Allah (Ibadah and Abd), Complete Trust in Him and His Plans (Tawakkul).

Thus, the pilgrims become more conscious and aware of Almighty Allah leading to increase in their piety and virtuousness (Taqwa).

- Honoring the ‘Symbols of Allah’ and what Almighty Allah deems sacred.

- Significance of the Islamic tradition and the history of sacrifices made for the sake of Almighty Allah Alone by the Noble Prophets and their families and followers. Importance of past history of Islam and its symbolic connections with the present.

- Communal Hajj rituals pave way for interactions between pilgrims of different countries, building bridges of cooperation, tolerance, patience, love and empathy between them. Thus, integrating all pilgrims into a single global Muslim community -The Ummah having a Common Identity (symbolized by ‘Ihram’ dress) and same purpose (depicted by communal prayers, rituals) promoting unity within.

Thus, with this and many more lessons etched into the minds of pilgrims; and as the Hajj concludes, the pilgrims start heading home equipped with piety, virtuousness, sincere love and devotion to Almighty Allah and perpetual remembrance of Allah coupled with a sense of belonging to the ‘Ummah’ of Prophet Muhammad.

Hence, in conclusion, the rituals of Hajj connect the pilgrims - to the Almighty Allah, to their own inner selves, to their fellow brethren and the Noble Prophets whose paths they traverse in the sacred valley of Makkah.

Empowered and humbled by their ‘life changing’ experiences and deep insights propels the pilgrims to return home with a renewed sense of purpose to serve Almighty Allah and His Servants in the best possible manner.



# The return of the Messiah: a theological story with a taste of fantasy

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Dr. Tijani Boulaouali

## 🗨️ *Messiah's Fantasy*

*After ten hours of interesting and exciting watching of the American thriller web television series Messiah, which consists of ten episodes, I extracted an important conclusion.*





***The Messiah series has been launched by the American media-services provider and production company Netflix this year (2020)***

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This fictional story, in which reality mixes with imagination, truth with illusion and religion with metaphysic, deconstructs the traditional dogma of the return or appearance of Messiah. This dogma is considered to be an essential element in the three monotheistic religions, namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but the figure of Messiah has been presented and interpreted here in a different way, where he transcends the particular and narrow religious borders to the human and the universal.

There is no objection regarding the artistic and aesthetic aspect of this series, which we can describe as one of fantastic contemporary filmish works, in terms of narration,

sonography and acting. This is, in fact, another area for critics and researchers who are specialized in cinematic studies.

The focus of this review will be on the theological dimension that forms the core of this series, which deals with a fundamental issue of faith. How did the screenwriter Michael Petroni read and interpret the doctrine of the return of the Messiah, which takes a prominent place in monotheistic theology (Jewish, Christian, Islamic)? To what extent has the director been able to present a model figure who is somewhat identical to the expected Messiah? Has the director succeeded in achieving a consistency between the theological perception on the



one hand and the popular perception on the other hand? To what extent were the makers of this series able to present a universal model of tolerance, love and coexistence that stems from certain religious elements towards different faiths, philosophies, cultures and contexts?

### The full story

The Messiah series has been launched by the American media-services provider and production company Netflix this year (2020). It tells the story of a strange young man (represented by Mehdi Dehbi) with long dark hair on his back and a medium beard, called Messiah. He strives to spread his message that calls for peace and love worldwide. The story begins in Syria, where he was able to influence the people by his rhetoric and propagandist discourse and his charismatic personality, and he promises them that the danger will disappear.

In the beginning, he led his followers to Damascus, where he summoned a massive sandstorm that blew during a whole month, protecting the city from ISIS's cannons. As a result, his supporters began to multiply

in record time, especially after the prophecy that he promised them had come true. From there he continued his journey with two thousand people to the Israeli borders, where he was arrested and interrogated by an IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) inspector called Aviram Dahan. The biggest surprise is that Messiah knows everything about the private life of this inspector, and this will be repeated later with other people. Inspector Dahan put him in a cell, but Messiah would escape on the same night without knowing how this happened.

The events would accelerate until Messiah unexpectedly appears in the United States of America. This will break the sequence of the narrativity, and make the event exceed the limits of space and time. There, Messiah would miraculously save a church located in a small village in Texas from a hurricane that destroyed everything, and then he would convince the local priest that he carries a message. Social media







***The events would  
accelerate until Messiah  
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grabbed this news, and so the pictures of Messiah and a scene of his steadfastness at the heart of the storm began to spread. CNN would also follow the event closely. This led to a rapid spread of the supernatural story of Messiah. His followers increased day by day, following him wherever he moved and settled.

The CIA was not unaware of what was going on. Rather, it was chasing the movements of Messiah step by step to reveal whether this charismatic person is really the Messiah or he is just a deceiver who hides other plans. From the beginning, detective Eva Geller questioned this person's intentions, and was not convinced that he is the savior of humanity. Strangely enough, the CIA did not find any information about him in the databases. For this reason, there was a fear that this person is a terrorist who devised another method of carrying out criminal attacks.

In addition, the personality of Messiah continued to receive great acceptance from various social groups (men, women, children, patients, etc.), and even the President himself held two secret meetings with him in order to know his truth. On the other

hand, there was an opposition party that aimed at eliminating the call of Messiah. In the end, while hundreds of people were waiting for the Messiah's speech organized by CNN in one of the huge halls, he suddenly left and got into a black car in which the inspector Dahan was with other two inspectors. The car headed to the airport where Messiah was smuggled in a private plane to Israel. Suddenly, the plane disappeared from the radar screens and crashed before the arrival. The news spread throughout the world instantaneously, which caused great disappointment to his followers not because of his death, but because he was not the Messiah, but a person from Iranian roots. He previously stayed in a psychiatric institution, and also knew of the practice of magic, as his brother stated to a TV channel.

The story did not end with this scene, in which deception was mixed with tragedy and strangeness, but a child grazing sheep in one of the Arab countries appeared in the picture. From a distance, he saw smoke coming from the far fields. He went there to discover a plane ruins, dead bodies, and the Messiah who had no apparent trace of the crash. Messiah approached the body of

inspector Dahan, and as soon as he touched him, he returned to life. He did the same thing with another body that returned to life as well, which its owner began to kiss the hand of Messiah and thanked him. This supernatural position made inspector Dahan feel perplexed, because he used to hate the Messiah, and tried to kill him many times, and now he is his savior.

### **From the Theological to the Humanistic**

This series assumes a different approach of the dogma of belief in the return of Messiah that goes beyond the prevailing theological visions, which are colored by the nature of the religion with which it is associated. The Messiah does not explicitly reveal his religious identity in the story. It is difficult to know whether he belongs to Judaism, Christianity or Islam.

Perhaps Jerusalem refers to the common origin of the three monotheistic religions that also share the doctrine of belief in the return of Messiah. This is what he focuses on in different phases of the story, where he stresses the value of human being, and affirms the positive universal values of peace, love and coexistence.

Humanism is present in one way or another in the discourse of Messiah, not only in its Western philosophical dimension, which came as reaction to religion in general and Church in particular, but in its monotheistic manifestation. Both the Bible and Qur'an confirm the centrality of human being whom God has given the mind to think before he decides. Human being is what he is and what he will be. Moreover, human being cannot be separated from his destiny, but in the end, he is the one who makes his destiny.

