

“By which is better” was the most watched TV program in Ramadan““

THE MWL JOURNAL

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MWL:

**Kingdom's Hajj decision is
an urgent necessity required**





Precautionary measures required by Shari'ah necessity

I / Muslims around the world have supported the Kingdom's decision allowing a limited number of all nationalities living in the Kingdom to perform Hajj this year as part of the precautionary measures taken due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The support is manifested in the reactions of the Islamic bodies and organizations from different parts of the world and the opinions and statements expressed by prominent scholars and leaders (which are included within this journal).

On behalf of scholars from the Supreme Council of the Muslim World League, the Islamic Fiqh Academy, and the World Supreme Council for Mosques, the Muslim World League supported this wise decision, which took into account the safety of the people and the interests of the nation.

In a statement, it stressed that the current circumstances imposed by COVID-19 pandemic represent an exceptional case that must be treated differently in order to preserve the safety and life of pilgrims.

Shari'ah and its major rules, according to the statement, consider preserving a life among its five major necessities, which should be offered full protection and regarded with high degree of seriousness and not taken lightly under any pretext. The Saudi government took this urgent precautionary measure to protect and serve pilgrims of the Grand Mosque and the visitors of the Prophet's Mosque.

Many muftis and senior scholars of the Islamic world described the decision as sagacious and agreed that Shari'ah requires such precautionary measures in the current circumstances and conditions. The scholars said

one of the greatest objectives of Shari'ah is to remove hardships and difficulties facing Muslims and people and make life easier for them.

Almighty Allah says, "He has not laid upon you in religion any hardship"; "Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you"; and "Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope."

The statement concluded that the kingdom's decision regarding the Hajj this year represents an urgent necessity imposed by Shari'ah rules and preventive measures.

The decision was issued out of the keenness of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and his Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, for the safety and protection of all citizens and residents.

The performance of this year's Hajj 1441 H with a very limited number of people hailing from various nationalities living in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ensures the safety of pilgrims and everyone involved in Hajj. This way the Hajj rituals cannot be disrupted and will not contribute to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, given that Shari'ah stresses the importance of avoiding all actions that might bring harm to people.

The decision was made after thoughtful study and analysis of all the reports sent by international health research centers and after full consideration of the situations prevalent in many Islamic countries that will make it difficult for them to let their pilgrims travel for Hajj.

We ask Allah almighty to remove this pandemic from all the Muslim countries and the rest of the world.





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MWL: Kingdom's Hajj decision is an urgent necessity required

Makkah - MWL

The Muslim World League (MWL) has issued a statement supporting the precautionary measures the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has taken for this year's Hajj 1441H.

The statement was made on behalf of the MWL scholars from the Supreme Council of the Muslim World League, the Islamic Fiqh Academy, and the World Supreme Council for Mosques.

In the statement issued on behalf of the above organizations, the League of Islamic Universities included, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League and the Chairman of the International Organization for Muslim Scholars said the conditions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic represent an exceptional case that should be considered very carefully from the Shari'ah perspective in order to protect the life of pilgrims.

The statement stressed that the texts of the Shari'ah and its major rules consider

preserving a soul as one of the five major necessities. All Muslim scholars agree unanimously that these necessities should be protected and not taken lightly under any pretext or circumstances.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa pointed out that the Kingdom has taken on its Shari'ah-based responsibility and imposed these pressing and urgent precautionary measures as part of its efforts to protect and serve the pilgrims of the Grand Mosque and the visitors of the Prophet's Mosque.

The Muslim World League received calls from a number of muftis and senior scholars of the Islamic World, shortly after the Kingdom has issued this wise decision. All the scholars reiterated their support for the wise decision and precautionary measures, describing them as a Shari'ah ne-





cessity, especially in the light of the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic remains to be very dangerous and highly contagious at large gatherings, the statement noted. The predominantly probable threats imposed by such gatherings, in the light of the COVID-19, are treated, according to the Shari'ah, as a certainty. The Noble Qur'an says, "And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you."

The Muslim scholars also unanimously agreed that the removal of hardships facing people is one of the ultimate purposes and objectives of the Shari'ah. Allah the Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an, "He has not laid upon you in religion any hardship"; "Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you"; and "Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope."

The statement said this is another wise decision that reiterates the Kingdom's

keenness on the safety of the visitors of the Two Holy Mosques from the time this pandemic has started until the time the Hajj precautions have been taken, given that the pandemic is still life-threatening.

The kingdom's decision for this year's Hajj reflects an urgent necessity required by Shari'ah rules and the preventive measures, the statement said.

It concluded by praying to Allah to protect and reward the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman for the great efforts they have exerted for the sake of Islam, Muslims and the entire humankind. The statement prayed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to successfully fulfill its responsibilities as perfectly as possible towards serving the Two Holy Mosques and the Islamic issues and protecting the interests of the Islamic Nation.



Muslim World League: Islamic nations support Egypt in protecting its borders and security

Makkah – MWL

The Muslim World League (MWL) called upon the international community to assume its responsibilities and take practical steps to implement the “Cairo Declaration on Libya” initiative. The Declaration calls for a ceasefire and a political solution to the Libyan crisis, and maintains the unity and territorial integrity of Egypt. This initiative is a road map for a comprehensive solution that safeguards the safety and security of the Libyan lands, restores its institutions, eradicates terrorism and extremist

militias, and ends illegal foreign interventions.

In a statement announced by its Secretary General, who is also the Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the Muslim World League stressed that all Islamic countries, under its umbrella, stand with the Arab Republic of Egypt. They all support President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi’s measures to protect the borders of Egypt and maintain its security and stability, which constitute an important pillar of the security of the Arab and Islamic Nation.



“By which is better” was the most watched TV program in Ramadan

By: Dr. Abdullah Alshiaani

The “By Which is Better” program, which is currently broadcast on MBC TV channel, has topped the list of the most viewed religious programs in the Arab world. What distinguishes the program the most is the deep and solid discourse it adopts for addressing all issues clearly and transparently in a modern form and content, not a conventional one.

“By which is better” TV program on “MBC”, which hosted Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Chairman of the Association of Muslim Scholars, was on the top of the most watched religious TV

programs in Ramadan in the Arab world. The program was distinguished by the accurate selection of timing at four thirty p.m. in Ramadan, which gave it impetus in the follow-up, especially since it comes before “Iftar” -breaking the fast- to be a spiritual

dose for the viewer, filled with deep and discreet presentation of all the issues one needs in his daily life.

One of the factors that attracted viewers to the program is Dr. Al-Issa talking about his personal experiences and attitudes that he experienced around the world. He was aiming to engage the Muslim community in the debate and creating a more realistic dialogue closer to the daily life of Muslims, where he sought through the topics of the episodes to show the true image of moderate Islam and revealed the aesthetics of Islamic civilization, with a deep and open modern speech.

One of the most prominent issues discussed by the “By which is better” program in the Islamic matter, was the issue of the Sunni-Shiite conflict. The program also devoted an important episode to exposing the corrupt practices of political Islam and the ethics of its groups, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. Moreover, for the first time, prohibiting attacks on places of worship was discussed in such program. The program discussed the Islamic reference issue, emphasizing in the name of scholars, thinkers, bodies, assemblies and world councils of the Muslim World League that Saudi Arabia is the spiritual reference for Muslims. This is out of Kingdom’s honor of serving the Two Holy Mosques, its Islamic leadership and carrying out all its Islamic responsibilities at all levels in an honorable historical context.

In a rare vision of Muslim women’s issues, the program devoted two full episodes to correct misconceptions in dealing with women, and to respond to the discourse that accuses Islamic legislation of abusing them. Writers in Arabic and Islamic newspapers and magazines praised the way to carefully discuss the topics chosen in the program, and display them clearly and transparently,

Al-Husseini: Sheikh
Muhammad Al-Issa
is one of the most
prominent religious
leaders in the world

in a contemporary template and content far from the traditional repetition in similar programs. They also praised the importance of the topics discussed, the purposeful manner in which it was presented. The Muslim World League Journal reviews many of their opinions in this poll.

The moderate approach

Muhammad Ali Al-Husseini, the Secretary General of the Arab Islamic Council in Lebanon, wrote an article praising the program and considered it a new vision and Sheikh Al-Issa presents an authentic and renewed religious speech. He said, in a stage considered one of the most dangerous and accurate, the MWL Secretary General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa presents in “By which is better” a unique model in explaining the basic principles of Islam based on the values of justice and tolerance, which have been obliterated for years by obscurantists. Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa represents a distinguished performance, a renewed scientific style, a broad, moderate and enlightened intellectual vision. Abdulwahab Al-Shehri, a distinguished, professional interviewer, hosted Dr. Al-Issa by an elegant media style, with a good selection of questions to be asked in a smooth manner



without any complications to reach the high aim and the benefit of this valuable program. Al-Husseini added, “By which is better” ... a need and necessity, there is no doubt that the title of the program “By which is better” is the best choice that was drawn from Allah saying, “Call for the path of Allah with wisdom and good advice and argue with them by which is better”, a verse reflects the moderate approach that Islam is based on. The issues of our nation, full of clashes, divisions, and differences on all levels, are in urgent need of positive, religious, intellectual, and life dialogue, which is based on the contents of this noble verse, whose treasures are extracted by enlightened scholars involved with high religious and scientific competence. There is no doubt that the importance of this program, presented on “MBC” in Ramadan lies in its important timing and the need for constructive dialogue with the various segments of society. It is the best way to address many problems and crises and fill the gaps from which misguided ideas that sought to sabotage people’s minds and distorted the clear Islamic concepts based on tolerance, love and kindness. It also distorted the kind word

that Islam established “Did you not see what Allah says, as an example, a good word like a good tree that its root is steady and its branch is up in the sky and it pays off at all times?”.

Mr. Al-Husseini defined Dr. Al-Issa as an exceptional leadership figure, and said that this foggy stage in our nation needs lamps to reveal the darkness. We do not exaggerate, but we confirm, if we say that Dr. Al-Issa is an important and inspiring leadership figure, who has done well, presented and made great efforts in the service of Islam and the homeland.

Al-Husseini emphasized in his article that Dr. Al-Issa is considered one of the most prominent religious leaders in the world. “By which is better” program is a golden opportunity to shed light on his knowledge, wisdom and experiences that contributed greatly in building bridges between different segments of society by rejecting negative dismissal and exclusion, identifying the dangers of division, calling for the necessity of dialogue with followers of religions, co-existence, and rejecting violence because of their religious affiliation.

Respecting the mentality of the recipient

Hussein Shobokshi discussed in his article the content of traditional religious programs and how they were stereotyped and admired and praised the episodes of “By which is better”. He said that the program presented and brought up many important and controversial ideas and issues that were on people’s minds. He added that Dr. Al-Issa addressed these issues in respectful manner and with a professional dialogue respecting the mentality of the recipient. This Professionalism recognizes that we do not live in this world alone; therefore, others must be respected. Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa succeeded in providing a simple and straightforward religious discourse, with respectable answers to many issues, which are different from the old discourse that used to dominate the scene full of sharpness and without moderation, coexistence and respect for the other. Shobokshi said such programs that offer a qualitative shift in religious thought and attract the viewer to the spirit of religion with its ethics and manners are a step that deserves praise, respect and appreciation. It confirms that the recipient, as what happened with this program, respects the good things. Greetings to those in charge of the distinguished work, and hope that we will see many similar programs.

Establishing moderation

Hassan Al-Mustafa mentioned in his article “Transit to the future and transcend sectarianism”, the importance of promoting moderation between Islamic doctrines, adding that Dr. Al-Issa, and within the “By which is better” program on “MBC”, spoke about the sectarian dispute between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Considering that “there is no aggression or conflict between Sunni and Shi-

Al-Mustafa: What Dr.
Al-Issa is saying is
very important

ite moderation, the problem with sectarianism, whether it is Sunni or Shiite,” adding, “Sunni and Shiite moderation are all brothers, and these Shiites are our brothers in Islam”.

Al-Mustafa added, what Sheikh Al-Issa says is extremely important, as he was a former Minister of Justice in Saudi Arabia, and he is currently the Secretary General of the Muslim World League. He is also one of the faces of “New Saudi Arabia” that works to establish moderation, renounce violence and sectarianism, and mitigate the legacy of political and partisan Islam. Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman was clear in his intention to free society from its guardianship, after it hijacked religious discourse for decades, and transformed it from a tool of communication and compassion into a tool of discord.

A milestone

Bayneh Al-Mulhim mentioned in her article, “Which is the best and our religious discourse” that what draw her attention in the program, is its religious and intellectual dialogue and a modern perspective form. As for the permanent guest, the intellectual Sheikh Muhammad Al-Issa as the distinguishing mark and the value added to TV

programs. We are in need for such Dr. Al-Issa, for the renewal of religious discourse and display its true moderate image, which was exploited by terrorist groups and used its media platforms to falsify the reality and the truth of the tolerant religious discourse. They tarnished and smeared it by justifying their criminal and terrorist acts or their extremist discourse in general.

She added: I remember Dr. Al-Issa's speech at the Three Heavenly Religions Convention in Paris a few months ago when he made clear the keenness of the Muslim World League to spread awareness inside and outside the Islamic world. This includes the necessity that Muslims in Europe adhere to respect the constitutions and laws of the countries in which they live. They should not accept fatwas issued from abroad in their religious affairs, because each country has its spatial circumstance and its specificity in Shari'ah rulings. As fatwas in Islamic law differ according to place and time, and this is due to the horizon amplitude of Shari'ah, which aims to find interests and exclude evil and this achieves the true purposes of the provisions of Islamic law.