In addition, the mystic component is



***Gabriel was inspired by  
the peaceful message of  
Messiah, which was further  
strengthened during his stay  
at the moderate group***

also present in the message of Messiah, in which various religious and beliefs inter-





sect. This refers to the great Sufi Ibn Arabi, who emphasizes in his philosophy the unity of religions and the divine love that covers all people regardless of their origin, religion and culture. Therefore, people, despite their different beliefs, origins, social classes, and educational levels, find in the Messiah their calling, or what satisfies their spiritual vacuum and their need for truth. Thus, they visit him from everywhere to answer their questions about life, future, or fate. The patient asks for healing, the poor wishes for health, the lover dreams of the beloved, and so on.

Moreover, both the tolerant “Gabriel” and the extremist “Salem” were taught and inspired by the Messiah. These two young

men were friends when they were with the Messiah in the desert and on the Israeli borders. After Messiah’s departure and sudden appearance in Texas, his followers split into two groups. The first group was embraced by a moderate Islamist group, and the second one fell into the hands of an extremist group. Gabriel was inspired by the peaceful message of Messiah, which was further strengthened during his stay at the moderate group. When he was giving his sermon of peace in a mosque in Palestine, suddenly his old friend Salem entered the mosque carrying an explosive belt, and when he wanted to blow himself up, he discovered that the person standing on the podium is his old friend Gabriel. He tried to change his idea of bombing, but the extremists had implemented their sinister plan by remote control of the explosive belt, and the mosque exploded. This led to the killing of many innocent people who had come to listen to the message of peace and love.

We conclude from the above that although the idea or dogma of the return of Messiah is shared between all monotheistic religions and it fundamentally affects dealing with various central issues such as conflict, dialogue, destiny, etc., the followers of these religions have not succeeded to make this common element (and other elements) a factor for coexistence and tolerance. Maybe the idea of the Messiah series came as a reaction to this fragmentation that the dogma of the return of Messiah causes, although in essence it refers to unity and a common destiny. So, this traditional monotheistic doctrine has here been deconstructed, not to destroy it completely, but to adapt it to the new context by focusing on common human values that transcend religions, ideology and geography.

🗨️ *The corona pandemic has hit many countries in the world hard, and continues to surge. What does Islam say about such pandemics, and what solution does it offer to contain the disease given its strong advocacy of personal hygiene? Dr. Javed Jamil, Chair in Islamic Studies and Research, Yenepoya Deemed-To-Be University, Mangalore, who is one of India's prominent Muslim intellectuals and author of more than 20 books, offers an insight into Covid-19 from the Islamic perspective.*

## Health sciences must now look to Islam to set things right

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by: Aftab H. Kola





**MWL: The entire world, including GCC countries, is going through a severe crisis because of COVID-19 pandemic. Can you recall any instance in Islamic history when humanity faced such a grave danger? How was it tackled then?**

Dr. Javed Jamil: Since the rise of Islam in the early seventh century, the world has faced many epidemics and pandemics. The records of all of them have not been fully preserved. There are several accounts of epidemics in the Islamic world, but none assumed such pandemic proportions. Syphilis had been a major killer before 19th century in many parts of the world, especially Europe where promiscuity was high. There were other epidemics like measles, polio and plague. The more known epidemics include the Black Death (1346-1353), Cocoliztli epidemic (1545-1548), American plagues (16th century), Great Plague of London (1665-1666), Russian plague (1770-1772) and Flu pandemic (1889-1890). But perhaps the most devastating pandemics of the modern world have been Spanish Flu and HIV/AIDS. Spanish Flu caused by H1N1—believed by most scientists to have originated in pigs—in 1918 affected one third of the world's population and killed 20-50 million people, according to various reports.

The second most devastating pandemic has been HIV/AIDS, which in the last 30 years has affected more than 100 million people and killed more than 38 million. More than 70 million people are still living with HIV. Initially, promotion of prophylactics and safe blood transfusion were used as the standard methods to contain it. Now, anti-HIV drugs are being used and that is helping to increase the life expectancy of the patients. But to date, only one patient is known to

have been declared “cured” of HIV.

Then there were other swine flu epidemics in the first decade of the 21st century in America and some other countries. Fortunately, the Muslim world has remained relatively free of pandemics.

The Corona pandemic may not ultimately prove to be as big a killer as Swine Flu and HIV/AIDS, but it is unique in the sense that unlike other pandemics, it has affected almost every country in the world, and almost everybody feels threatened by it.

**MWL: Covid-19, which is still spiking, has unsettled the lives of people almost everywhere. What is the solution offered by Islam's teachings to handle such a pandemic?**

Dr. Jamil: If just one prophetic Hadeeth had been followed right in the beginning in China's Wuhan, this would not have become a pandemic; if countries had followed that principle, they would have largely remained relatively safe. The Hadeeth is:

‘If you hear about it (an outbreak of plague) in a land, do not go to it; but if the plague breaks out in a country where you are staying, do not run away from it’.(Sahih Al Bukhari).

Had Chinese officials banned travelling from and to Wuhan, Corona could not have moved out of that city. And once it began spreading to other countries, had travelling between countries been severely restricted and none allowed to enter a country without being quarantined, the disease would not have become so widespread.

In addition, Islam has presented a ‘Holistic Regime of Hygiene’, which safeguards against large number of diseases, including viral pandemics. That regime has the following components:

## I. External Physical Hygiene

Istanja (washing of private parts after urinating): this has huge protective effects against urogenital infection.

Wudu (ablution): this involves washing of the exposed organs and mouth, reducing the risks of mouth infections, cardiovascular problems, skin infections and cancers and eye infections; it would of course be a big protection against Covid-19. Washing of private parts after intercourse and bathing as soon as possible: this will decrease the chances of sex-related diseases including HIV and HPV;

Miswak (brushing of teeth): this has a remarkable preventive effect on infective diseases of teeth, gums and several internal organs.

Ban on pig farming; discouraging keeping dogs in houses and in the vicinity; Cleaning of hands after touching any unclean things, including animals such as dogs.

## II. Internal Physical Hygiene

Total ban on alcohol, drugs, tobacco (it should be declared haram in accordance with the principles laid down by the Noble Qur'an, which do not allow any khabeeth (harmful) activity). Ban on flesh of dead animals, carnivorous animals, pork, blood, etc.

## III. Sexual Hygiene

Have a sexual intercourse only with spouses. Sex during menses and immediate postnatal period is not allowed. Wash mouth and private parts soon after intercourse. Circumcision (a big protection against HIV, HPV and related cancer cervix and other sexually transmitted diseases).

## IV. Mental Hygiene

Total ban on activities such as pornography, watching sex and violence, reading materials that can lead to corrupting thoughts, which can incite people to indulge in forbidden activities.



## V. Spiritual Hygiene

Regular prayers: Tasbeehat (repeated rehearsing of God's attributes); invocations; preaching to others; meditation; charity.

## VI. Environmental Hygiene

Cleaning of clothes; cleaning surroundings; not doing anything that pollutes air and water.

**MWL: You recently stated that almost all other viral outbreaks in the last 120 years have direct relationship with Islamic guidelines. Is it not high time that medical sciences embraced the Islamic guidelines? Please elaborate.**

Dr. Javed Jamil: Almost all viral outbreaks in the last 120 years have had direct relationship with Islamic guidelines. If pork had been banned, more than 80 million people would not have met premature deaths due to Swine flu; had there been strict laws in force against promiscuity and homosexuality, around 38 million lives would not have been lost to HIV/AIDS (another 50 million afflicted with the disease are languishing at present); millions of women would not have died of HPV-related Carcinoma Cervix had circumcision been a worldwide ritual; and millions again would not have succumbed to Rabies had dogs been not allowed in residential areas, and millions of people would also





***More than 80 million  
lives are lost just  
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not have lost their lives to Hepatitis B (spread through blood transfusion and sexual route). In addition to this, had alcohol been made totally illegal, hundreds of millions of lives would not have succumbed prematurely to various diseases, accidents and crimes related to drinking, in the last 50 years.

The latest news in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak is that China has imposed ban on the meat of wild animals, specifically lions, bats, snakes and pangolins. The meat of all these animals has been prohibited in Islam.

The injunctions of the noble Qur'an, and the system they seek to build are not just health-friendly; health is in fact the essential criterion of these injunctions. It is not just that Qur'anic system is beneficial for health; health is, in fact, an inseparable part of its ultimate objectives. What is good for health is promoted, and what is bad for health is prohibited. Islamic paradigm of health is uniquely different from the modern paradigm of health, which is unduly influenced by the forces of economics. It is time medical sciences declared freedom from the rules of the market forces and took cue from Islam's 'Dynamic Paradigm of Health'. It should develop a new policy based on the superiority of life and healthiness of life over everything else.

The world must know that if Islamic principles are allowed to be put into proper practice, every year more than 80 million lives can be saved. These include: two million murders; 2.2 million suicides; 2.5 million deaths due to AIDS; 5 million deaths due to smoking; 2 million deaths associated with alcohol; 2 million deaths associated with gambling and drugs; 70 million cases of foeticide; 60,000 deaths due to Rabies. And of course, deadly pandemics such as Covid-19 could have been avoided or effectively contained.

Moreover, more than 10 million people (excluding foeticide) could have been saved every year from falling prey to unwanted deaths had Islamic legal and socio-economic system been in force. These are no ordinary figures, but staggering statistics from all accounts. If we add the figures of foeticide, more than 80 million lives are lost just because the laws of God are not in force. We need a system in place, which decreases mortality and morbidity, reduces the global burden of diseases, increases total life and decreases the burden of the cost of maintaining health. Health sciences must now look to Islam to get things right.

**MWL: In your books, you have presented a 'Dynamic Paradigm of Health', which you claim was inspired by Islamic teachings. Can you explain what that means?**

Dr. Javed Jamil: The main features of Dynamic Paradigm of Health inspired by Islam are as follows:

1. In the present global system, health does not occupy the supreme position, and laws are made more in accordance with the demands of economics than the demands of health. In Islam, an overwhelming majority of injunctions regarding living have direct relationship

to health. The practices that are beneficial to health are promoted and those that are harmful are either prohibited or discouraged.

2. Modern constitutions emphasize only ‘Fundamental Rights’ and to a lesser extent ‘Fundamental Duties’”. There is no provision called ‘Fundamental Prohibitions’. In Islam, the constitution is three dimensional with equal emphasis on Rights, Duties and Prohibitions, and all these are aimed at ensuring a peaceful and healthy living – both in this world and in the Hereafter.

3. In Islam, equal emphasis is given to individuals, family and society.

4. Family system is the biggest safety wall against diseases, as well as mental and social tensions. In Islam, no relationships outside a proper marriage between males and females are allowed. This is the biggest protection against diseases like HIV/AIDS, HPV/Cancer Cervix and most other Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

5. In the modern world, the responsibility of maintaining health falls mainly on individuals themselves. Dynamic Paradigm talks of a health-protective family and social system where the system does not let the individuals to get exposed to unhealthy substances and practices. The onus is not only on individuals, but also on the system.

6. Islam promotes a ‘holistic concept of hygiene’, which has already been elaborated.

7. The emphasis is more on natural prevention through avoidance of an unhealthy lifestyle; prevention through artificial methods like vaccines and condoms are only additional protections.

**MWL: In the light of such a great tragedy, how do we as Muslims respond to people’s sufferings?**

Dr. Javed Jamil: Alhamdulillah, Muslims



are very much aware of their Islamic responsibilities and many Muslims, individually or in an organized manner, are busy helping people. Charity and help to people in need are the mainstay of Islam’s social system. Muslims need to organize in a much bigger way to help humanity. They must first look to helping people in their vicinity irrespective of their religion, region, creed or color. They must fully cooperate with the respective governments in following the norms of social distancing and the like. Allah is with those who help others and a big reward awaits them in the hereafter. Those that are hungry should be fed, those who are ill must be cared for, and those who have lost their jobs must be rehabilitated. While individual efforts are always welcome, organized efforts with proper study and planning should be the ideal course. Muslim governments should take the initiative in streamlining charity works.

**MWL: To prevent human-to-human contamination, the 10th century Islamic scholar of medicine, Ibn Sina, used a method of isolating people for 40 days as a means of limiting the spread of contagious diseases. Can you elaborate on that?**

Dr. Javed Jamil: Yes. In the 10th century, Ibn Sina introduced the method of isolating people for 40 days as a means of limiting



the spread of contagious diseases. Almost all the contagious diseases which spread through human-to-human transmission have an incubation period of a few days to two weeks, and most except a few like tuberculosis, remain in the human body again for a similar period (incubation period is the period between the entry of virus/bacteria into the body and the appearance of the first symptoms of the disease.) Even in tuberculosis, the chances of the disease spreading become minimal within a month of the anti-tubercular treatment. Ibn Sina's theory was a great advance in preventive methodology when we consider the fact that it was suggested about a 1000 years ago. Now, with better knowledge, we can plan the quarantine period according to the nature of specific diseases.

**MWL: The coming together of communities of different faiths, races and nationalities under the banner of science, service and humanity has led to a high degree of global cooperation in the absence of any outstanding global leadership, and shows what ordinary human beings are capable of when there is a common threat. In this context, what is the way forward?**

Dr. Javed Jamil: Yes, it is a positive development. But differences have also surfaced. The way forward is to recognize the need to

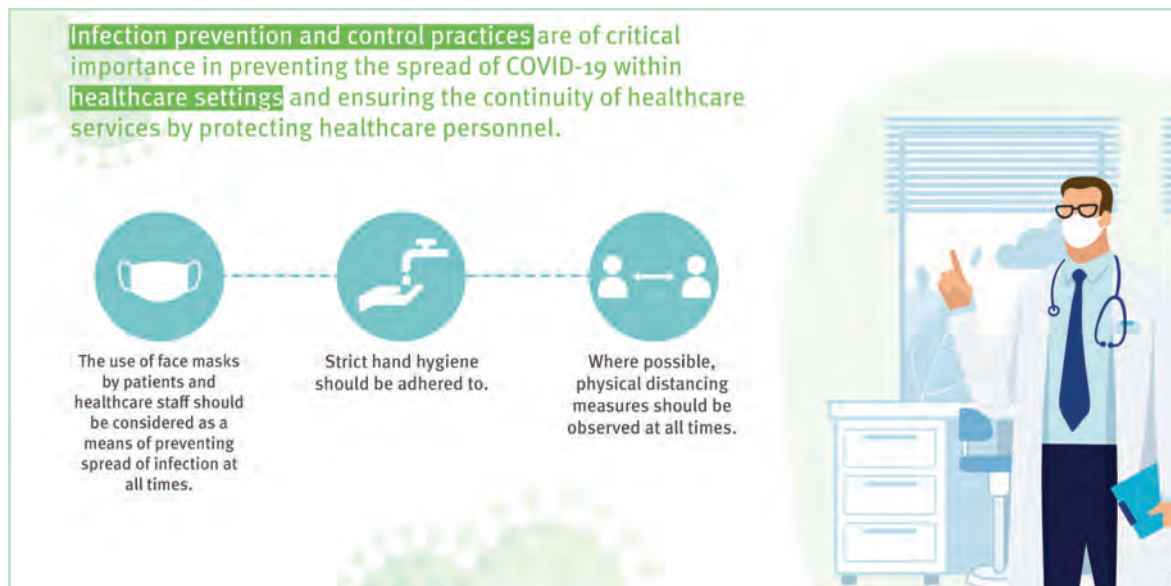
give supremacy to life and health in world affairs. The Corona pandemic has proved what I have been advocating in my books and articles for years. During this pandemic, for the sake of health, governments have put extraordinary restrictions on people. The world must not hesitate to ban those items and practices that pose serious threat to human life and health. The concept of 'Freedom of Choice' should be limited to 'Freedom of Healthy Choices' and not 'dangerous choices'. The world must decide on the best ways of defining 'good' and 'bad': what is good for health must be deemed good, and what is bad for health deemed bad. Legal steps are necessary to safeguard people against exposure to unhealthy items and practices. The World Health Organization must accept its failure in doing enough to promote the best standards of health and must not shy away from advancing programs and policies that actively prevent diseases.