Dr. Al-Issa considered "Makkah Document", which was signed last Ramadan under the patronage of the Muslim World League, is one of the most important documents of the modern era. Because it emphasized protecting the legitimate freedoms, achieving justice between women and men, and not affecting national cohesion and understanding the nature of difference and diversity between humans.

Al-Mulhim concluded her article saying, of course, there are great attempts to spread Islamic and religious moderation in general and the discourse of moderation and tolerance, which we are betting on, even if it is in

Al-Ajlan: talked about
issues that are rarely
addressed in a religious
program

its beginnings. These which I hope will succeed in confronting militancy, terrorism and wars to end decades of regression backward in distracting people from the real concepts of their Islamic religion, which they knew and understood fourteen centuries ago, and do not need parties that try to militarize clear Islamic concepts.

Unique style

Osama Hamza Al-Ajlan wrote an article entitled "Al-Issa is a voice we need to understand moderation". Al-Ajlan considered the program an enlightening platform of a unique style. He said, "During Ramadan, channels were crowded with many religious programs that benefit people in many aspects of jurisprudence, legality, and other issues of religion and life. However, among those programs, "By which is Better", which navigated the viewer in the thought of Dr. Al-Issa, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, emerged as an enlightening platform of a unique style ... where he dealt with issues that a religious program rarely touched on in this depth, clarity and openness".

He added, "The viewer wandered through the episodes of the program with Dr. Al-Issa on an enlightened intellectual journey,

Shobokshi: the proficiency in dialogue respects the mentality of the recipient

aimed at correcting many concepts mistakenly represented as Islamic thoughts, and have been distorted by extremist voices over the past decades around the world. This valuable program highlighted, through the topics of its episodes, the true image of moderate Islam. It reveals the aesthetics of Islamic civilization and the enlightened thought that this civilization presented to the world that respects differences and diversity, and understands differences between human thoughts. Through the episodes of this program, Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa was keen to present a unique model of fine Islamic thought, through clear language, transparent objective presentation, and balanced scientific vision, which he presented to the viewer through his personal experiences, and what he went through in traveling around the world, to present a clear and normal image of the Muslim individual in his experience of life, whether in his society or other complexes in culture and belief”.

Al-Ajlan expressed his admiration, saying, “What I admired most in what Dr. Al-Issa said in “By which is better” is his assertion to understand the principle of difference and acceptance of the other, which is a clear mental joint that differentiates between moderation and extremism. Dr. Al-Issa, in

many episodes, emphasizes this meaning with many examples, phrases and attitudes, to explain to the viewer that difference does not mean the inevitability of conflict. Respecting this difference and its etiquette does not mean affecting the privacy of religious or national identity, nor even the privacy of individual opinion. Dr. Al-Issa laid out, simply and deeply, the foundations for a correct understanding of the Islamic religion, through which people coexist safely and peacefully as our true religion wanted. We need to insist on those strong Islamic values and concepts, and we need voices of this depth and serenity, like the voice of Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa”.

A rare model

Dr. Muhammad Al-Masoudi praised in his article, “By which is better ... moderate speech and soft power”, the important topics discussed in the program. He said, “The program addressed the problems that characterized Islamic discourse from extremism, classification and exclusion, and it is considered the best of this year’s programs in Ramadan. Dr. Al-Issa is one of the most prominent inspirational religious leaders globally, and “By which is better” is a golden opportunity to shed light on his knowledge and experiences that contributed in building bridges between societies and followers of religions, as a rare Saudi model in highlighting our nation’s efforts in moderation and combating extremism and terrorism”.

“By which is better” was introduced with a different experience in religious programs for the first time. It is different from the traditional stereotypes into spaces for open discussion that identifies with the era and accompanies it with full effectiveness, and a unique moderation with special richness

and deep experiences. Stormed calmly and wisely into the reality of the world with all its details, contradictions, people, religions, cultures and freedoms. From it, the title of the program brightened an ideal choice that reflects the moderate approach and the moderation upon which our true religion is based, as stated in the Quranic verse (Call for the path of Allah with wisdom and good advice and argue with them by which is better)".

Dr. Al-Masoudi added, "The program discussed boldly and impartially contemporary Islamic issues and addressed the problems that beset Islamic discourse, which are as an example, extremism, classification and exclusion. It raised high the values of faith, citizenship, awareness, positive interaction with the other and humanitarian action and it explained why classification and exclusion are considered an entry point for extremism. It shows how the national cohesion of a single society is affected by the dispersal and separation thesis led by extremists who wish to be unique in their opinion on controversial issues, and reject all who try to discuss them in their crucial assumptions that they endorsed without clear evidence".

Al-Masoudi said, "The program set the criteria for the correct diligence, exposing the extremists' false methods, slanders on others, trying to read its intentions and assuming its worst, and instructed the correct way to deal with these hardline currents, and discussed many modern issues".

Al-Masoudi stated, "Honestly, it was one of the best programs in Ramadan for this year. Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa is undoubtedly one of the most inspiring world religious leaders. "By which is better" is a golden opportunity to shed light on his knowledge and experiences that contributed in building bridges



between societies and followers of religions, as a rare Saudi model in highlighting our nation's efforts in moderation and combating extremism and terrorism".

Persuasion and acceptance

Fahd Al-Adim said in his article, "Sheikh Muhammad Al-Issa is the tolerance which binds us to the world", as there can be no successful bind or ties unless there is love, forgiveness and tolerance, as you see in the gracious features of Dr. Al-Issa, before you hear it through (By which is better). Sheikh Muhammad Al-Issa does not represent a person as much as he represents the vision of the moderate Muslim of the world around him, as he represents the Saudi Muslim's vision of those who share us humanity with all their religions and beliefs. His voice is our voice, which we all raise for the love of the world, which for years has been seen by us as exclusionary and atoned for those who do not share our religion or doctrine".

Many people may believe in an idea, but they eschew the clash of society and provoke it, but the brave one is who initiates by saying what he sees as good for people, even if this saying is provocative for some-



one who composed some idea, but Sheikh Al-Issa is able to persuade and he has acceptance. Even if he tells you a new and strange idea, he does not make you feel provocative. There is no doubt that acceptance is a divine gift, supplemented by knowledge and argument, and the Muslim World League has for years been searching for that scholar that connects all the Islamic world, so Sheikh Muhammad Al-Issa came to prove that his tolerance can connect the Islamic world not only with each other, but with the whole world”.

Reconciliation of faith

Ali Al- Rubaie said in his article that Al-Issa reconciles Einstein and Newton with faith in “By which is better”, that Dr. Al-Issa explained that Western scientists, with their theories of gravity and relativity, are closer to faith and are far from atheism in light of their conviction with a great power that manages the universe. Sheikh Al-Issa explained in “By which is better” on “MBC” that faith is an instinct instilled in the hearts of all human beings, and that science is the safest way to know Allah through his universal signs that only scientists will understand. He

showed his reservation to describe Einstein and Newton as atheists. Pointing to the possibility of including their proposition what is not possible, or attributed to them what they did not say or some have worked in self-interpretation of the subjective premises and relied on his judgment on hasty sentimentality, fabricated, illogical and unfair, and issued by prior perception and judgment.

Al-Rubaie added, “Al-Issa called on the scholars to take responsibility for dialogue with others to be introduced to the shared aesthetic values, being the best reason for wisdom and good advice, since the dialogue language is based on mental controversy”.

He concluded his article by saying, “The program, which was at four thirty p.m. daily in Ramadan, showed that the speaker is familiar with the theory of gravity and the equally valued force effect on the planets. Moreover, the acceleration of a body when it is subjected to a force equal to the value of it divided by the mass of the body. Realizes the relativity that interpreted gravity in the concept of geometry for the study of time and space and its impact on the curvature of super-geometrical objects of space, and the paths that bodies take and move through space.”

Eradicate extremist thought

Khalid Al-Matrafi wrote in his article, “Dismantling the virus of extremism... Al-Issa as a model”, about what Dr. Al-Issa discussed in the program in terms of central issues with a deep and solid discourse to respond to extremist groups across the Islamic countries. Saying that the concepts included in Dr. Al-Issa speech were among the most effective ways to confront the roots of extremism and terrorism, and his presentation of the correct Islamic values and principles, and revealed

the hidden of their existing discourse that they are “the word of God on the earth and his will”, and return the path of Islamic discourse to the path of righteousness and its universal humanity.

He added, Dr. Al-Issa’s program succeeded with distinction in showing the diversity of Islamic discourse, its universality, its validity and reform for every time and place, and showing the meanings of wisdom and good advice based on insight and rational awareness.

Al-Matrafi explained, “Three central issues discussed by Al-Issa in his program, with ingenuity and simplicity, and with legal understanding and awareness and a moral ethical philosophy. The first issue is “prohibiting attacks on places of worship”, and affirming that Islam emphasized that the existence of other places of worship should be respected and even protected, and criminalizing attacking them for whatever reason”.

The second issue is “the Islamic reference issue”, emphasizing in the name of scholars, thinkers, bodies, assemblies and world councils of the Muslim World League that Saudi Arabia is the spiritual reference for Muslims. This is out of Kingdom’s honor of serving the Two Holy Mosques, its Islamic leadership and carrying out all its Islamic responsibilities at all levels in an honorable historical context.

The third issue, in which Dr. Al-Issa was distinguished by his clever style and his ability to criticize, is “the corruption of political Islam practices” and the ethics of its groups, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. And how they giving up interest in Islamic belief and behavior, and even their slogans that raise them when they are forced, as well as using utilitarian pragmatism in its worst form.

Al-Rubaie: The program showed that the speaker is familiar with the theory of gravity and **the equally valued force effect on the planets**

He concluded his article: “I wish if Dr. Al-Issa not to stop the episodes of his program, and to continue it, even weekly, because it represents a very important legal enlightening platform for many who are deceived by extremist ideas”.

Women’s issues

Maha Al-Wabel talked in her article “Dr. Al-Issa, Ramadan’s Award” about her admiration for the program and the presented topics, especially issues of women, identity and belonging. Saying, “Dr. Al-Issa believes that empowering women according to the legislation and according to their biological nature means giving them the full opportunity to innovate, advance and serve society. His words are concise and clear, but they carry a flood of thought and method that draws its purity from our glorious law and its clear argument”.

She added, “I followed what Dr. Al-Issa presented in this valuable program. This man offers a moderate vision in everything, whether about women’s issues or other controversial issues. In addition, he approached in his discussions, in the program, unusual issues for such religious programs, which makes it an enjoyable intellectual journey

in a thoughtful mind characterized by transparency and clarity. Where Dr. Al-Issa was keen, through his dialogues, to present his intellectual and life experience, and his relationship with the other as an Arab Muslim, and how he sees this difference, to emphasize that the assimilation of the principle of difference between people and acceptance of the other is a detailed intellectual difference between moderation and extremism. Another important issue that Dr. Al-Issa always emphasizes is the issue of identity and affiliation, stressing on the link between them and their link to belief and religion". She praised the content of the program and described it as an enjoyable intellectual journey for those who watch "By which is better" episodes with Dr. Al-Issa, with his refined mind, as a real and a true Islamic thinker.

Rebroadcast and translation

Majed Karoub said in his article "By which is better" that the program is a different experience from the traditional template to the open space for free discussion, meditation and interaction with the era. It is rich in deep personal experiences, which brought the reality of almost the whole world with all its details, contradictions, and aesthetics; and directly intertwined with various religions and cultures.

He added that the program addressed elites, leaders, thinkers and scholars in the kingdom and the Islamic world, and should be re-broadcast and translated in to some main languages, such as English, French, Hindi, Chinese and Spanish. This translation will clarify and assure to the world the reality of Islam and its values of tolerance, love, peace and respect for others. Reflecting successes achieved by Sheikh Al-Issa in his meetings

at the level of constitutional, religious and cultural institutions in Europe, America and Africa. Also at the level of Muslim scholars that culminated in the declaration of "Makkah Document" adopted by more than two thousand Muslim scholars around the world. This program contributes to correcting many of the ideas and beliefs that were unjust to humanity in the name of the Islamic religion, although it is not related to the Islamic religion at all.

Peace Islamization

Abdullah Saleh Al-Qarni praised in his article "By which is better.. Muhammad Al-Issa is the Sheikh of peace", the contents of the program, and Dr. Al-Issa considered one of the most brilliant people in the Islamization of peace through dialogue. Saying "The thirty episodes of (By which is better) are available on YouTube and many platforms. You will find that it is a unique precedent for MBC channel to convince such scholar like Al-Issa, to sit in front of the world for thirty days in front of people with a daily program. Perhaps one of the advantages of corona crisis is that Dr. Al-Issa is not travelling as he always does for his Islamic and missionary tasks.

He added, "Sheikh al-Issa approached an issue, in a way that no one can do it as he did, which is the Islamization of peace through dialogue to coexist with a steady jurisprudence that moves it brilliantly to reach all people, based on the mercy of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, who was sent in mercy to all.

He described the program as a prolific visual book, and hoped that Sheikh Muhammed Al-Issa will be hosted again on MBC in Ramadan next year, because we are in need to generalize the understanding of the great religion of Islam.

MWL commends EU for recognizing and protecting Muslim communities' rights

Dr. Mahjoob bin Saied

In a virtual conference held by the European Commission on addressing discrimination against Muslim communities, experiences were exchanged in order to identify better channels of cooperation to combat discrimination. There was an emphasis in the conference on how to effectively enhance cooperation between equality promotion organizations and national authorities together with the civil society in order to provide better support to victims and develop measures to prevent discrimination against Muslims in the first place.