Muslim countries and Islamic organizations must take the lead in promoting 'Dynamic Paradigm of Health' and must organize conferences on this topic at every possible level. Facts and statistics must prevail over conjectures of every kind.

**MWL: Islam places emphasis on personal hygiene and food hygiene, and faith can play an important role in global efforts to promote hand hygiene, which in the current context is fundamental to reducing the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. Please enlighten us on this.**

Dr. Jamil: I have already explained the Islamic concept of holistic hygiene. In particular response to Corona outbreak and to stop repetition of viral diseases (such as HIV, HPV, Hepatitis B, Rabies), we have to put effective ban on the meat of wild animals like bats,





lions, pangolins and snakes, and also ban pork meat and pig farming. Furthermore, sexual hygiene should be emphasized with awareness campaigns. Why there is low percentage of deaths in most Muslim countries, especially Arab countries and traditional societies like India, has to be studied, and it is highly likely that the association of Corona deaths (as several other viruses have already proved) with alcohol has to be established. And of course, frequent hand washing, masks and other measures of social distancing should be further strengthened. There is a much bigger need to curb travelling between affected areas and unaffected places. Balanced food regime with mixture of meat, milk products, vegetables and fruits including dry fruits should be promoted for improving immunity.

**MWL: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received 7.2 million pilgrims in 2019. The administration responsible for managing the two holy mosques in Makkah and Medinah took proactive measures before the epidemic turned into a global pandemic. And it was the right decision. Your comments?**

Dr. Jamil: Yes, as I said before, restriction on travelling between infected and uninfected areas is the mainstay of controlling the pandemic. Saudi Arabia, with huge numbers of people coming from around the world and gathering at the holy places, was perhaps more vulnerable than any other country. The Saudi government took the right decision in putting restrictions on Umra and Hajj travelers and ensuring that there are no big gatherings in holy mosques. This has certainly helped in keeping the epidemic from spreading as it did in many other countries. That also indirectly helped other countries because pilgrims could have become big carriers of the infection.

**MWL: What are the challenges ahead, and what can be done to help people work together to overcome this pandemic?**

Dr. Jamil: The challenges are still huge. Not only is there the challenge of eradicating this epidemic and saving as many lives as possible, but also facing the economic and social impact. Coordinated efforts are necessary to: (1) develop effective vaccines and anti-Corona drugs, (2) rehabilitate those who have lost

their jobs, (3) build cooperation between different countries in order to improve the economy, (4) improve healthcare systems, and (5) make people aware about giving up harmful practices to prevent future infections and diseases. A lot of research is also needed to understand the various factors that led to the spread of the present pandemic.

**MWL: There is also the devastating financial impact on the world in general. Muslim countries are also facing financial crisis. What is the solution Islam offers?**

Dr. Jamil: Islam stresses on: (1) wealth generation through halal practices; (2) wide distribution of wealth through: (a) spending on halal items and practices, (b) developing a proper taxation system based on Islamic concepts of Zakah, Ushr, Khums and Sadaqat, which in economic terms imply taxes on wealth and assets rather than on expenditure; (c) use of Islamic charities in an organised way for welfare activities; (3) mutual cooperation; (4) Muslims must campaign against economic inequality and commercialisation of dangerous practices like drinking, sex, etc., at the world level; (5) more spending on education and research; (6) more stress on technological development and manufacturing. Self-reliance and mutual cooperation should remain the ultimate goals.



## Pensketch of Dr. Javed Jamil

Dr. Javed Jamil, the author of several books, is a versatile thinker. What is most admirable about his works is the comprehensive nature of his approach in dealing with contemporary issues. He has propounded several remarkable theses in fields ranging from community medicine to physics, from social sciences to economics, and international affairs to religion. His books like “Islam means Peace”, “The Devil of Economic Fundamentalism” and “Muslims Most Civilised, Yet Not Enough” have attracted big attention. His latest book, “Justice Imprisoned” is centered on the international system of law and justice. It is an undeniable fact that we are living in a time when crime has become the order of the day, and as Dr. Jamil puts it, “justice, rather than being chosen to lord over the human society, has been sentenced to life imprisonment in the so-called Civilized World”. He has reproduced credible statistics to show how big a failure the current legal system has been. Dr. Jamil has argued that both problems and solutions are sought to be “commercialized” to the hilt with the result that weapons, law machinery, litigation and even the prisoners have all become the money-machines. If novelty of work, freshness of approach, depth of thoughts, ability to influence the world and capability of revolutionizing knowledge are the criteria of greatness, Dr. Jamil should soon find a place among the distinguished thinkers of the contemporary world.

# Adhan allowed across Europe amid the Coronavirus pandemic

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By: Jawzi Belkacem Lardjane

“ *The Islamic call to prayer is not just a call for Muslims. It is a call for all the world. It asks everyone to seek success, and it also calls to believe in the One God and the Prophecy of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Many Christians and most Jews believe in the oneness of God, and some of them even believe that Muhammad, peace be upon him, is a Prophet of God.* ”







***According to one study,  
the Adhan (call to prayer) is  
the most and ever repeated  
sentence in the world***

According to one study, the Adhan (call to prayer) is the most and ever repeated sentence in the world, which is never interrupted. In every second, many calls to prayers are raised around the world. They call to the second most important pillar of Islam, regular prayer (Salat), which comes after the declaration of faith.

Recently, most Muslim governments have, however, decided to suspend congregational prayers to halt the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, so most mosques are temporarily closed and only open for Muadhins (callers to prayer) to call for prayer and will not be open for worshippers until respected authorities declare a near-complete control of the virus.

In the 21st century, the world has become a small village, thanks to technology and communication, which sparked many Muslims to share and comment on Adhan videos filmed in famous cities of Western Europe where some municipalities granted exceptional short permission to all religions to raise their liturgical calls to console people against the coronavirus.

In most European countries, the Adhan is not allowed outside Mosques, and Muslim minorities have not heard the Adhan out-

side Mosques for decades, if not centuries. In some countries like Spain, it was not called since the fall of Al-Andalus in 1492. Raising Adhan is proof that Islamophobia, despite being inherent in some people, is a political agenda by rightists and major media, which turned into sleep mode due to the coronavirus crisis. The rightists are currently much concerned with economic and political gains after the pandemic while the media are preoccupied with covering the coronavirus, but this does not exclude hearing any fabricated story linking Islam to the spread of the virus.

Unlike the coronavirus, Islamophobia has been a pandemic hitting the West since centuries, and this is a huge opportunity for reconciliation between the West and Islam. The coronavirus showed us, in many ways, how religious hatred and racism were being used to distract people from true concerns and genuine debates. Also, Islamophobia has always been enhanced by the infodemic surrounding Islam.