Helena Daly, the European Commissioner in charge of the equality file, stressed that the Muslim communities in Europe face increasing discrimination in many areas of life because of religion, ethnicity and gender and other reasons. She explained that this endangers the fundamental rights of Muslim communities and prevents the full realization of equality, calling on member states to exert more efforts to ensure that the existing rules are fully implemented and enforced throughout the European Union.

In a statement published by “Al-Sharq Al-Awsat” newspaper, Daly said, “We have noticed that a citizen no longer accepts to be subjected to racism because of disability, skin color, creed, origin and race. We have also recently noticed an increasing number of complaints due to exposure to racism on streets on the basis of religion and beliefs where veiled young women have been harassed and some of them have reported hav-



ing their veils pulled off their heads. Moreover, veiled young women are objects of discrimination at the workplace. We are now



Fighting Discrimination on Grounds of Religion and Ethnicity: Addressing the Vulnerabilities of Muslim Communities in the EU
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searching for the best way to prevent these incidents from occurring again.” The suffering of Muslim communities from racist behavior and the procedures of a number of European countries has been a subject of ongoing discussion since the 1980s. Furthermore, with the advent of the third millennium, the issue has become more complicated, especially after the Islamophobia phenomenon that has emerged following the events of extremism and terrorism as well as the term “Islamization of Europe”. This period also saw the emergence of extremist right-wing parties in the political and electoral landscape in European countries. The debate on the rights of Muslim minorities has intensified while concerns over the issues of citizenship and respect of religions have increased. The Muslim World League has hailed

the European Commission’s position in the virtual conference on the rights of Muslim communities and their protection against racist and hatred measures. The praise came as part of the Muslim World League’s objectives aiming to promote the positive integration of Muslim communities into their societies and respect the citizenship pact, which these communities accepted and adhered to. To achieve these goals, the Muslim World League has promulgated awareness messages in the conferences, seminars and meetings it has held in all countries across the globe. These messages affirm the fact that Islam is a religion of honesty and loyalty that should be respected and appreciated because it promotes primarily the true values of tolerance, coexistence, peace, love and harmony. Also, Islam deals peacefully and in a civilized

way with the theories of evil and hatred and dispels these theories and reveals how false they are.

Indeed, the abuses and violations of the Muslim minorities' rights through the media or other means of any European country fall within the responsibility of these countries that have to intervene in order to prevent such abuses and violations. European countries should bring legal action against the advocates and perpetrators who engage in racist and hateful actions that provoke sedition against these minorities.

A legal action should be brought against those who infringe upon the rights of others and discriminate against others on the basis of sex, race, or color. Such act is rejected by all international covenants and laws, most importantly the Charter of the United Nations, which states in its second article that "protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people without discrimination on the basis of race, language or religion". It is also rejected by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965, which constitutes the legal basis for declarations and the various relevant decisions, because it condemns racial discrimination in all its forms and denounces propaganda based on ideas and theories that treat any race or group as superior.

It is possible to distinguish between the criminal laws in various European countries, which emphasize the protection of public order and which seek to protect human dignity. Racist speeches targeting a group or a minority may be considered a threat to the public order, and therefore, such speeches are in terms of their



degree of seriousness tantamount to insulting and slandering a specific person. These laws often do not protect the rights of minorities per se, although they affirm the protection of human dignity and the protection of public order. In some European countries, racist rhetoric based on hatred is prohibited, but speeches that are rooted in racism and hatred that insult, despise and offend Islam and Muslim minorities are overlooked.

The Muslim World League is the most reliable and powerful organization that can educate Muslim minorities in the world about their cultural and religious identity. Moreover, it can help them adhere to respecting the laws stipulated in the constitutions of the countries in which these minorities live, either as legal immigrants or as citizens.

These efforts come in line with the Muslim World League's civilized message aimed at promoting the culture of peace to achieve societal security and entrench the values of coexistence and mutual respect among the peoples of the world. The Muslim World League works also to promote tolerance and dialogue among the followers of religions, defend the cultural identity of Muslim minorities across the world, and ensure these minorities are open to other cultures.

MWL Journal interviews Kerala Minister for Higher Education and Minority Welfare

ALAVUDHEEN K.M.

“Excerpts taken from an interview given by Dr. KT Jaleel an academician turned politician, a former professor in history and the current Minister for Higher Education, Minority Welfare, Hajj and Wakf to K.M Alavudheen Hudawi Puthanazhi Research scholar in Arabic Kerala- India for the Muslim World League Journal.”



As far as higher Islamic learning is concerned, Kerala had to its credit one of the oldest seats of learning that attracted students from all over the world. How Kerala, a peripheral region outside the core Islamic world, could enjoy such an outstanding achievement?

• Though the Malabar region, the historical variant of present North Kerala remains at the periphery of the heartlands of Islam. It had a legacy of cultural and historical contacts with Arabia through the spice trade, dating back to more than two millennia. Since the region encompassed many port cities and played a pivotal role in the east-west trade, Arab traders to the Malabar region brought their religion and culture here. The local kings were so tolerant and accommodative of foreign traders and their culture that they were allowed to teach and preach their ideas and messages. In a sense, it has to be said that the rulers actually encouraged the spread of Islamic culture here. Thus, the coastal regions were having not only religious places, mosques, temples and synagogues but also great learning hubs, as the fourteenth-century Moroccan traveler, Ibn Batuta, recorded. He came across various such centers all through the length and breadth of the Malabar Coast. This tradition flourished in the following centuries. By the sixteenth century, we had cosmopolitan centers such as Calicut and Ponnani, with great learning centers established by Makhdums and Calicut Qadi families.

This is a time of extended academic discourses and discussions on cultural exchange between Kerala and Arab countries. The scope of research and readings on the maritime journeys that formed the cultures and civilizations are still wide

open. What are the creative steps taken by the governments that ruled the state in these areas?

• Since the Arab-Indian historical linkages thrived and flourished unprecedentedly after the emergence of the petro-economy, the possibilities of research have multiplied at many levels. This ranges from the retrospective survey of historical connections to salient aspects of everyday lives that characterize our present interactions. The economic, social and cultural contributions of the migrant labor to the development of both the regions are crucial, but they have not been subjected to rigorous and systematic investigation. In the state of Kerala, the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), funded by the Government of India, has been producing scholarly analyses of the economic impacts of the migratory movements to the Gulf. As the economy is the focal area of CDS research, various other aspects of the Arabia-India connections are yet to be fully explored. In view of the immense scope for comprehensive research in the area, the government of Kerala has recently founded the Centre for West Asian Studies, a research center at the University of Kerala. More such centers and projects aimed at research are in the pipeline.

Historically, Muslim intelligentsia played a vital role in European Renaissance and in Indian Renaissance as well. What was the role of Muslim intelligentsia in the celebrated Kerala version of Renaissance?

• Unlike Europe, in Kerala, the advent of Islam peacefully through the Ocean contributed to the elimination of negative stereotypes in the Kerala psyche. Many downtrodden classes found in Islam a safe anchorage from social discrimination legitimized by the caste system. Historically, Islam brought the



message of universal equality, fraternity and brotherhood among the people. This attracted thousands of subaltern people to its fold. Later, in the colonial era, renowned Muslim scholars like Zainudheen Makhdoom led the anti-colonial fights against European imperialists. Mampuram Thangal and Qazi Umar of Veliyankod also mobilized the people through critically interpreting the Islamic conception of human rights. During the British period, Kerala witnessed waves of awakening among people belonging to different castes and communities. In tandem with the reform movements among the lower castes led by Sri Narayana Guru and Sahodara Ayyappan, Socio-cultural and political movements burgeoned among Muslims. At the social level, eminent scholars such as KM

Moulavi and Makthi Thangal led the fight for eradicating superstitions and un-Islamic rituals through promoting modern education and laying special emphasis on women's education and socio-cultural awareness. They were very much inspired by Salafi discourses happening in the Arab world. On the educational front, the pioneer religious body of Ulema, systematically founded a network of madrasas without compromising with government-led modern school education. At the cultural level, various schools of thought and sects actively engaged in healthy debates enabling each group to harmoniously cooperate and develop their own distinctive institutional infrastructure. The political sphere was more important for it articulated a coalition of general platforms binding different people of

perspectives struggling for general welfares and progress of the community. Kerala's political sphere needs to be mentioned here.

Ours is a political climate dominated by strong secular and egalitarian ethos. This has enabled the Muslim community to marshal its resources effectively towards furthering its educational and academic goals.

The overall social, economic and educational statuses of the Muslims of Kerala are comparatively higher than their counterparts in other Indian states. What in your opinion are the forces that might be contributed to it?

- An array of socio-economic factors are responsible for the seeming discrepancy disparity between Muslims of Kerala and those inhabiting the northern parts of India when it comes to the overall status. Unlike the context in Kerala, a host of problems hinder the social and educational development in other states. The seeming discrepancy between Muslims of Kerala and those inhabiting in Northern parts of India when it comes to the overall statuses of both. Higher incidence of poverty, lack of accessibility to education institutions, lack of political and social awareness, lack of awareness about the importance of education, and the reluctance to change their mind set with regard to getting government jobs, moving abroad and changing the lifestyle are some prominent among them.

When it comes to the quality of educational rate, Kerala tops all other Indian states. How do you explain the Kerala Model of Education?

- In Kerala, people are educated and the parents are more concerned about the education and better socialization of their ward, which is not found in most of the north Indian states.

Here in Kerala, teachers are hard-working and the system of education is always under constant check. From the days of colonial missionaries to the post-colonial culture of collective action, the educational distinction of Kerala has layers of history. While authorities in north India are least bothered about the system of education.

A recent comparative study of the success in the prevention and management of Covid-19 by the government of Kerala with selected European countries, revealed that even though the investment of major European countries in the medical sector is much higher than Kerala state, Kerala could strive ahead mainly because Kerala invested the amount in medical infrastructure development in a sustainable way to reach the benefit to all sects of the community. Do you think This Kerala Model was possible because of its socialist attitude towards sustainable medical development?

- Kerala's performance against the pandemic continues to be remarkable on various grounds, and as a government with more people-centered initiatives, the state is already known for high standing in the health sector. The United States is the country with the most healthcare spending: 16.9% of GDP. In Kerala, it is 5.3 per cent. The GINI Index measures the world's economic inequality, which is calculated from zero to 100 percent. As the index grows, economic inequality increases. But in Kerala, it is only 0.83% which indicates that there is the only minimum level of economic inequality. However, it is very high in the countries which are most affected by Covid19, such as the US, Spain, Italy, and China, it is 41.4%, 34.7%, 35.9% and 38.5%, respectively.



These characteristics have helped the health sector in Kerala to prevent the spread of the dangerous pandemic. Kerala keenly focuses on the importance of health and other basic needs of the people in times of disasters. The government is focusing on alleviating poverty and maintaining the social environment peacefully through free rations, community kitchens for food and social pensions (payment of dues). That way, we were able to effectively implement the lockdown without compelling civilians to go to public places for livelihood. Most of the Gulf countries also have adopted such noble approaches, and they are able to fight back against Covid19. At the same time, unemployment, economic crisis and the inadequacy of basic health care are plaguing all over the world.

The spread of Covid19 has a direct impact on the economic, social and personal lives of the world. World countries are on a vigorous mission to combat such crises while preventing the spread of disease.

While considering the relationship between Muslims and Hindus an obvious difference is found among those in South and Northern parts of India. Is there any historical reason behind such a phenomenon to see?

- Partly, this is due to geo-historical reasons. Since the region is extremely connected to the regions of the Indian Ocean through maritime waters than its land-locked northern sides, Kerala has centuries-old connections with Southern Arabia and many other

parts of the Indian Ocean. The expansion of a number of religions in the South was through peaceful maritime exchanges. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all of these three religions made its presence through maritime waters, while in the north its expansion was accompanied by the political expedition. Partially, this is connected to the socio-religious movements and post-independent social scenarios emerged in Kerala. In addition, the notable practice of demographic balance and the mixed cohabitation of various religious communities in the state, unlike the communal ghettos of the north, also contributed to this amicable situation along with the strong demographic proportion of various communities. Along with communal ghettoization in the north, the injury of partition still remains unhealed there while the south did not have to bear the brunt in the same degree.

In the history of Malabar, we had at least a few global personalities like Syed Fazal of Mamburam, who was known as Fazal Pasha in the ottoman Turkey. In 1852, when he went into the forced exile, he was well accepted by the Arab world and the Ottoman Empire. Do you feel that, in the modern times, we are unable to produce such internationally acclaimed citizens?

- There are different reasons for the absence of such glorious personalities in modern times. One is that in modern times, our education system and political leadership has become merit-based instead of value-based. The second reason is that after World War 1 and the consequent disintegration of global Islamic Khilafat, the political structure of the Muslim world has narrowed down into small nation states. As a result of that, the idea of global citizens became almost absent every-

where in the world.

As we know, MWL and WAMY are the two organizations with broad transnational networks. In your opinion, what kind of relationship does exist between them and religious bodies in India?

- Despite the sectarian and ideological difference, various Muslim religious organizations have shown from time to time a tendency to cooperate each other and stand together against the problems of Muslims all over India in particular and across the globe in general. The same approach is what Muslim organizations in India used to resort to International organizations like MWL and WAMY having transnational networks. It means that they put aside all differences on sectarian and ideological lines to cooperate with each other to be in the cause of empowering and uplifting Muslims all over the world and solving various sorts of problems they are suffering from.

The Muslim World League journal, the mouthpiece of MWL, is famous for its wider readership not only in the Arab world but also among the people of non-Arab countries. How you came to know about the journal and its readership?