The coronavirus pandemic has elapsed many cells of Islamophobia industry. If Adhan were called during natural circum-





***In the 21st century, the world has become a small village, thanks to technology and communication***

stances, the cells of Islamophobia would have used it as an opportunity to harass Muslims and intimidate them. There is nothing wrong inside the Adhan that threatens other cultures and faiths. If they listen carefully to the Adhan, they will find out that it is a wake-up call to get out of the pandemic of materialism and atheism, and it will also help them find the right path out of the actual pandemic.

The Adhan, in this very critical phase of civilization, provides us with many historical, social, as well as spiritual reminders that can help us overcome the pandemic and its negative impact afterward. Many changes are expected to occur after the end of the pandemic, social scientists and political experts are concerned with the post-pandemic era. There could also be many positive changes such as economic degrowth, which is critical to the environmental conservation and global balance between rich and poor. The reminder of the Adhan is not to pay attention to the beauties of Islam but is also a reminder to take preventive measures against any pandemic, in particular,

the coronavirus. Some news outlets around the world started praising the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, on healthcare and medical prevention; however, people and even Muslims still need more awareness about health issues. And the Adhan is the most fabulous reminder.

The Adhan is a distinct aspect of Islam, which has no parallel in other faiths. Among all other religions, it is only Islam that calls publicly to prayer five times a day, and it is only Muslims who gather five times a day in the house of God to perform prayer in such a harmonious and beautiful way. Nevertheless, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Some commentators have criticized the handling of some Muslims of the coronavirus, in particular, the Tablighi Jamaat meetings in Malaysia and Bangladesh, which have been cracked down by authorities to halt the spread of the coronavirus. However, those are small segments which do not represent Islam and the whole Muslim community. Islam was the very first founder of preventive medicine on both individual and social levels. Everything started with

the call to prayer because, after every call to prayer, Muslims are required to perform ablutions to pray, and ablutions include washing three times hands, face, arms, and feet.

Social distancing, good hygiene, and quarantining were already known to the early Companions, and it worked for them during plagues. The most infamous disease in Islam was that of the Emmaus Plague, which occurred in the Levant in 18 AH/640 CE. Over 25,000 Muslims lost their lives, including some of the most famous such as Muadh bin Jabal and Abu Ubayda Amir bin al-Jarrah who were charged with the governorship of the Levant but perished due to the bubonic plague outbreak, May Allah be pleased with their souls.

Then, when Amr bin al-As became governor of the Levant, he ordered citizens to scatter amongst the valleys and hills and not be congregated together. He told them that these contagious diseases are like fires: “they cause more havoc when spread in densely populated areas, and they do not spread when people are far apart”, historians reported. His tactics seemed unwelcome to some companions who could not understand his measures at the time; however, Amr bin al-As continued this policy until the plague was over and never returned as such in the Muslim world.

When Umar bin al-Khattab was informed about Amr bin al-As’ policy, he did not find it to be incorrect as Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said earlier: “If you hear of the outbreak of a contagious disease in a land, do not enter it; but if the contagious disease outbreaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place.” He, peace be upon him, also said: “Those with contagious diseases should be kept



away from those who are healthy.”

Sometime later, during the dark ages in Europe, Jews were blamed for the Black Death epidemics and were heavily prosecuted across Europe, while Islam was saving the world through the works of great Muslim scientists such as Ibn Sina and al-Zahrawi who often quoted finding their motivation in the hadith of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him: “for God has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease - old age.”

Other socio-economic and long-term effects of the coronavirus include racism, xenophobia, nationalism, individualism, unemployment, closure of mosques, misinformation, de-schooling, and hopefully raising Adhan in Europe should not be viewed as a charming tactic to invade Europe. Muslims should be cooperative and show the best example of how Islam teaches us to act in different situations to save the human soul from aches. Action is not just required to show the true message of Islam; it is also necessary to avoid backlash and misunderstanding due to outdoor loudspeakers. Adhan is not enough, actions speak louder than words.



It was one of world's oldest  
universities but few heard of it

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By: Qais Bajaifer

🗨️ ***It was one of the world's renowned learning centers during the 15th and 16th centuries. As an academic institution, it rose to prominence with over 25,000 students enrolled in it, studying different subjects such as chemistry, physics, medicine, optics, geography, history and Islamic studies.***

Many in the Islamic World may not have heard of this important higher institution and this could be the reason why it is less known today in comparison to Al-Azhar University (Cairo) and Al-Qarawiyyin University (Morocco) founded in 970 and 859 respectively and considered among the ancient universities in the world.

The University of Sankoré was founded in 989 by Mansa Musa, the 14th century West African ruler who was so rich and built schools, libraries and mosques in the city during his reign. In fact, Musa played a pivotal role turning Timbuktu into a leading center of education to which many people from the world flocked to study at the University of Sankoré. During his era, Timbuktu, which is located today in the heart of Mali in West Africa and known for its rich cultural heritage, lived its Golden Age. The university, whose mosque still stands (hence the name the Sankoré Masjid), became a magnet for scholars of religion, arts, mathematics and sciences and its courses gained at the time prestigious reputation similar to that of the Oxford and Sorbonne universities today. It was a great intellectual institution and an unparalleled center of Islamic learning that existed during civilizations in Mali, Ghana and Songhay, circa 12th to 16th centuries. Moreover, Sankoré housed the largest collections and copies of books in Africa.

### Structure of university

With a magnificent pyramid-shaped work of architecture, the renowned University of Sankoré was founded by the erudite chief judge of Tumbuktu Al-Qadi Aqib bin Mahmud, who acted as the dean of the university. At the beginning, Al-Qadi Aqib built it as a “madrassah”, the Arabic word for

school. Sankoré was one of three ancient mosques that were described as important centers of learning in Timbuktu, Mali. The other two mosques were Jingaray Ber and Sidi Yahya.

The structure and organization of Sankoré was different to some extent from that of common universities of medieval Europe; however, Sankoré offered high level of learning similar to that found in Europe at the time. Furthermore, the inner courtyards of Sankoré were constructed with similar dimensions of the Ka’bah.

### Courses

Sankoré did not have a central administration; rather, it consisted of numerous independent colleges, each run by a single scholar or professor who conducted courses in the open courtyards of the mosque and in some cases at their private residence. In their book “The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu”, John Hunwick and Alida Jay Boye described the form of teaching adopted by Sankoré in the following words, “The core of the Islamic teaching tradition is the receiving of a text, which is handed down through a chain of transmitters or silsila from the teacher to the student, preferably through the shortest and most prestigious set of intermediaries.” The student would listen to the teacher’s dictation, write their own copy and read it back, or listen to another student read it. “When he had a correct copy he could then study the meaning of the text and its technical intricacies through lectures delivered by his teacher and at a higher level by question and answer.” The scholars had their own private libraries to help them teach. The process seemed to be intensive and required a lot of hard work.

Different fields were taught ranging from

medicine, surgery, astronomy, chemistry to language, philosophy, linguistics, history, geography and art. However, the principal subject matter was Quranic and Islamic studies, Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, law and literature. Moreover, the university offered various trade classes including business, carpentry, farming, fishing, construction, tailoring, navigation, shoemaking and other handy trades.

At the time, Sankoré gained reputation as a very significant seat of learning in the Muslim World and was claimed to have enjoyed a level of learning superior to that of other Islamic centers in the world. The curricula had four-degree levels, the highest of which is equivalent to PhD and took students, originating from diverse backgrounds, ten years to complete. All students would study under the supervision of specialized professors. The memorization of the Noble Qur'an and mastery of the Arabic language were compulsory for all students without exception as Arabic was the medium of instruction at Sankoré. The entry requirements were not easy to meet because the university applied very high standards of education across all colleges. Perhaps that is why Sankoré produced world-class scholars in their fields. Some history books mention the story of a scholar from the Hijaz who traveled to Mali so that he could teach in the university. He was told to take 10-year pre-requisite courses at Al-Qarawiyyin University of Morocco before he could join the faculty of the Sankoré University. This shows how the courses, whether scientific, Islamic or literature, were extremely difficult. A study showed the subject of mathematics taught at the university around 600 years ago was very advanced. When the mathematics course of Sankoré was translated from Arabic into



French and sent to the Sorbonne University in Paris, the mathematics professors of the Sorbonne confirmed that the level of mathematics taught at Sankoré was equivalent to the second year of the mathematics program. The Sorbonne programs, as it is known for everyone, are the hardest and admission into the university is not easy.

### **Famous scholars of Sankoré**

One of the eminent scholars of Sankoré was Ahmed Baba As-Sudane (1564-1627), the last chancellor of Sankoré. He was a prolific author and wrote over 60 books on several multiple subjects including law, medicine, philosophy, astronomy and mathematics. Many described him as one of a kind professor, jurist and imam. As-Sudane was also dubbed one of the greatest African scholars of the late 16th century. Unfortunately, most of his work was lost in 1593 during the Moroccan invasion of Timbuktu, marking the loss of one of the richest libraries of his day. Another remarkable scholar is Mohammed Bagayogo As-Sudane Al-Wangari who was a professor of philosophy and Arabic grammar and was also the sheikh and professor





of highly esteemed scholar Ahmed Baba. A significant amount of his writings has been preserved in manuscript form in the Ahmed Baba Institute of Timbuktu, a repository of African literature. He was known for his refusal to comply with the Moroccan occupation. He embarked on a journey to perform Hajj and during his journey, he visited Cairo and was an honorary Doctorate from Al-Azhar University.

Other notable scholars from Sankore include Modibo Mohammed Al-Kaburi, Mohammed Ibn Al-Mukhtar An-Nawahi, Abu Al-Abbas Ahmed Buryu and Mohammed Ibn Utman, many of whom were already graduates from other educational establishments in Tunis, Fez, Cairo and Makkah during the early times of Sankoré.

### Manuscripts

Timbuktu housed one of the largest libraries of manuscripts since Egypt's famous library in Alexandria that was burnt down around 2,000 years ago as a result of a huge fire, as some historical accounts claimed. The reason behind the huge number of manuscripts written in Mali can be found in the active

trade in books between Timbuktu and other parts of the Islamic World at the time, which led to the writing and preservation of thousands of manuscripts. The scholars relied on calligraphy as the main mode of transmission of knowledge from one generation to another through these manuscripts whose fields include astronomy, botany, law, science, history, to mention but a few. A deeper look into the Timbuktu's Golden Age history shows how books became the most valuable commodity above all other trade goods.

About 20,000 manuscripts are preserved by the Ahmed Baba Institute of Higher Learning and Islamic Research. With an area of 4,600 square meters and an air conditioning system to preserve the quality and condition of manuscripts, the center holds manuscripts covering different subjects, most of which are written in Arabic as well as in local languages such as Songhai, Tamashek and Bamanankan and date back to the 14th to 16th centuries. The center, which is equipped with an automatic fire-fighting system, also holds few manuscripts in Turkish and Hebrew with topics covering medicine, astronomy, poetry, literature and Islamic law.

Some renowned oldest families in Timbuktu also have manuscripts preserved and conserved in private libraries and these manuscripts have been passed on from one generation to another as a tradition. Each family has sworn publicly that it will protect the library housing these manuscripts as long as they live.

### Today

The University of Sankoré is still functioning today but with very limited resources. However, its legacy as the beacon of African enlightenment still exists today.

# Internet: A modern tool for introducing people to Islam

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Alwaleed Jaafer Elias

“ *The Internet represents an appropriate tool to learn about Islam, as it is the place where most of people from all over the world congregate in different ages, genders and religions. It has also become the easiest place to provide fatwas and interpretations and clarify different rulings, and with the press of a button a non-Muslim can get all information he wants to know about Islam.*



The issue of introducing non-Muslims to Islam through the Internet has occupied the minds of many of those who bear their responsibility to let others know about this religion. Unfortunately, Muslims have not yet succeeded in exploiting the Internet in a proper way. Still, their portion on the Internet does not rise to the required level.

The Internet has gained more importance due to its acceptance among people, and in the depth of influence on their lives, regardless of their races, attitudes and levels. Today, people see the Internet as the first and preferred source of information and news, especially after the decline of traditional media such as newspapers, magazines and broadcasts. Internet is the easiest and fastest way to communicate messages, receive information, participate in making events and interact with issues.

#### **Internet advantages**

The Internet is characterized by a set of merits such as crossing the space barrier, as it transcends all geographical barriers that hinder the spread of ideas and exchange of knowledge. These barriers include economic ones, such as the



***The Internet is characterized by its low cost and ease of use, and this doubles its role and advantage over other media.***

shipping costs of printed materials, security and supervision, e.g. banning some books and publications that express specific cultures. All of this has been overlooked by this new medium, as it transmits vast amounts of information in the form of electronic signals that cannot be stopped. Its advantages also exceed the barrier of time, so the information is transmitted over the network

with a tremendous speed, and makes the information in the hands of the recipient upon its issuance, so all users of the network are equal, which achieves the principle of information equality.

#### **Interact and share**

An important feature of the Internet is the interaction feature. People are accustomed to traditional media outlets only to be recipients,





and their role is limited to receive what is provided in those means, which determine what the recipient receives, watches or listens to. All of that has changed in the Internet age as the user is the one who determines what he wants and when, and how to use it, in addition to that, chat rooms and dialogue forums allow the user to interact with any event and transform him from a simple recipient to a participant and sender. It allows him to share his opinion. This characteristic has a great influence that can be used to explain and convey the message of Islam to the other, and to explain and de-

fend issues of the Arab and Islamic nation. The Internet is characterized by its low cost and ease of use, and this doubles its role and advantage over other media. This is unlike other media means such as newspapers, satellite channels and radio stations that need huge budgets.

### **Muslims and the Internet**

Statistics show that internet users from Arab countries represent a small percentage of the total number of Internet users; 75% of them are young people between 19 and 40 years old. Statistics also show that only 12% of Internet users in the Arab world use it for educa-

tional and research purposes while the rest for chatting and fun purposes.

Islamic sites were at the beginning of their emergence using the English language, and were created by Western Muslims, who, before others, realized the Internet importance and the role that can be played in the service of introducing people to Islam. Afterwards, the sites started appearing in Arabic and some other languages, but they were not effective because they were primitive in design and content. But recently, a number of distinguished sites have appeared, which are supervised by specialists and supported by ministries, agencies in different countries of the world. These sites are characterized by good design and quality of content and are well-funded.

### **Chat rooms**

Chat rooms is a very important tool in acquainting people with Islam due to spontaneity and vitality, as chat visitors speak on the air directly. Anyone who wants to explain Islam to others in these rooms can reach thousands of interlocutors.

The invitation within these rooms is not much different from outside it. It

is based on the principle of counseling and arguing with the people with a good manner. There are many conditions that must be available in whoever wants to do this duty, including having complete and comprehensive information about Islam. It is also preferable that he has knowledge of the English language, that more than 80% of the network's visitors deal with, so he must be able to use it in a way that makes him able to communicate his argument in a clear way and by which he can respond to others' inquiries.