- I came to know about the journal for the first time during my career as a teacher. It was a great surprise for me to know that a foreign Arabic magazine had such a wider readership in a non-Arab speaking region. “The sophisticated language it uses, the range and the novelty of topics it discusses, the critical analysis it employs, and above all the neutrality it maintains while dealing with controversial issues,” one of my colleagues explained when I queried him about the distinguished features of the journal.



Disaster Preparation for the Muslim nation

Tasnuva Jahan

Every day we hear more and more news of misfortunes that ruin the societies they touch. It may be natural disasters or man-made disasters. Currently, novel Corona virus is hitting different parts of the world. The word 'novel' corona virus means it is a new form of the virus. We are experiencing global tragedies such as shutting down cities, mosques and even entire countries. The new and deadly virus first appeared in China's Wuhan province in December 2019. The disease mainly causes severe respiratory illness is called COVID-19. Nevertheless, it has so far affected over 200 countries and an international conveyance (Diamond Princess, a cruise ship harbored in Yokohama, Japan). Over billions of people around the world are under virtual lockdown



under virtual lockdown. As the global corona virus death toll has crossed 18,000 including more than 7,000 in the worst-hit Italy. The daily number of death rate is rising at an unprecedented level. Also, many countries are struggling with a rise in confirming cases. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the corona virus outbreak as a global 'pandemic'. The epidemic is inevitably having an enormous impact in some areas. Spain is suffering the worst outbreak of COVID-19. More than a dozen states of the United States are implementing stay-at-home orders. Germany has banned public gatherings of more than two people. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also suspended Umrah and travel to visit two holiest sites Makkah and Madinah. The corona virus outbreak has completely upset lives across the earth, restricting movement, shutting educational institutes and forcing millions of people to work from home. The world is fac-

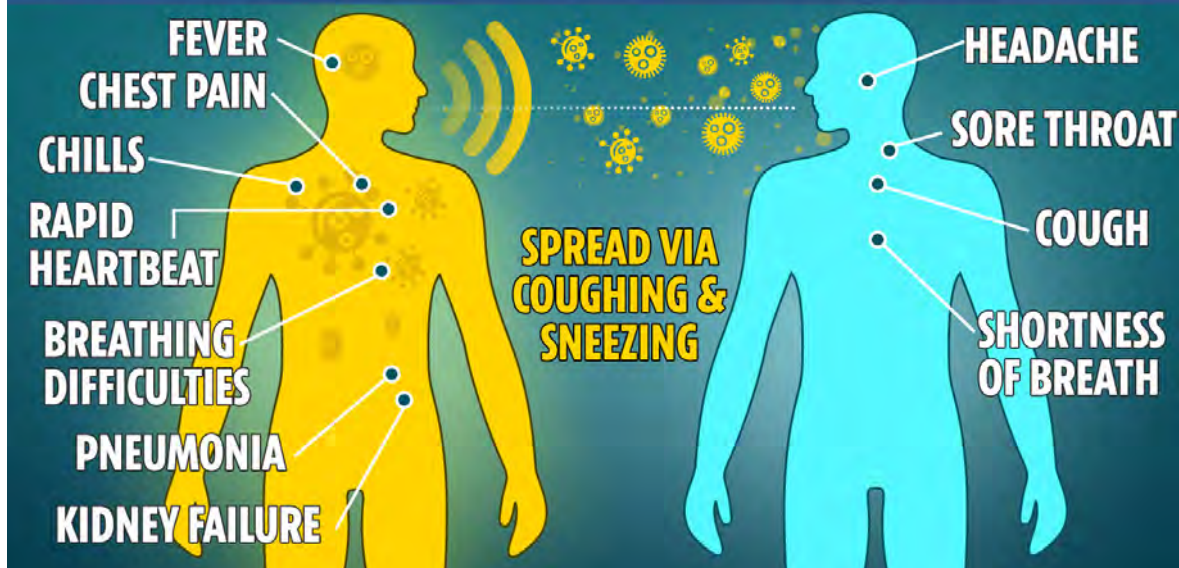
The highly contagious coronavirus has affected many countries around the world.

ing enormous challenges.

Fears are growing that the new corona virus outbreak could raise the prices of essential commodities and food prices around the world. Economists predict the disruption in international supply chain management caused by the corona epidemic will diminish several country's economic growths. Supply chain management is the management of flow of goods and services. It also includes all related processes that transform raw materials into finished products. The financial risks of epidemics are not trivial. The consequences of outbreaks are not distributed

CHINA CORONAVIRUS

The symptoms of 2019-nCoV and how it spreads



equally throughout the international economy. Developed countries are providing different economic facilities for its citizen. But the main problem is for vulnerable populations of poor and developing countries, as they do not have enough health care services and savings to protect against financial disaster. Economic policymakers are accustomed to managing different types of risk, such as trade imbalances, exchange rate movements, and so on. However, the findings of this paper offer an insight into the several Islamic preparations for the disruption caused by outbreaks and epidemics.

Islamic point of view:

The rapid spread of the novel corona virus has sparked worldwide alarm. Many parts of the world are battling the virus. People have different views about epidemics and di-

The daily number of death **rate is rising at an unprecedented level.**

sasters. Some consider that as mere events and accidents taking place by chance, while many others consider as torments and tests of the Almighty. Islam has much to offer in this regard. Many Qur'anic verses and Prophetic texts directly or indirectly discuss the problem describing certain actions. There are a number of strategies to slow down any infectious disease outbreak and disasters impact.

Punishment for opponent:

According to Muslim religion, natural disasters, calamities or epidemic is a punishment

Even the most developed nations having all modern **resources, medical expertise** and strong army, are found to be helpless against the **novel virus attack.**

of Allah for those people who are either disbelievers, disobedience or cross their limits in the earth. Sometimes natural catastrophes are very intense. It even destroys the innocent people living in the affected area. Islamic instructions make clear that the innocent people who face an affliction will get a reward from the Almighty on the Judgment Day.

Surat Al-Anfal verse 53 explains ‘That is because Allah would not change a favor which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. And indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing.’ This verse interprets that Allah will never take away His blessings from any nation unless they changed themselves into something. Right now, our blessings of safety have been replaced with anxiety and deaths due to our acts.

According to Surat Ash-Shura Verse 30, ‘And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.’ Consequently, due to people’s corruption or sin Allah sends any virus or pandemics. Surat Ar-Rum verse 41 repeated that ‘Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by (reason of) what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of (the consequence of) what they have done that perhaps they will return (to

righteousness)’.

If Allah inflicts any punishment on a nation, no one would be able to combat that punishment. Surat Fatir verse 45 reveals ‘And if Allah were to impose blame on the people for what they have earned, He would not leave upon the earth any creature. But He defers them for a specified term. And when their time comes, then indeed Allah has ever been, of His servants, Seeing’.

Everything is evidently declared in the Nobel Qur’an. Muslims should consider about that, nothing will protect people except Allah. Even Muslims should fear the fitnah (affliction and trial) which affects not in any particular wrongdoers, but it may afflict each person good or bad one. Surat Al-Anfal verse 25 states, ‘And fear a trial which will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively, and know that Allah is severe in penalty.’

Throughout Islamic history, different tribes and people were hit by natural tragedies. Surat Fussilat verse 15 refers to the former tribe of Aad, ‘As for ‘Aad, they were arrogant upon the earth without right and said, ‘Who is greater than us in strength?’ Did they not consider that Allah who created them was greater than them in strength? But they were rejecting Our signs.’ Consequently, they were punished by a windstorm.

The people of Fir’aun (Pharaoh) were disobedient to Allah. Pharaoh denied clear signs in the form of natural catastrophes to reform himself. Finally, they were punished by the Allah. This fact has been revealed in the Surat Al-A’raf verse 130 ‘And We certainly seized the people of Pharaoh with years of famine and a deficiency in fruits that perhaps they would be reminded’.

The people of Sodom indulged in homosexuality and immoral behavior. The Prophet Lut

requested them to take the right path. But they did not refrain from their immoral practice. Therefore, Allah rained down on them a rain of stones.

Care for sinner:

Natural disasters such as different types of calamities, disease, and famine can be warnings for sinners to reform themselves. According to Surat At-Tawbah verse 126 ‘Do they not see that they are tried every year once or twice but then they do not repent nor do they remember?’

Surat As-Sajdah verse 21 declares ‘And we will surely let them taste the nearer punishment short of the greater punishment that perhaps they will repent.’ This verse clarifies Allah’s mercy that disasters befall sinners in this world, as they may be purified.

According to Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 44 reflects that, ‘Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?’

‘O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one’s] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers’ Surat Al-Hujurat, verse 11.

According to Surat Al-Anfal verse 33, ‘But Allah would not punish them while you, (O Muhammad), are among them, and Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness.’ So repentance is important in the Sharia. If anyone repents, Allah lifts their torments. And no one would be punished. ‘...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out’ Surat At-Talaq verse 2.



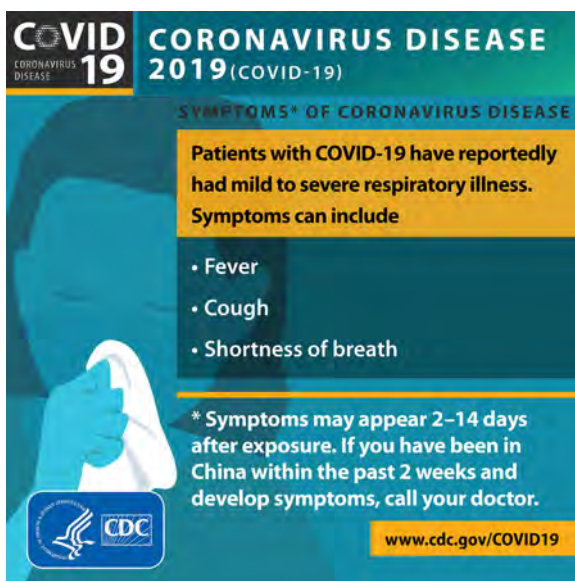
Hence, if people fears Allah and keeps their duty righteously, their problems will be resolves.

Muslims should take a lesson from the Qur’anic verses. Allah is merciful to His creations. He sends repeated trials upon the Ummah. Accordingly, anyone may return and repent to the Allah, and give up the actions which Allah has forbidden.

Trial for believer:

According to the Noble Qur’an and Hadith, natural tragedies may come to test or trial for the believers. ‘And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient’ Surat Al-Baqarah verse 155. It is apparent that when people face any hardship with patience then they will get a reward for their sufferings.

In another verse Surat Al-Baqarah defines that ‘Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such (trial) has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until (even their) messenger and those who believed with him



The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also suspended Umrah and travel to visit two holiest sites Makkah, Madinah

said, “When is the help of Allah?” Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near’ Surat Al-Baqarah verse 214.

‘Do the people think that they will be left to say, We believe and they will not be tried?’ Surat Al-Ankabut verse 2.

Ultimately, this world is the place of trial for the devotee. Joy cannot be achieved except through tests.

Disaster preparedness:

Islamic law has guided Muslims in all walks of life. It also prescribes the dealings with natural mishaps. Islam has clear directions for quarantine to inhibit the spread of viruses and epidemics. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, ‘If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it. But if the plague breaks out in a place while

you are in it, do not leave that place’ (Sahih Al-Bukhari). Reported by Abu Huraira, The Prophet (peace be upon him) also held, ‘the cattle sheep, cows, camels, etc. suffering from a disease should not be mixed up with healthy cattle’ or ‘Do not put a patient with a healthy person’ (Sahih al-Bukhari). It is a precaution prescription.

The concept of hygienic practices is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition. Washing certain parts of the body is a part of ablution and a Muslim’s daily ritual of cleanliness. Surat Al-Ma’idah verse 6 declared that ‘O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles...’

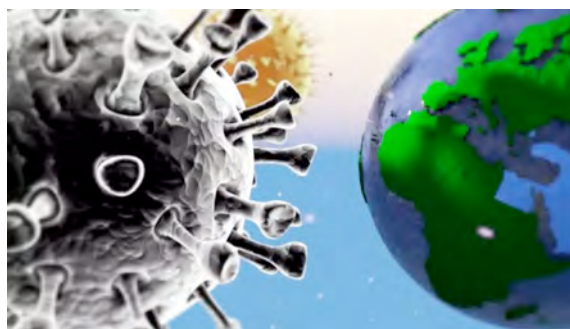
The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, ‘cleanliness is part of faith’. Even the Prophet would cover his mouth with his hand or a piece of cloth when he sneezed. In another Hadith the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated, ‘the blessings of food lie in washing hands before and after eating’ (Abu Dawud). Islamic teachings strongly encouraged people to keep safe from infections.

However, these extraordinary times, several mosques across the globe cancelled Friday Jumma prayer. They are also broadcasting an altered Azaan or call to prayer telling believers to “Saloo fi Buyutikum” (pray in your homes) instead of “Hayya ala al-Salah” (come to prayer). As large gatherings could increase the spread of Covid-19. It was also done at the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during heavy rains and high winds (Sahih Al-Bukhari). Importantly, the present ‘social distancing’ concept is recognized in the ancient Muslim religion. The coronavirus is spread through coughing or sneezing. The virus will be in droplets that

are coughed/sneezed out into the air. People who are within 3 to 6 feet of someone coronavirus infected, can reach those droplets. So, it is recommended to avoid gathering in mosques.