#### **Preacher terms**

Anyone who wants to explain Islam to others should enjoy wisdom and patience over the discussions and dialogues that may last for long periods, and he must put in his mind that discussion may deviate from its course and turn into attempts to provoke, abuse and defame. He must prepare himself to set an example for others for the tolerance of Islam and should enjoy general culture and familiarity with other religions, and understand the psychology and nature of their followers. If he wants others to listen to him and be able to draw their attention and influence them, he must

wait for appropriate opportunities to present his call in an appropriate form and style, because direct preaching often does not work. It is also necessary to show respect for other people's convictions and religions, in order to win their hearts, because everyone thinks that he is right, as respect attracts others to dialogue and discussion.

#### **Advocacy messages**

There is a wide door to the introduction to Islam made available by the Internet and it is the email that most people use. This email can be exploited to send appropriate invitation messages to millions of addresses, or to provide their owners with the lists of Islamic sites or links. The advantage of this method is that it is easier than the chat rooms because it is not a direct dialogue. Anyone who wants to

practice it can prepare his mission letters and use some scholars to revise them, while chat rooms require him to be always present and have the required responses immediately.

If we want to catch up with others and fulfill our duty as a nation with a message that must be introduced and explained to people, we must work to bridge the digital divide that separates us from the developed countries to exploit and benefit from the sources of information. We must be well aware that the Internet is an effective tool in spreading culture and advocacy, and that others use it to this purpose. It is not logical that we use it as a means of compromise and passing times. The Internet is the language of the present and the future for those who know its causes and secrets.



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# Charity to repair Society

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Tasnuva Jahan

## 🗨️ Introduction:

***Charitable acts are an essential spiritual practice for Muslims. Islamic legal system fleshes out the implications of Qur'anic and Prophetic texts on charitable distribution or humanitarian actions. They are either of an obligatory nature or a voluntary nature.***

The religious dimension motivates and deepens the obligatory or voluntary aspects of charity. For the Muslims, charitable mechanisms were established and developed by religion. However, among the various fundamental problems, currently, the world is facing the effects of coronavirus. There is no doubt that this epidemic will impact the world economy in a myriad of ways. Mortalities and infections are rising. Cities

and countries go into shutdown without a predictable timeframe. It is going to reason for total devastation in poorer regions of the world. This global crisis requires a global response. Nobody can solve all creation's problems. But it is our duty to strengthen cooperation by Islamic economic policies. Islamic principles especially encourage charitable acts or humanitarian contributions, which are mentioned in the Noble



Qur'an. According to Surat Ar-Ra'd verse 29, 'Those who have believed and done righteous deeds - a good state is theirs and a good return.' It means a validating faith and love of Creators to purify the believer's heart. Nevertheless, here our concentration goes with the highlight on zakat. It is one of the main obligations in Islam. Zakat is a system to transfer money from the rich to the poor or needy. The Muslim religion provides a basis for humanitarian aid. Islamic charity can help to repair society as well as balance the societal challenges.

#### **Zakat:**

Islam is a complete approach of life. It has five fundamental pillars namely faith, prayer, zakat, fasting during Ramadan month and Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah). Zakat is the third fundamental pillar of Islam. Literally, the Arabic terms zakat means 'to purify'. It states the purification of a believer's wealth and soul. Wealth purification signifies the utilization of assets for financial evolution and distribution. Soul purification suggests being free from hatred, greed, selfishness, and uneasiness. The Noble Qur'an does not define the items of zakat nor does it provide the required proportion of zakat. It is left to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) within the Qur'anic explanations and examples. Eight categories of zakat beneficiaries are clearly revealed in the Surat At-Tawbah verse 60: 'Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakah] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler - an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.' This verse leaves considerable freedom for



### ***It states the purification of a believer's wealth and soul***

Muslims in zakat aid. People in crisis, as well as those in need of long-term support (the indebted and the poor), are allowed to benefit from zakat. In money terms, every Muslim should donate 2.5% of one's annual total wealth accumulated over the year. But it is higher than the Nisab limit, a minimum amount that is in excess of necessity to meet one's basic needs. Wealth contains all items of value, including cash, jewelry, precious metals, agricultural crops, property, savings and retirement funds, with other items.

#### **Discussion in the Noble Qur'an:**

The primary source of zakat is the Noble Qur'an. The Qur'anic texts refer to zakat more than a dozen times. The traditions of the Prophet also recognized zakat. Both Qur'anic and Prophetic texts have a variety of references to zakat and a broader sense, the concept of sadaqa or charity. According to Islam, charity means purity. So giving zakat to the needy means purifying the wealth of the rich. Surat At-Tawbah verse 103 says that 'Take, [O, Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.' Surat Al-Mujadila verse 12 also says, 'O you who have believed, when you [wish to] privately consult the Messenger, present before your consultation a charity. That is better for you and purer. But if you find not [the means] -

then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.’ Other Quranic implications also contain purification of sin.

In the Noble Qur’an, zakat is frequently paired with prayer or salah as a pious duty. According to Surat Al-Baqarah verse 43, ‘And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience]’. Also verse 83 repeats that ‘... And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah...’ The imperative nature of zakat is noted in several verses. ‘Who establish prayer and give zakah, and they, of the Hereafter, are certain [in faith]’ Surat Luqman, verse 4.

In addition, zakat is not only a religious obligation but also a right of the poor in the wealth of rich. Surat Adh-Dhariyat verse 19 defines, ‘And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.’ This concept of right repeats in another verse, ‘And those within whose wealth is a known right’ Surat Al-Ma’arij verse 24. It should be emphasized that the ‘acknowledged right’ indicates a particular sum calculated in an objective and Islamic way.

Muslim religion teaches to keep a check and balance in society. Consequently, it instructs the wealthy Muslims to share a particular portion of wealth with the underprivileged. This sharing is made mandatory for rich Muslims. Surat Al-Baqarah verse 110 also echoed the same while Surat An-Nisa verse 77 focused on performing prayer and giving zakat. Thus, zakat is an obligatory action in Islamic tradition.

Surat Al-Baqarah verse 277 declares, ‘Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and give zakah will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor



### ***Muslim religion teaches to keep a check and balance in society***

will they grieve.’ Therefore, zakat is not only made as an obligatory nature in Islam, but also encouraged with reward. Moreover, Surat Al-Muzzammil verse 20 affirms, ‘and establish prayer and give zakah and loan Allah a goodly loan. And whatever good you put forward for yourselves - you will find it with Allah. It is better and greater in reward...’

The positive aspects of Islamic contribution, not least its social cohesion, as well the possibility for personal expansion; Surat Ar-Rum verse 39 states, ‘And whatever you give for interest to increase within the wealth of people will not increase with Allah. But what you give in zakah, desiring the countenance of Allah - those are the multipliers.’

Charity and zakat are consistent with the needs of Muslims as a growing spiritual and



financial community. ‘And We made them leaders guiding by Our command. And We inspired to them the doing of good deeds, establishment of prayer, and giving of zakah; and they were worshippers of Us’ Surat Al-Anbya verse 73.

Surat At-Tawbah verse 34 says, ‘O you who have believed, indeed many of the scholars and the monks devour the wealth of people unjustly and avert [them] from the way of Allah. And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah - give them tidings of a painful punishment.’ Accordingly, Muslims must not hoard wealth at any cost.

Therefore, all these examples emphasize that Zakat has a deep humanitarian and socio-economic value. It creates brotherhood between rich and poor as well as improves the economy of the nation.

#### **Clarification in tradition:**

The tradition and teachings of the Prophet provide a context for interpreting the Qur’an and delivers several legal standards. It also contains a reference to zakat.

Narrated by Abu Huraira, the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) said, ‘The best charity is that which is practiced by a wealthy person. And start giving first to your dependents’ (Sahih Al Bukhari). In another hadith the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) noticeably pointed out the obligatory feature of zakat when he sent his representative to Yemen: ‘Inform them that Creator made it obligatory to take alms from the rich to give to the poor...’