At present time, due to corona virus fear people are rushing to hoard huge amount of foods, daily commodities. This hoarding can lead to wasting. Even it may cause a price hike. Islam forbids hoarding of stuff because it may cause harm to people. Muslim scholars have different opinions about hoarding. Some opined that if the people are not in need of it, it is allowed to stock it up till it is needed. Then it may be sold, so as to protect against harm and hardship from them. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Whoever hoards food away from the Muslims, Allah will afflict him with leprosy and poverty' (Sunan Ibn Majah). Islam prohibits wasteful consumption. Instead of wasteful spending on needless things, a righteous believer can do beneficial activities to secure a better social life. Thus, people should not think about unnecessary hoarding. 'Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful' Surat Al-Isra verse 27.

Significantly, people need to work consciously and carefully during any emergency situation like an epidemic. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'If you were to rely upon Allah appropriately, then He would provide for you just as He would provide birds; they go out in the morning empty, and returns full' (Ibn Majah). Clearly, the hadith indicates the necessity of work with the importance of trusting Allah. Birds do not stay in the nest waiting for Allah's contribution coming to them. Abu Huraira reported the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as saying: 'A person while walk-



The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the coronavirus outbreak as a global 'pandemic'

ing along the path saw the branches of a tree lying there. He said: By Allah, I shall remove these from this so that these may not do harm to the Muslims, and he was admitted to Paradise' (Sahih Muslim). It is vital to act foresightedly and to have precautions for possible destruction. This Hadith can be a key plan for corona disaster management as there is no vaccine. So prevention is only cured.

A Muslim government is also responsible to take the necessary steps to ensure people's safety. The state is responsible for analyzing the present coronavirus problems with suitable plans and policies. In Surat Yusuf, Allah describes the Prophet Yusuf's plan to the governor of Egypt to sustain an expected famine. This Surah also highlights the importance of preparation and hiring the most competent to deal with a serious problem like hunger. It can co-relate with the present coronavirus epidemic.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Verily, Belief returns and goes back to Madinah as a snake returns and goes back to its hole (when in danger)' (Sahih Al-Bukhari). It is referring the Prophet's flight



to Madinah when Makkah's inhabitants threatened him because of his message. This Hadith is related to arrangements in a risky condition. We can Shift it as disaster awareness. Perhaps it suggests the idea of shelters to prepare for the tragedy.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also said, 'There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment' (Sahih Al-Bukhari). This refers that medical experts should research for a vaccine and COVID-19 treatment. Muslim religion also inspires to take precautionary measures to ease the impact of any dangerous situation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once noticed a Bedouin man leaving his camel without tying it. Also he asked the Bedouin, 'Why do not you tie down your camel?' The Bedouin answered, 'I put my trust in Allah.' The Prophet (peace

be upon him) then said, 'Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allah' (At-Tirmidhi). Finally, Islamic principles are a model for Muslims in any sort of disaster preparation. People should overcome themselves from risks within the spiritual and traditional systems. The highly contagious coronavirus has affected around the world. The global health crisis is rapidly transforming into a global depression. As there is no vaccine for COVID-19 as well as much knowledge of new infectious diseases is still unknown. The calamity is unprecedented. Even the most developed nations having all modern resources, medical expertise and strong army, are found to be helpless against the novel virus attack. As the situation deteriorates slowly, the Muslim religion asks the believers to take appropriate steps to face these challenges under Islamic guidance.



New outlook: human nature and evolution

The Scientific American magazine has published a special issue with the following title on its cover: "HUMANS: WHY WE'RE UNLIKE ANY OTHER SPECIES ON THE PLANET." It was published in September 2018 (vol. 319, na3). One of the articles says, "Most people on this planet blithely assume, largely, without any valid scientific rationale, that humans are special creatures, distinct from other animals. Curiously, the scientists best qualified to evaluate this claim have often appeared reticent to acknowledge the uniqueness of Homo sapiens, perhaps for fear of reinforcing the idea of human exceptionalism put forward in religious doctrines. Yet hard scientific data have been amassed across fields ranging from ecology to cognitive psychology affirming that humans truly are a remarkable species".

This special issue is made of many articles, some of which are as follows: how humans became singular, decoding the puzzle of human consciousness, what makes language distinctly human, creation of the human mind..."

In parallel with the Scientific American, the French magazine (Sciences Humains) published in December 2018 a special dossier titled "Humains: Nos origines repensées" (Humans: our origins are being thought out).

The dossier presents new hypotheses and theses about the appearance of the human mind, which is very different from that of the closest apes to Man representable by the big monkeys. The differences in question can ultimately be traced to the evolution of the human species. Two

phases are involved in human evolution:

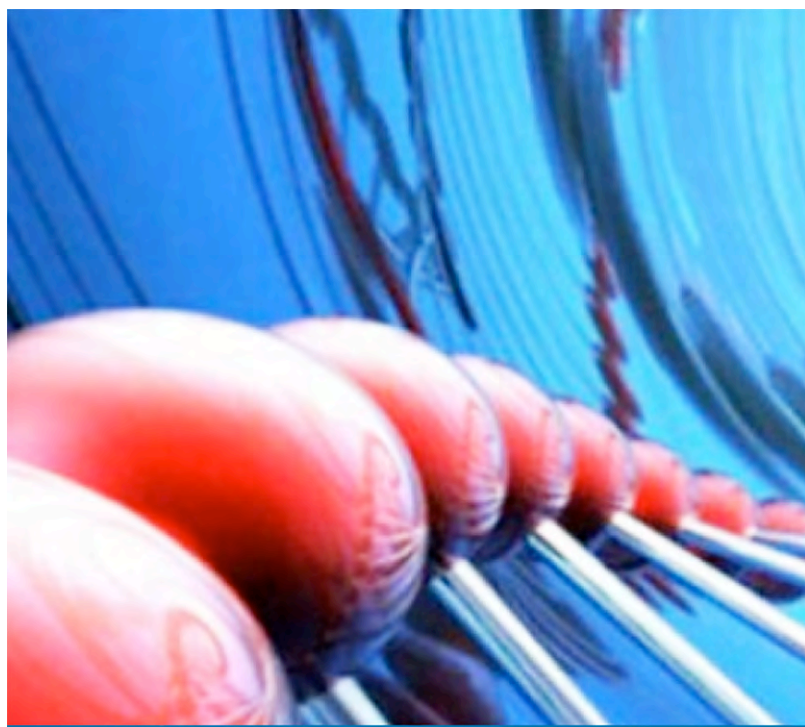
- 1- Man's acquisition of the ability to walk on two feet and having a bigger brain.
- 2- The emergence of language. Various tools, art and concepts are linked to the understanding of the distinctive features of human species evolution, which led to the birth of the human mind. This raises today new visions and horizons regarding the necessity of the rethinking of the evolution movement of the human species. The rethinking process should be applied to the acting mechanisms of human evolution, such as natural selection, social selection and cultural selection, which are today subject to full re-examination. This new rethinking of these issues is inconsistent with the classical Darwinian outlook that claims that natural selection explains the human evolution and attempts to avoid the environment and obstacles pressures. As to the new visions and perspectives, the evolution of the human species is not the result of its adaptation to the physical environment, but related to its adaptation to the non-physical environment, which humans have created.

Man is not an ape

There is so much question in the West regarding the idea that ape is not the origin of Man. The author Alain Prochaientiz denies this idea as expressed in his new book published in 2019, "Pourquoi nous ne sommes pas des singes?" : "Why are we not apes?". The journal "Science et Vie" has also published a special issue in December 2018 titled "Man does not descend from ape". The scientist George G. Simpson's book raises the question and answers it in its title, "Are we apes? No, we are humans".

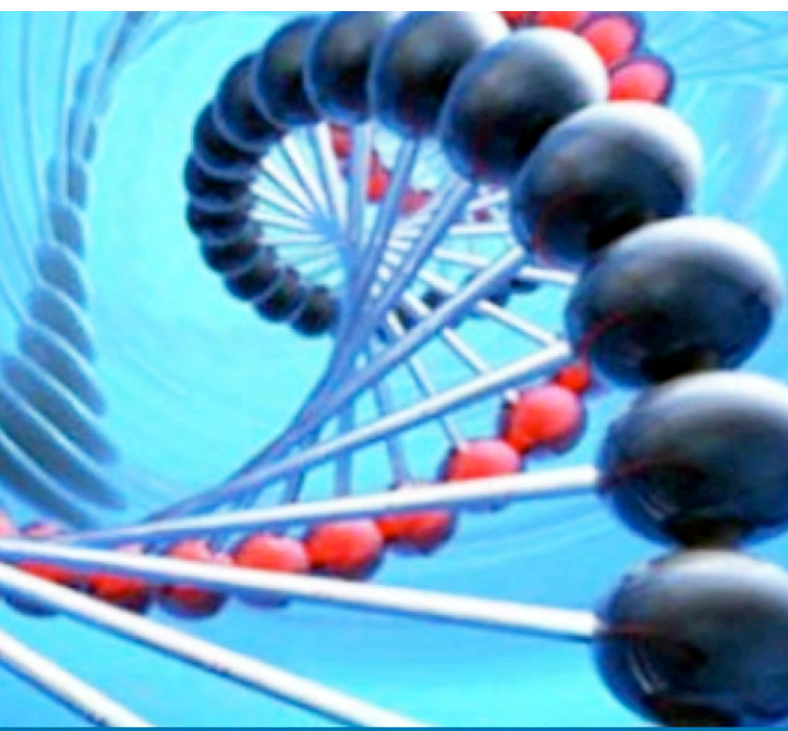
The crux of the difference between the animals and Man

Contemporary writings tend to emphasize the similarity between animals and humans rather than the gap between them. Here, we mention only two examples that show the difference. Jane Goodall has said that the chimpanzees are able to make some tools to catch the woodworm. On the other hand, certain Japanese researchers in the field of animals have observed that the Asian monkey teaches younger monkeys skills how to wash the sweet potatoes. However, these simple behaviors of some apes do not change the big constant truth underlined by the special issue of the journal of Scientific American. This big truth is manifested by the distinct human profile, which some of the articles call cognitive revolution or what we call, in our terms, the Third Human Dimension (THD) (languages, thought, knowledge, science, religion, myths, laws, cultural values and norms). With this cultural system, Man is considered a singular creature on the planet earth able to dominate the rest of the living species and the material features of nature. These Man's distinct unique qualities have given legitimacy to humans to be the master over all on the planet. Consequently, from the perspective in this article, some similarities between the humans and the other species should not cover the great truth manifested in Man being the single creature having the THD. As long as none of the other species can compete with the human species in the administration of what goes on earth and in the sky, the great truth of the human distinctiveness remains solid and credible concerning the undeniable human domination.



Scientific methodology dependency on quantitative data

Modern Science's avoidance to stress the importance of the big stable features of the human species is due largely to its methodology based on observations and quantitative indicators without taking into consideration the qualitative data, on the one hand, and without putting the details of the quantitative methodology into a thought framework which assembles the separate fragments of the quantitative data, on the other hand. In doing so, the latter would be given explanations and clear meanings and greater legitimacy among the masters of knowledge. Economists, political scientists and sociologists' descriptions of Man as *Homo oeconomicus*, *Homo politicus* and *Homo sociologus* are attributes for the human species which are difficult to be true unless Man is



described first of all as Third Dimensional / Cultural Being. The lack of the presence of the great cultural truth in human nature hampers the understanding and the explanation of greater credibility. The marginality of culture in the perspective in the human and social sciences has made, for instance, the thought of the Russian thinker Lev Vygotsky in his book (Thought and Language) not appealing in scientific circles. As such, the cultural factor in psychological thinking remained very marginalized in most part of the 20th century. The features of disorder in human and social sciences referred to some of them are due basically to their epistemological view of the nature of Man. These sciences give more credit to the material sides of Man. This epistemological view of human nature is the outcome of factors witnessed by Western civilization since the Renaissance: the conflict between the Church

and the scientists. This situation has led the scientists not to be friendly to religion. Consequently, both natural sciences that study natural phenomena and Darwin theory focus on the biological side of Man, before the cultural aspect.

Increasing interest in culture

There are today several indicators in these sciences that are in a position to promote the importance of cultures in the understanding and the explanations of the behaviors of individual and social phenomena. Cultural sociology stands strong as a leading discipline. It considers culture as an independent variable. That is, culture is not a dependent variable. Thus, culture is an intrinsic feature of human nature. As such, it is the basis for understanding and explaining what takes place in societies and among individuals. This is in full agreement with our thesis in this article, which emphasizes that Man is a third-dimensional cultural being, before being Homo economicus, Homo politicus and Homo sociologus. As seen, culture is the most distinguishing feature of the human species from the other species. Culture is the origin of the aspects of society's movements, the variety of individual behaviors and social phenomena. Thus, the cultural vision is heavily standing on what we call the Great Realities that help understand and explain people's behaviors, the movements of societies and civilizations in the past, present and in the future.

Potential questioning of the evolution theory

The above evidence implies that the classical formula of Darwin theory might strongly be modified or perhaps changed. As Scientific



American stated that the human species is a unique species on the planet. That is to say, it is a special species according to the various evaluations made by modern sciences in their studies of the human species. But the French magazine (*Sciences Humains*) does not hesitate to say that the re-thinking of the origin of the human species is taking place in sciences which are interested in the study of Man. The titles of the books mentioned show clearly that the ape is not the origin of the human species. It is a tendency that advocates a revision of the matrix of Darwin theory. There is a strong legitimacy to carry out this in current situations of human and social sciences that started to promote the importance

of cultural aspects in the understanding and explanation of behaviors of the individuals and dynamics of societies and civilization. Therefore, such a rethinking reinforces our claim that the third human dimension (culture) represents what we call the great truth in human nature. If culture is given a higher credit in all human and social sciences in the study of Man, this will create a scientific revolutionary paradigm in Khun's terms which represents a rupture with what he calls normal science that has accumulated an enormous capital of knowledge in favor of Darwin classical theory which is adapted by many scientists in different natural and human and social sciences.

Change in the epistemological view of sciences

What is clear is that the progress of contemporary sciences has started from their methodology, which relies on quantitative data, as shown in physics, chemistry and medicine, which use material factors in establishing their concepts and theories to understand and explain phenomena. But things have changed in natural as well as in human and social sciences in the and out the 20th and early 21th century as we have mentioned. This change is heavily supported by the epistemological vision of Man in the Arab Muslim civilization and its pioneering scholars and scientists before modern times. The Qur'an considers Man as a distinguished being from the other species. Consequently, Man is the only being to be God's representative (Khalifa) on the planet earth.

“Behold, thy Lord said to the angles I will create a vicegerent on earth.” In his part, Ibn Khaldun sees Man as a distinguished being from the other species by the ability to think which is a very important feature of the Third Human Dimension, “God distinguished man from all the other animals by an ability to think which He made the beginning of human perfection and the end of man's noble superiority over existing things.”

The critical attitude of many of today's scientists to the idea that Man's origin is the ape and Ibn Khaldun's outlining Man's distinctions by thought strongly questions the credibility and the reliability of the studies of modern psychology which have made the study of the behaviors of rats and pigeons and their findings the basis for understanding and explaining Man's behavior: The Third Dimensional Being.





German Muslims reject sectarian incitement

Jeddah: Al-Walid Jafar Elias

German Muslims have very much welcomed the decision of the authorities to ban the activities of Hezbollah and consider it a terrorist organization, in response to the decision taken by the German parliament with a majority of its members late last year. On Thursday, 30 April, Steve Alter, a spokesman for the Interior Minister, Horst Seehofer, said the ministry banned Hezbollah activity and

included it in terrorist organizations in Germany, adding that the competent authorities began taking measures in all of the federal states to implement this decision.

A number of German Muslims indicated that the party used to fabricate crises among the members of the united Islamic community in Germany, by fanning racist and sectarian strife, although German Muslims – Sunni and Shiite, have always known that they are one community, and there are no negative

classifications among them. Hundreds of elements of the party's active cadres entered Germany during the past years, infiltrated mosques, and engaged in fundraising tasks for the party, which violates the state's directives not to collect financial donations from worshipers, as part of its war to dry up the sources of terrorist financing. The entire Islamic community in Germany has been affected by the party's irregularities, as the security authorities have begun to search mosques and suspect Islamist figures active in the field of charitable work.

Ahmed Jassem, an activist in the Islamic community in Hamburg, confirmed that the party's members are intimidating Muslims who have expressed their opposition to the actions of Hezbollah activities and that some of them have even been subjected to physical attacks and death threats, which led them to submit official lawsuits in many police stations. Jassem explained that Muslims in Germany were known during the past period by their strive to integrate into the large society, and many of them hold high academic degrees and enjoy respect from the German people, in addition to being a peaceful community that does not make a distinction between its members due to sect or race. However, the party's cadres caused this situation to change through their discriminatory practices. Jassem noted that Muslims are now feeling overwhelmed by the decision to prevent the party from practicing its destructive activities and placing it on terrorist lists, stressing that they will cooperate with the official authorities to implement this decision. Official security reports had indicated that about 30 mosques and cultural centers in Germany have links to Lebanese militia He-



zbollah, listed as a terrorist organization in many countries of the world, where its members meet regularly in those mosques and cultural centers to collect financial donations for the party, and then send the donations to Lebanon to be used in sabotage activities in many countries of the world. A report by the Intelligence Agency in Hamburg confirmed that there are 1050 Hezbollah supporters and members in Germany and that many party activists are working to attract members of the Lebanese community in Germany for the benefit of the party, which threatens the possibility of prohibited intelligence or espionage activities.

Several German media outlets have called during the recent period for security checks in the activities of the sectarian party, noting that the sympathizers of Hezbollah collecting donations and funds is another evidence of the necessity of altogether banning the party, as that money may be used in prohibited terrorist

activities, or to fund the party's militia that is killing civilians in Syria, or to foment crises in Yemen, or even to sponsor terrorism around the world.

As a result of the escalation of these warnings, the Ministry of Interior issued a statement in January, saying that many violations committed by the party's followers had been monitored and that those abuses were being evaluated to "take decisive action," according to the report. Following the recent decision of the German authorities, Interior Minister, Horst Seehofer, said in a statement reported by the German media, "By the text of the law, I say that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization that committed numerous attacks and kidnappings all over the world, in addition to many criminal activities, and planned terrorist attacks on German soil. Part of our historical responsibility is to take

all possible measures to protect the rule of law, this is German logic. "

The minister added that the measures will not be limited to merely classifying the party as a terrorist organization and banning its activities, but many other measures will be taken in the near future, such as reviewing lists of party followers and its cadres, to ensure that they meet the conditions for regular residence, monitoring their movements, in addition to tightening control on the movement of the money they send abroad. He indicated that there are almost certain reports confirming the involvement of the party's elements in illegal activities such as money laundering, and drug trafficking and that this information is now being verified, and if it is proven true, the accused person it will be brought to trial and deported from German territory, without hesitation.





Tolerance as an effective weapon to counter Islamophobia

Nizar Abdul Baqi Ahmed

Although Mila Orioles is just a French teenage student, who does not know much about the outside world, she uttered words that sparked widespread controversy; some considered it as incitement against Islam, while Islamic activists indicated that her

negative words about Islam should not be taken seriously because she is just a child. They demanded that the values of tolerance advocated by Islam should be expressed when dealing with non-Muslims. Orioles had described Islam as a “religion of hate” while fighting on the Internet with a Muslim during a hypothetical dialogue. Soon, that



description quickly spread to social media and was reported by many French Muslims, some of whom were infuriated. The girl said she received about 200 hate messages every minute, including death threats before she was put under police protection. The story got so much space in the media, and the French President Emmanuel Macron and the Minister of Justice, Nicole Pelopet, commented on it. Far-right politician Marine Le Pen tried to use it to attack Islam and Muslims.

Negative silence

The New York Times published an article by Professor Mustafa Akyol, who lectures on Islam and Modernity at the Cato Institute. He said, “This issue has become another link in a recurring pattern, Western ridicule or publicly demean Islam, describing it

as a cruel, intolerant, and violent religion. Unfortunately, some Muslims contribute to these accusations with harsh, intolerant, or violent reactions, while most Muslims do not agree with this approach, but prefer to remain silent. Although silence does not exacerbate the problem, it does not solve it either”. He added, “The very negative view of Islam, which is called Islamophobia, has now become a real problem. Although the motivation of many remains the desire to offend Islam, we unfortunately help them do so by justifying the terrible actions in the name of Islam, tyranny and intolerance. Therefore, it is normal for some non-Muslims to be shocked by these mistakes and judge Islam accordingly.”

Civilized style

Akyol refers to the way Muslims should

follow in responding to criticisms of their religion, and how to deal with these abuses, and says, “It is primarily our duty to rethink our reactions, challenge the harsh interpretations of our faith, and build alliances with all persons of intent. Recently, the German Minister of Justice indicated that her country would play its role when it announced that right-wing terrorists were the first threat to Germany. This statement came after a right-wing gunman killed nine Muslims, most of them young men in a cafe in Hanau. Therefore, the most appropriate response to the advocates of Islamophobia is to show the advantages of Islam, and its call for tolerance and dialogue, and it is very important to avoid the anger that leads to actions may alienate others from Islam, and to highlight to those we interview with the call of Islam to the preachers to follow wisdom and patience when inviting others”.

Clarifying facts

Akyol said the reaction of Muslims against Islamophobia must be calm and gentle, in the most polite way in order to win the hearts and minds of those who appear hostile. There are many elements of power in the Islamic religion that Muslims must use to win the battle of minds and hearts. Islam is completely flexible, so it is necessary to focus on clarifying the essence of the Islamic religion, which calls on its followers to coexist with others in complete peace and rejects all forms of isolation and negativity. Islam calls for interaction and does not call for self-contempt or living away from society. At the same time, Islam rejects all forms of coercion or forcing others to en-



ter it. Rather, it leaves them with complete freedom to choose the religion they want and this is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. This is Islam, which is a religion valid for all societies and times.

Renewing the speech

Akyol said it is extremely important that Muslims agree on how to renew the Islamic discourse so that they can merge in today's world with a contemporary vision. Many of the rulings that came in a certain time context should be reconsidered. Extremists who refuse to develop the Islamic discourse and cling to provisions and interpretations that prevailed during the medieval period should differ in response and engagement. For example, Muslims in France can send a message to Mila to confirm respect for her opinion of expression and express regret for the hatred that emerged from her, assuring her that Islam is actually the religion of compassion, not hate. It is better to attach a useful book on Islam, and a beautiful bouquet with a nice message. “If we do so, young people will see Islam in a brighter way, changing some of their negative perceptions of our religion and our societies.”



Deutsche Welle: Islam is an integral part of European history

Jeddah - Al-Waleed Jafar Elias

The German website (Deutsche Welle) published an article by a writer specializing in religious sciences, Stefan Schreiner, in which he stressed that Islam is an essential part of European history, despite the attempts of many to deny this fact. He says abundant historical evidence shows that Islam was never once alien to Europe as much as some extremists are promoting to achieve their own goals. “In our modern times, Christian or Jewish heritage is often referred to when discussing the identity of Europe, but history books refute this false premise and shows that Islam has for centuries been part of European history. Those who repeat the opposite aim only to achieve one goal, which is to exclude Islam and ensure that it does not belong to Europe”. At a time when some were seeking to

expel Muslims from several countries in Europe, Islam had begun to spread again from the east and southeast in the Balkans, Lithuania, Poland and Belarus. The writer said the proof that Islam does not distance itself from Europe is the existence of a large number of Muslims that make up a large part of the population of Europe.

The writer affirms that the mistake of believing that Europe is a Christian-Jewish continent appears in what Jews suffered during intermittent historical periods of great hostility in many countries of Europe. He says, “Since the seventh century, churches have continuously declared that Jews are not desirable and considered them to be unacceptable persons and consequently expelled them since the Middle Ages, especially from Western European countries. Likewise, with the rapid progress of Muslims in North African countries

that were Christian at first and soon converted to Islam, Jews were accused of collaborating with Muslims against Christianity, and large numbers of Jews were expelled from Spain when Muslims left”.

The article emphasizes the penetration of Islamic thought in European countries a long time ago, noting that the continent was not only affected by the Christian heritage, but also was formed and influenced in its history by the ancient Greek-Roman heritage, and by Jews and Arabs in general, and this appears clearly in its influence on the elements of Islamic civilization. Therefore, Muslims in many countries - especially in Eastern Europe - have left their mark on many milestones, especially in architecture and engineering. The article continues, “Several years ago, Muslims in Lithuania celebrated the 600th anniversary of their granting of public concession by Duke Vytautas Wittold, who not only guaranteed them the right to reside and exist in the country but also recognized them as citizens with full rights to citizenship and granted them the right to live and practice their religious rites in total freedom like other citizens. Those remain in Lithuania, and their descendants still exist today.”

The author of the article goes on to confirm his view by saying, “In the same way, Muslims in Bosnia continue to confirm that they are part of European history and that they play a role in making the history of the continent over the past six centuries. Therefore, the Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Mustafa Ceric, said it is a historical mistake that has serious consequences. Islam is always viewed as the religion of immigrants only, and the fact that Balkan Muslims are indigenous European citizens is ignored.”

The writer said Ceric stresses that the only solution to the identity crisis in Europe is to rec-



ognize Muslims as an integral part of the continent and not immigrants or refugees and that states and governments must stop the ideas of extremist right-wing parties that trigger crises and call for the expulsion of migrants and restrictions on Muslims, and always linking terrorist operations with Islam.

The author of the article concludes by stressing the need to coexistence with others and that if European countries are serious in achieving social security and persuading Muslim minorities to integrate into the larger society, then it is necessary to create the conditions that lead to this goal, by removing the factors that Muslims feel injustice, and guarantee equality, social justice and equal job distribution. He added that it is also important to deal decisively with the right-wing extremists who promote claims that the nature of Islam is fundamentally inconsistent with the nature and values of Europe, and adhere to classify Islam as an ‘enemy.’

“It is difficult to envision Europe as a Christian continent without its Jewish and Islamic roots, and that will remain a mere imaginary assumption, as it has always been. As Europe has in the past always been influenced by positive debate across the three divine religions, its stability and peace can only be guaranteed through the cooperation of the followers of those three Abrahamic religions”.

A mosque attacker in Norway receives a maximum penalty



Tariq Mehdi Siddiq

OSLO - A Norwegian court has upheld the maximum possible punishment for a man who opened fire inside Al-Nour Mosque last year in a suburb of the capital, Oslo, after killing his stepsister. The court sentenced him to 21 years in prison and stated in its findings that the attack “reveals a hostile spirit rooted in the criminal, who committed a crime that threatens public peace and harms the country’s reputation”. The CBS News said that although Philip Manhouse could not harm anyone inside the mosque, due to the vigi-

lance of the worshipers, who threw him to the ground and took away the weapon he was carrying, the court rejected the defense’s request to mitigate the sentence, noting that the strict punishment will deter others from committing crimes that jeopardize people’s lives.