Zakat payment is clearly traced at the period of Abu Bakar, the first Caliph. Abu Bakr said, ‘By Allah! I will fight those who differentiate between the prayer and the Zakat as Zakat is the compulsory right to be taken from the property (according to Allah’s orders) ...’ (Sahih Al Bukhari). So, from the period of Abu Bakar, there is a precedent of mandatory zakat payment to the central government, then distributed it to the needy. In view of Zakat’s importance, it should be paid before other debts.

Narrated by Abu Huraira, the Prophet said, (On the Day of Resurrection) camels will come to their owner in the best state of health they have ever had (in the world), and if owner had not paid their Zakat (in the world) then they would tread him with their feet. Similarly, sheep will come to their owner and if zakat had not paid, then they would tread him with their hooves and would butt him with their horns. The Prophet added, I do not want anyone of you to come to me on the Day of Resurrection, carrying over his neck a sheep that will be bleating/ a camel that will be grunting. Such a person will (then) say, ‘O Muhammad! (please intercede for me,) I will say to him. ‘I can’t help you, for I conveyed Allah’s Message to you ‘ (Sahih Al Bukhari). Overall, it is expected that the zakat





payment will purify the zakat payer's income, satisfy the basic needs of needy, and solving the problems of poverty.

#### **Poverty Alleviation:**

Poverty has become a financial, social, and political issue around the world. Particularly the poor and developing countries, including many Muslim countries are suffering the problem. History shows that zakat is an effective instrument to alleviate poverty. In the era of Omar bin Al Khattab and Omar bin Abdul Aziz, zakat played a vital role to eradicate poverty. Nevertheless, with the collapse of the Islamic Empire, zakat institutions lost their magnificence.

During the reigning of Omar bin Al-Khattab (the second caliph), the governor of Yemen, Mu'adh bin Jabal sent one-third of the zakat collection in a specific year to Omar bin Al-Khattab. Omar rejected and said, 'I sent you to take from the rich and render it to the poor among them'. Mu'adh claimed that there is no one who deserved the zakat money. In the following year, Mu'adh sent half of the zakat collection and faced a similar situation. Later, in the third year, he sent all the zakat collection to Omar as well as said, 'This year I did not find a single person to donate the zakat'. Same thing happened during the period of Omar bin Abdul

Aziz. Then, the then Egypt's governor sent him a letter asking on direction of zakat funds donation as no eligible unfortunate was found in Egypt. According to Omar bin Abdul Aziz, the funds can be utilized to, 'Buy slaves and let them free, build rest areas on the highways and help young men and women to get married'. Hence, Zakat is efficient in fighting against poverty if being managed properly. Therefore, the zakat system gave rise to exemplary social unity and significantly improved the living standard of poor.

Importantly, under the rule of Omar bin Al-Khattab, a new technique of zakat collections was introduced, known as al'ashir. Omar established several checkpoints on major highways, particularly those coming from another country. At each checkpoint, an appointed tax collector, collected zakat from the Muslim traders. Alternatively, the non-Muslim merchants were required to pay taxes on imports (Ahmed, 2004; Dogarawa, 2009). This system continued through the early history of Islamic government (Ahmed, 2004). Omar also introduced the theory of Baital-mal or Public Treasury to manage the zakat as well as waqf funds in 15 AH.

Generally, Islam aims to create a society free from poverty. Besides poverty alleviation, zakat aims to eradicate greediness among Muslims.

#### **Modern implications:**

In early Islamic history, zakat was distributed locally. Islamic governments remained in charge of zakat collection and distribution through a mechanism known as 'Bait-Al-Maal' or Treasury House. It comprised of a collective fund to support the destitute. If a country did not need this support, it was



## ***Zakat is a system to transfer money from the rich to the poor or needy***

transferred to another country. Nowadays, many Muslims consider that majority of governments use their political agenda with this fund. So, they no longer trust them to ‘Bait-Al-Maal’. However, zakat collection and distribution system varies from country to country.

In the present world, charitable actions are no longer limited to a particular region but shield the entire world. We are experiencing the benefit of digital communication and modern transportation. In the past, individual initiatives and humanitarian assistance were limited to the domestic level. In the case of zakat payments, mainly people’s needs are prioritized. Then the surplus distributed in other areas or as instructed by the central government.

In today’s modern life, cutting-edge technology is utilized for religious activities. E-Zakat or the on-line zakat system is a crucial breakthrough in modern technology. The traditional way of zakat payment and collection was done through the zakat collection points or offices. Currently, several countries are introducing the e-zakat system to improve the zakat collection system as payment method is easier. Similarly, it is expected to inspire rich people to pay zakat more enthusiastically. It would also enable individuals and companies to find information and get service from zakat institutions. Equally, the amount of collected zakat can be increased.



It will be very helpful to eradicate poverty from society. But, the e-zakat system must not violate the Shari’ah in case of responsibility, transparency, and efficiency. As zakat is rooted in religious law.

### **Conclusion:**

Ambition has no rest. Thus, zakat can act as a bridge between the spiritual and financial connections of Muslims. Zakat acts as a shield to protect Muslims from the evil pleasures of wealth hoarding. It is one of the central global economic frameworks. It can be ideally placed to co-ordinate efforts to address economic hardship. Currently, the coronavirus epidemic is putting enormous stress on economic systems throughout the world. It could lead to serious disruptions in the world market, particularly to low-income people due to price hikes and food deficiency. Usually, epidemic comes and go, but some true stands out in society. If the epidemic continues, the civilization will disappear. It is important to eradicate the problem as it is enormous. Today the main duty of every Muslim is to look after the poor to repair society and eliminate social injustice. We hope that all Muslim countries would utilize charity in this regard. Zakat can face this challenge and balance the growth of the Muslim community.’

## Egypt mourns its 'doctor of the poor'

Cairo - Arab News

"I pledged to God that I would not take a penny from a poor person and that I would remain in my clinic to help the poor." This selfless statement sums up the attitude and benevolence of Egyptian doctor Mohammed Mashaly, who recently died at the age of 76.

Thousands of people turned out to pay their respects and say farewell to Mashaly — known simply as "the doctor of the poor" — in his home village of Zahr El-Temsah, in the Beheira governorate of northern Egypt.

The crowds that marched in his funeral procession reflected the love, admiration and appreciation for Mashaly. He became renowned in his country as the doctor who would take only 5 Egyptian pounds (\$0.30) as payment for a visit to his office. He was featured in a number of TV programs and news reports, and many state institutions honored him for his work and generosity.

Viewers were particularly moved by a TV interview in which he cried as he spoke of an experience he had when he started working at a health center in a poor area. "A little diabetic child came to me crying from pain and telling his mother to inject him with insulin," he said. "The



mother replied to the child, saying that if she buys the insulin shot she would have no money to buy food for his siblings. I still remember that harsh situation, which made me decide to devote my knowledge to treating the poor."

He said that he kept his fee low and sometimes he did not take any money at all from the poorest people and provided them with free medications, too. Commenting on his decision to turn down a donation worth millions from a TV show, he said: "I reject donations and I advise them to offer such donations to the poor and needy."

Mashaly grew up in a poor family and built his career from nothing. He struggled to educate his own children and his brother's children, yet still he chose to help the poor and those on limited incomes.

Mashaly continued to help the patients at his clinic in Tanta until shortly before his death, said Dr. Hashem Mohammed, who worked as his assistant since the mid-1990s.



*Mada'in Saleh, Al-'Ula, Saudi Arabia*