Prosecutor Johann Ueberberg had called on the court not to look at the accused with clemency, citing his hostile actions that he had been carrying out during the trial, such as performing the Nazi salute and his derision of judges, as well as his statement that he regretted not being able to kill worshipers inside the mosque. The prosecutor also revealed that

on the same day he carried out the attack, the accused had killed his 17-year-old stepsister, “which proves that he is a very dangerous person”.

The CBS News site indicated that Manhouse had raised the discontent of the media and those who followed the court sessions with his provocative statements and aggressive behavior. Norwegian newspapers said that he had published on his Facebook page a message praising the shooting incident in the two mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch in March 2019, hours before he carried out the attack. These behaviors have lost him popular sympathy and have caused many people through social media to support the severe punishment inflicted on him, to warn others.

Most of the political parties and entities in Norway agreed on the necessity of condemning this terrorist act, stressing that the country’s established democracy remains under direct threat due to these actions, and that all segments of society are required to stand together to reject any attack on the freedom of worship of the Norwegian citizens.

The site touched upon the visit of the Norwegian Crown Prince, Haakon Magnus, a few days after the accident to the mosque that witnessed the criminal attempt last year, where the worshipers welcomed him. Magnus reiterated then his strong condemnation of the attempt, indicating that his country’s government does not tolerate such terrorist actions that would bring a cycle of violence and counter-violence to the country, adding that Muslims are part of the population of Norway and enjoy all of their constitutional rights, and the police and security services will protect them and their mosques.

The Norwegian Crown Prince called on Muslims to “strongly interact with the community,



to show their true spirit, and not to be affected by such individual actions that do not express the Norwegian society”. He also called on them not to hesitate to inform the responsible security services when there is any similar threat in the future, and to take such threats seriously.

Members of the mosque administration and the Islamic Council in Norway welcomed the Crown Prince’s visit as a sign of support, affirming their loyalty to Norway and their eagerness to participate and interact with their surroundings. They indicated that they do not feel strangers in the community, rather they interact actively with all members, and that they are keen to explain the tolerance and moderation of Islam. They open their mosques on the official holidays of the state and welcome visitors who want to know more about the Islamic religion, and provide adequate copies of translated issues of the Holy Qur’an into Norwegian language, in addition to other books in many languages.

The worst right-wing attacks Norway has seen in its history took place in July 2011 when Anders Bering Brevik who said he feared “Islam would sweep” his country killed 77 people by blowing up a truck in front of government offices in Oslo, and shooting at a youth camp for the Labor Party on an island Utoya.



Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad and his Tafsīr Tarjuman al-Qur'an

Abdud Dayyan Mohammad Younus

Abul Kalam Azad, a prominent Islamic scholar, Mufasssir, Mufakkkhir, Journalist, Poet, and writer was born in Kidwah village in Makkah in September, 1888 and died on the 2nd of February 1958 in Delhi. He was known as Muhiuddin Azad. He was ten years old when his father came to Calcutta from Makkah in 1898. Within one year of his arrival in Calcutta his mother died, followed by his father a few years after.

Azad's education began in his residence under the supervision of his father who believed that outside influence might turn his son away from traditional ideas. Therefore, he appointed teachers to teach him at home and assisted him to memorize short books by heart following the method of teaching of Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlavi. After finishing his formal education successfully he studied various disciplines of knowledge of his own accord. In about 1900 he came into contact with the writings of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Talking about this period, Azad says:

At the time when I came in contact with the writing of Sir Sayyid Ahmad, a completely new world was opened to me... in six months I went through all the writings of Sir Sayyid and felt that I had suddenly landed in a strange, higher and loftier world. ... I was so proud of it that I looked down upon all my previous ideas and belief.

Azad was also influenced by Mawlana Nomani who gave him the responsibility for editing the *An Nadwa*. He continued with this duty from October, 1905 until March, 1906. He was the Editor of *Wakil of Omritsar* for some time and he published a weekly paper, '*Al-Hilal*' from the 13th of July, 1912. His intention was to publish a thoughtful Urdu paper. *Al-Hilal* quickly became a popular paper because of its thoughtful writing and the standard maintained but on the conviction of publishing some articles relating to the First World War the paper was closed down. On the 13th of November, 1915 *Al Hilal* was renamed *Al Balag* and a trust was set up called *Darul Irshad*. The main motto of that organization was to teach The Noble Qur'an and to spread Islam.

On the 18th March, 1916 Azad was given four days to leave the country in accordance with the defense act and after being ordered

as such, went to Karachi. As a result, *Al-Balag* and *Dar al-Irshad* were ceased. This was the desire of the British government, and within five months of arriving in Karachi, Azad's government privileges were revoked. At that time, the Independence (Khilafah) Movement was going on all over the country. In February 1920, as the President of the Bengal Provincial Khilafate conference, he gave a thoughtful speech on the Khilafate. Through that speech he inspired many Muslims towards this movement. He published a weekly news letter, '*Paigam*' for the benefit of the movement. Upon the request of the people, Azad then started taking the oaths of obedience from people as a leader as follows: (1) Doing good tasks, forbiddance from bad things, and being patient (2) Love for Allah. (3) Ignorance of all kinds of people's sayings in obeying the order of Allah, and showing bold. Contribution to all the people who gone astray (4) Following the Shariah (5) Obedience in truth. Thousands of people took the oath.

After his direct involvement in politics he was elected as the president of the All India Congress twice. After the Independence of India in 1947, he was selected as the government's Education Minister and held the post for a long time. Though he was involved in politics, he did not stop his research and wrote many books. Azad rejected *taqlid* in his writings and promoted a rationalistic approach departing from traditional beliefs and family practices. Azad faced challenges by traditionalists. Once Azad became interested in *Mutazilah* as he started reading their writings. This was because of bitter opposition of anti-*Mutazilah* forces and *Asharities*. Hence, Azad wanted to write a book on the rationalism of *Mutazilah*, however, he gave up this project later. During that time he became

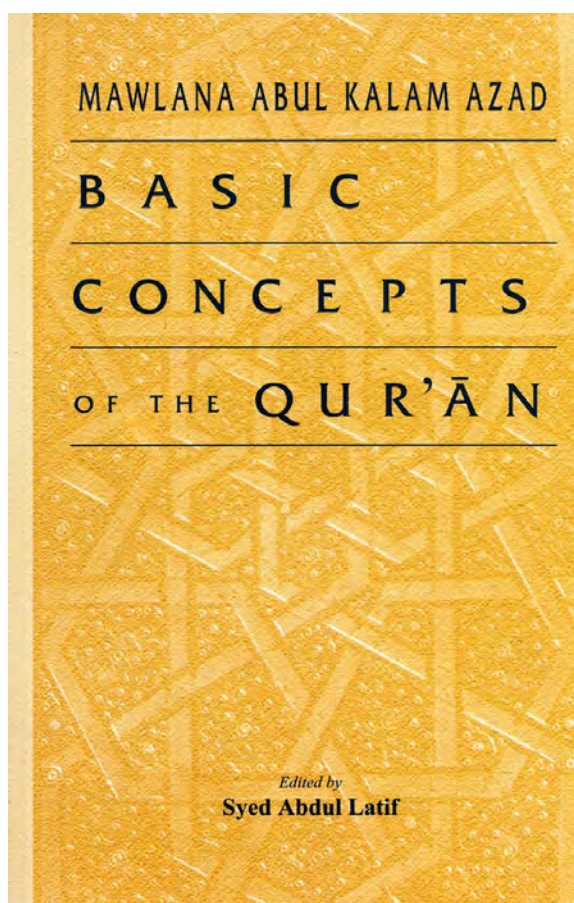
confused about the religious realities and practices. At this state of his atheism, Azad gave up the obligatory prayers. He writes about this situation:

This is the situation in which I remained from the age of 14 ‘til the age of twenty two. My external form was that of a person who wanted to combine reason and traditional religion, but inside me, in my beliefs, there was complete atheism and in practice also I failed to follow religious injunctions.

In 1908, Azad visited Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Turkey and he met the disciples of Jamal al-Din Afghani and Sheikh Muhammad Abduh. He was aware of the Pan- Islamic political, revivalist, nationalist and reformist movements in the Muslim world, and the reformist ideas of Afghani and Abduh. About the influence of Abduh and al-Manar, Azad says:

Al-Manar, because of its literary beauty as well as the subjects it discussed, was a completely new thing for me. I was not much impressed by its discussion on theological subjects as I was at that time, under the spell of the Sir Sayyid School. But its language, style and literary expression tremendously impressed me and later proved to be very useful in cultivating a real taste in me for Arabic language and literature. Al-Manar undoubtedly has claims on me.

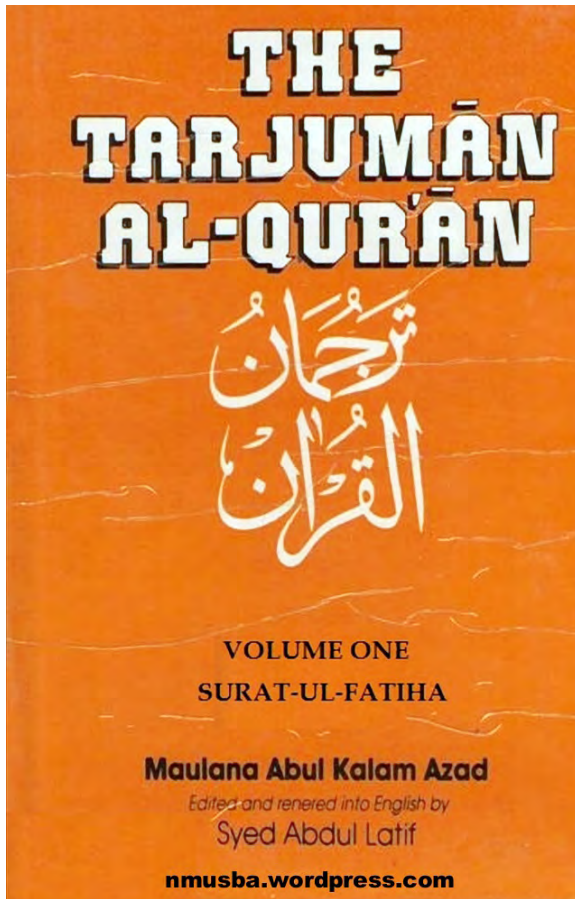
After returning to India, Azad wrote articles admiring Rashid Ridha and Abduh in relation to the social and religious awakening of the Muslim world. Abduh believed that the main cause for the backwardness present in the Muslim world was the giving up of the guidance of The Noble Qur’an and Sunnah. Azad found himself in agreement with Abduh and it was seen in his article on the problem of regeneration and reform of the Ummah. Azad echoed the ideology of al-Manar



in his al-Hilal.

Tafsīr Tarjuman al-Qur’an

The Tafsīr Tarjuman al- Qur’an is the product of Azad’s thoughts on The Noble Qur’an. Azad gives his understanding of The Noble Qur’an in this tafsīr, which is popular among the Muslim intelligentsia. Azad claims to have studied The Noble Qur’an for 27 years with serious consideration and great endeavor to unravel the meanings of every verse and every word of it. According to him, the real and fundamental teachings of The Noble Qur’an remained concealed and the scholars emphasized things other than the true The Noble Qur’anic message. Azad states his own method of interpreting The Noble Qur’an as follows:



Now, if we want to understand The Noble Qur'an in its real and original form it will be necessary for us first to remove all the veils which have been drawn over its faces because of the external influences from time to time and also from various corners, and then we should venture to find out The Noble Qur'an in the pages of The Noble Qur'an itself

Azad realized the need for presenting The Noble Qur'an in its real perspective at the time of editing Al-Hilal (1912-1914). Therefore, he made an announcement in Al-Balag in 1916 about the Tarjuman al-Qur'an and its explanatory translation of The Noble Qur'an which could be sufficient to present the original teaching of The Noble Qur'an, while the tafsir intended to be a detailed study of The Noble Qur'an. It was started in 1916 and

completed up to Surah An-Noor in 1930. The first part of the tafsir was from Surah Al-Fatiha to Surah Al-Anam and was published in Delhi in 1931. The second part was written from Surah Al-Aaraf to Surah Al-Muminun and was published in 1936. Golam Rasul published the third part of the tafsir and this was the collection of Tarjuman al-Qur'an.

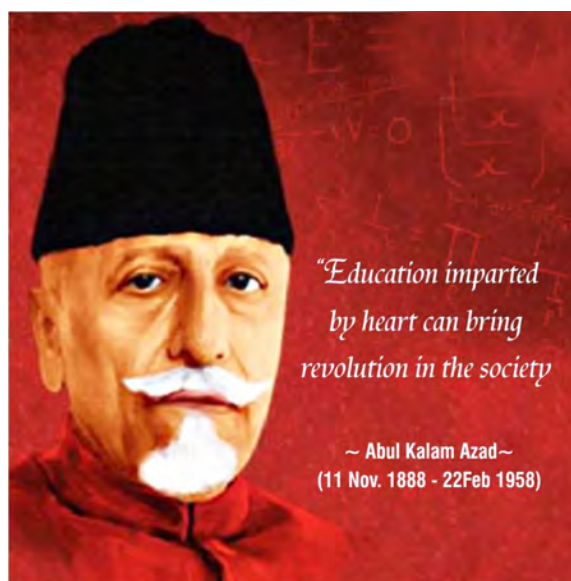
It should be noted that once in 1921, the whole manuscript of this tafsir was destroyed when he got arrested. After that, he became disheartened and lost inspiration for writing it again. However, considering the need for such a tafsir, in 1927, once again he took the initiative for writing the tafsir afresh. At the beginning of the tafsir, while discussing some basic principles of exegesis and translation, he remarked that the closer to the era of the Prophet Muhammad we are, the more we are able to understand the The Noble Qur'an. He mentioned that to ensure peace and prosperity, there is a need to abide by the guidelines of the The Noble Qur'an, which is solely applicable to all in respect of time, caste, reason, and country. The tafsir of Azad is an example of an uncompleted one.

Characteristics of the Tarjuman al-Qur'an
Azad's Tarjuman al-Qur'an closely resembles tafsir al-Manar written by Abduh and his disciple Rashid Ridha. The tafsir al-Manar and tafsir Tarjuman al-Qur'an were written by two minds cast in one, but expressed themselves in two different languages. Besides similarities between these two tafasir, in respect to certain concepts, there are different interpretations from other ancient and modern interpreters. Azad and Abduh both mentioned in their tafasir that a true understanding of the teaching of The Noble Qur'an is necessary to achieve success both here and hereafter. The Basic characteristics of this tafsir are given below:

1. The unique characteristic of Azad's interpretation is that he builds his ideas up based on the foundation of The Noble Qur'anic verses from various places in the The Noble Qur'an. The idea of the unity of the religion has been discussed in surah al-Fatiha. He rejects all religious 'groupism' on The Noble Qur'anic authority and offers a sympathetic attitude towards other religions, although this approach shocked some of his contemporary commentators. According to him, there is one religion revealed to all mankind irrespective of their race, culture and creed. Azad made a comprehensive approach in his interpretation and another remarkable feature of his understanding is his comprehensive approach towards the three principal attributes of God, which He mentioned in surah al-Fatiha and again throughout the The Noble Qur'an. These three main attributes are: Rububiya (Divine Providence), rahma (Divine Benevolence), and adala (Divine Justice). Another concept which The Noble Qur'an has mentioned in many places is the principals of wisdom and truth. Azad discussed elaborately these concepts in his tafsir.

2. This tafsir represents a reflection of Azad's intelligence as regards to literature that made his work acceptable to all persons at all stages. In his tafsir he indicates many things using only a few words. He was a linguist, so it was possible to explain each line of his tafsir condensed into a few pages.

3. Azad was accepted by readers for the exceptional style of his presentation. He translated The Noble Qur'an in such a manner that its main themes were clear to readers. With this, he gives notes through which the horizon of The Noble Qur'an is opened and readers are able to think clearly and research using Azad's tafsir. In spite of the fact that there are similarities between Azad and Ab-



duh's interpretations, Azad never took notice of linguistic aspects of The Noble Qur'anic message as Abduh did. Moreover, the tafsir al-Manar raises a number of issues that cover various aspects of the subject. On the other hand the tafsir Tarjuman al-Qur'an is brief and concise. Azad tried to remain close to the direct meaning of the The Noble Qur'anic text.

4. Azad succeeds in conquering the hearts of his readers through his use of thoughtful expression. Azad considered the invitation of The Noble Qur'an to be for all of mankind and that only the teachings of The Noble Qur'an are congruent with the nature of human beings. Through the proper utilization of words, sentences, and presentation, the standards of The Noble Qur'an are enriched. Azad did not explain anything which contradicted with the method of self-e Salehin. He emphasized the verses of The Noble Qur'an and Hadith with regards to tafsir. He was conscious enough not to make his tafsir unmanageable due to excessive hadiths, but in some places he quoted extra Hadith to resolve some questions.

5. Although Azad and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan were different in many aspects of interpretation it can be said that Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan helped Azad not to be attached to any single opinion when he discussed fiqh issues. He considered taqlid to be the main barrier to social change for the Muslims. He tried to solve the problems of society in the light of The Noble Qur'an and Sunnah. Azad's emphasis on a rejection of taqlid is in favor of using the faculty of reason in understanding the The Noble Qur'anic message. However, according to Azad, reason was not the sole judge to arbitrate between truth and falsehood. Azad had a special position as an Islamic thinker which is clearly reflected in his tafsir and was more concerned about the modern knowledge of science and technology. For example, in his tafsir of Surah Al-Muminun, he explained the different stages of humans according to the theories of science and the angels of the The Noble Qur'an. He mentioned how scientific analysis and The Noble Qur'an were similar and how it contradicts with regards to the scientific explanations of creatures of the sky, and geography. Azad believed that the basics of the development of modern science and technology were based on The Noble Qur'an. He thought that it was not possible to find out the exact truth through knowledge itself, and undoubted knowledge was found only in The Noble Qur'an. Mentioning the situation of the Arabs before The Noble Qur'anic revelation arrived, he said that the social situation of the days of darkness and its problems could not be eliminated by human intelligence alone.

6. Azad explained complex matters beautifully. For example, after narrating the history of Dhul-Qarnain in Surahh Kahaf, he correlated all other matters relevant to this, exhib-

iting his deep knowledge of history, geography, science and other subjects. He explained historical occurrences thousands of years before the Surah was revealed, eliminating misconceptions. Azad and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan had both used historical material and had applied the principle of reasonable conjecture for explaining the Dhul-Qarnain.

7. The methods of solving the various problems of the present time that it offers have given this tafsir a special acceptability. Azad tried to understand The Noble Qur'an in its original form. His attempt to discover the real meaning of The Noble Qur'an is remarkable. According to Azad, the strength of The Noble Qur'anic meaning lies in the manner of its presentation, which is the key to the correct understanding of The Noble Qur'an, without which, the true picture of it is lost to sight. Azad completed his tafsir in a new style and gave solutions to the different problems of everyday life. He mentioned the real spirit of obedience and indicated the real history behind different matters. His linguistic knowledge and standard of literacy was of a very high standard. So, to understand the tafsir properly, readers have to carefully ponder its themes.

8. Azad emphasized The Noble Qur'anic appeal to the use of reason to arrive at the truth of its message. According to him, there is no single chapter in The Noble Qur'an wherein it has not made an earnest appeal to man to reflect upon everything, therefore, the people should reflect and should use their reason and insight to grasp the reality of the message of The Noble Qur'an.

9. Azad concludes his tafsir with his views of social change, particularly the natural law of gradual change. According to him, this law is operating, not only in the physical world, but it is also effective in the social world.



Impact of ICT on Teaching and Learning of Arabic Language in Nigeria

By Dr. Busari Kamorudeen

Information and communication technology)ICT(has become an absolute requisite for both learners and teachers in diverse fields and disciplines in Nigeria. The ardent desire of many in this contemporary age is assisted by internet facilities to the extent that ICT is advancing step by step and pushing aside the traditional library from our educational landscape.



This article is therefore an attempt to examine the impact of ICT on the teaching and learning of Arabic language and the precautionary measures of teachers and learners of Arabic to meet these challenges of new technology.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is as follows:

- a) Emphasizing the significance of Information and communication technology in the teaching and learning of Arabic
- b) An observation of how ICT enhances students' performance in Arabic
- c) An examination of the trend among teachers and learners of Arabic in respect of the use of internet facilities

d) Establishing the merit and demerits of using a computer based method in the teaching and learning of Arabic

In this article we use some key terms which we should define for proper understanding. The terms include: Language, Information and communication technology, Library and teaching.

LANGUAGE

Language has been defined by Advanced English Dictionary [2003] as a systematic means of communicating by the use of sounds or conventional symbols. Language could be regarded as a vehicle through which feelings and thoughts are expressed. It is therefore not surprising that the national policy on Education in Nigeria encourages the teaching of one's mother tongue which is described as L1, in the primary and secondary levels. Also English language is to be taught together with the mother tongue as the second language L2 while French is regarded as a core subject in the interest of neighborliness

From the above it is clear that Arabic is only an elective course which can be taken or dropped by the pupils. This government lukewarm attitude and religious undercurrent associated with Arabic does not in any way recognize the relevance of the language to the Nigerian society. This is regrettable as this unaccepted position was worsened by making French a core subject and taken as a second official language in Nigeria. This is clearly stated by the policy. It asserts:

“For the smooth interaction with our neighbors, it is desirable for every Nigerian to speak French. Accordingly, French shall be the second official language in Nigeria, and it shall be compulsory in schools”.

While this writer is not and cannot be opposed



to this policy, its implication on the learning of Arabic at least for Muslim children in Nigeria leaves much to be desired. How is it going to be practicable for a Muslim child to learn Arabic for religious necessity and French as a curricular requirement in addition to a Nigerian language and of course, English which is the national language? The multiplicity of language to be learnt by pupils, no matter the status given to any one of them is not only psychologically confusing, but also practically unrealizable. The performance of Nigerian children in English language in the National Examination is very horrifying and astonishing, not to talk of other foreign languages with little or no attention.

With little or no recognition of Arabic in the scheme of Education, which portends danger for the Muslim children, experts in the field of Arabic have been coming up with introduction of several reforms, suggestions and recommendations aimed at playing down the factors responsible for poor Academic per-

formance of students in Arabic. Both individuals and institutions have introduced several reforms in an attempt to proffer solution to the above mentioned challenge facing the teaching and learning of Arabic in Nigeria.

These are also some other factors that are responsible for the abysmal performance which include: inadequate teaching materials to loaded teaching objectives, lukewarm attitude of parents, government and students to the language, inefficient and inadequate man power and more importantly the outdated classical methodology of teaching.

TEACHING

Teaching has been defined as a process of human development through activities designed to produce educated person. Teaching therefore involves activities that include learning and carried out between the learners and teaching materials in order to get the learner really educated. Thus the classroom teaching can be compared to communication process where someone gives and the other

receives. The teacher is therefore the fountain of Knowledge from who the students are waiting to be fed with acquisition of Knowledge.

Teaching in its generic sense is thus a system of action intended to include learning or what occurs when teachers by virtue of their institutional activities succeed wholly or in part in enabling pupils to learn [Ayo Dada 1999.]

Teaching is therefore aimed at providing suitable learning experience that will help the learner to interact properly and appropriately with the subject matter in order to attain desired effective learning. The actualization of this goal then depends on some factors. These include the quality of teachers, availability of necessary textbooks, provision of institutional materials, students' attitude to the course and other environmental influence

which include government attitude to a specific subject.

LIBRARY

Library according to Hornby [2000:682] is a building in which collections of books, newspapers, tapes etc are kept for people to study, read or borrow. Library therefore harbor a collection of books and other materials, a collection of literary documents kept for reference or borrowing

Some years ago, researchers, academics and scholars who intend to break the frontier of knowledge and discover recent version of civilization used to resort to the use of library as a reliable and convenient source of obtaining data. Thus library serves as the location for storage and preservation of all published documents such as journals, books, newspapers, magazines etc.





INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology [ICT] has been defined severally by many scholars for example [Morris 1992] defines it as the use of computers and telecommunication gadgets for processing and distribution of information in digital, audio, video, and other forms.

Also, Olagunju [2003] states that these electronic systems can be used for broadcasting communication and all forms of computer based communication. ICT centered education covers the use of computers, online self-learning packages, satellites, radio, optical fiber technology i.e Tele presence systems and all types of information technology, software and hardware[Lillian Rita Akindolu 2002, Adebayo 2002, Olagunju 2003]

Information and communication technology

has been a device to capture, process, store and produce knowledge at a speed never imagined or expected. It can be regarded as a key tool in the realization of effectiveness in classroom teaching and learning. Hence it is having a revolutionary impact on educational methodology globally and increase motivation in thinking and writing skills. Internet has become a good tutor which has provided opportunities for Arabic teachers and learners that we had before and serves as a good companion for modern users of Arabic [Oloyede 2009]. The improvement brought about by ICT in the teaching and learning cannot be over emphasized because it provides save environment for both language teachers and learners. Aside from the fact that ICT researchers and learners, through the use of Arabic software which can be used for self-development, it also offers various technologies that can be annexed across the planet earth.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For effective teaching and learning of Arabic in a robust environment for research activities, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

- i. Students of Arabic should be exposed to the modern technological challenges.
- ii. Scholars in the twin discipline of Arabic and Islamic studies should explore the world of ICT in order to broaden their academic horizon.
- iii. There should be collaborative effort from non-governmental organizations in the provisions of internet facilities in all academic activities
- iv. Government should provide internet facilities to teach Arabic in our institutions of learning especially tertiary institutions.
- v. Library should be computerized in order to gain online advantage and thereby reduce time spent in the library.

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Significance of World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development



Makkah - MWL

Last May, the world marked the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development on 21 May. This event, which is marked every year on 21 May, celebrates not only the richness of the world's cultures, but also the essential role of intercultural dialogue for achieving peace and sustainable development. The United Nations General Assembly first declared this World Day in 2002, following UNESCO's adoption of the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, recognizing the need to "enhance the potential of culture as a means of achieving prosperity, sustainable development and global peaceful coexistence."

The message of the World Day for Cultural

Diversity for Dialogue and Development is important: Promote culture and highlight the significance of its diversity as an agent of inclusion and positive change. It represents an opportunity to celebrate culture's manifold forms, from the tangible and intangible, to creative industries, to the diversity of cultural expressions, and to reflect on how these contribute to dialogue, mutual understanding, and the social, environmental and economic vectors of sustainable development.

It is also an opportunity for people of all cultures and diverse backgrounds and religions to deepen their understanding of the values of cultural diversity and be more tolerant and respectful of each other and the different values systems and traditions held by the other. The event emphasizes the importance to avoid misunderstanding and hatred that can lead to nothing but conflict. According to UNESCO statistics report, three-quarters of the world's major conflicts have a cultural dimension.

UNESCO defines culture as, 'the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs' (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity).

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