

THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE *Journal*

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No.3

**Royal Step to
Guard Sunnah
From Misuse**

Geneva hosts global Muslim World League gathering



Letter From the Editor

The peace of certain societies is that of all ones

There are some individuals who, of course, adopt in our contemporary era ideas that have largely and enthusiastically glorified power and consequently decided that war is the origin of human life; and that all countries with their respective population have to utilize their energies and sources in the preparation for it lest they would eventually be destroyed by evil forces. Furthermore, adherents of such strange ideas contend that he who sincerely hopes for peace is either an individual, who has no ability to effectively wage a war or an illusionist who lives only in the world of dreams.

Fortunately, the leaders of human thought, even at the secular framework, are not on the same level as favoring and glorifying war. Some of these leaders are good and called for peace and harmony. Others have adopted a different ambitious course by developing complementary philosophical projects for the establishment of peace at the different parts of the world, and hence gave people hope that peace can be achieved.

However, Allah Almighty has protected those who truly followed His religion from these aggressive ideas. Furthermore, religions have given human hope for achieving peace and stability; and that such peace is neither a confused medley of dreams nor a mirage in a lowland.

A renewed opportunity for reviving the meaning of peace and harmony has properly presented itself at the Forum on (the Role of Followers of Religions in Enhancing Peace and Harmony) which was held in Geneva under the patronage of the Muslim World League with an effective participation of an elite of prominent thinkers, ideologists, writers, diplomats and those interested in promoting cultural interaction and contact as well as civilized and interreligious dialogue.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League H.E. Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, has delivered at the inaugural session of the meeting a comprehensive speech in which he clarified the reality of Islam, encouraged people to fight extremist and terrorist ideologies, urged them both to enhance religious and ideological awareness of the Muslim minorities as well as communicate with all for disseminating the values of tolerance, moderation and peace.

Likewise, His Excellency the Secretary-General urged the followers of religions and cultures to combat exclusionary presentations and hatred theories such as Islamophobia, which is now considered the first resistant to the efforts of

fighting extremism and represents a strong obstacle to the positive integration of Muslim minorities, laying the blame for this matter on the bets of personal interests pertaining to certain political competitions.

The speeches of the participants have come to cement the principle of tolerance among religions, stressing peace, coexistence and distance from force or coercion, together with supporting as well as enhancing the culture of respecting and protecting all religions as well as urging those concerned to inculcate this particular culture in the minds of young generations so that they can be brought up professing love and peace.

The Forum concluded its deliberations with a call on raising a new global slogan titled “The peace of certain societies is the peace (that) of all societies (ones)”. This is founded on the fact that the world has become closely interconnected as any harm and corruption on any of its part affects immediately and swiftly the approximate and far sites. It warned that any failure in the application of the values of justice, freedom, tolerance, and peace among different religions and cultures will create a possible nucleus for either an extremist ideology or a terrorist crime; and that non-support for the oppressed will have serious consequences.

In its recommendations, the Forum demanded to intensify Islamic meetings with scholars of other religions to study outstanding issues and problems; and form common concepts and ground around them; an attempt to secure liberation from the effects of the historical conflict among their followers. This is intended to disseminate the culture of peace and understanding as well as desist from promoting the culture of violence, hatred, exclusion, and non-poisoning of the media space by broadcasting harmful materials or speeches that do nothing but only fuel religious, sectarian and intellectual conflicts.

The participants have stressed the significance of cooperation and coordination among the major religious institutions in the world with a view to interacting with political, cultural and social decision-makers to help high and common religious and ethical values and principles establish themselves firmly.

In conclusion, the Forum extend profound thank and appreciation for the Muslim World League for the efforts made by in raising the awareness of Muslim minorities, in enhancing their positive integration programs in their respective societies and in extending bridges of cultural interaction with all of them.



The Muslim World League *Journal*

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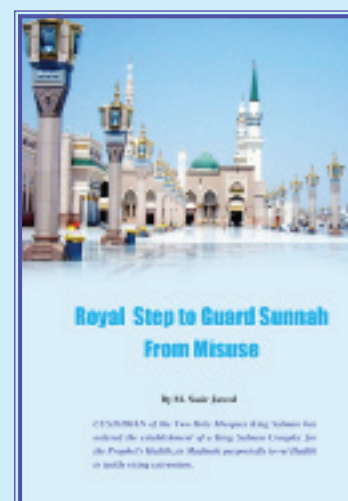
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Geneva hosts global Muslim World League gathering

Muhammad Zakir Hossain

The Muslim World League (MWL) organized a forum on “Role of Followers of Religions in Promoting Peace and Harmony”. was held in Geneva - Switzerland on Tuesday (18/14 / 1439H corresponding to 7 November 2017).

The forum was addressed by MWL Secretary- General Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and attended by a group of leading thinkers, writers, diplomats and concerned parties.

The forum, widely covered by media, stressed the importance of the MWL introducing the true religion of Islam and Islamic culture to the world.

In his opening speech, Dr. Al-Issa said that the MWL is an umbrella organization of all Muslims that is concerned with spreading the truth of Islam, fighting extremist and terrorist ideas, enhancing religious awareness among Islamic minorities, and promoting the values of moderation, tolerance and peace.

Saudi Arabia has become an international platform to fight extremist and terrorist ideas

Dr. Al-Issa stressed the importance of looking to the world with greater optimism and hope, and exerting joint efforts to reinforce peace and harmony. He noted that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has become an international platform to fight extremist and terrorist ideas.

He added that extremism must be fought also in the wide cyberspace. Followers of all religions and cultures must resist hateful theories such as Islamophobia, which is currently considered the main obstacle before efforts to combat extremism and the integration of Muslim minorities. He also blamed media provocations and online instigators that spread extremist ideas, crossing borders without visas and work permits.

Extremists work only in a vacuum and exploit religious sentiments to polarize people

Dr. Al-Issa showed the participants some examples of weak extremist arguments that are far away from the facts. Extremists work only in a vacuum and exploit religious sentiments to polarize people. The religious sentiments have become their last hope following their recent defeats. They tend to ignite and stir religious emotions in the wake of widespread Islamophobia that seeks to target Islam as a religion rather than the extremists who fight Islamic moderation. This is unfortunate since it only serves extremism and terrorism. Only one in 200,000 people were extremists, and this would decline with the ongoing anti-extremism efforts and endeavors to overcome the challenges with God's help, he said.

Al-Issa blamed personal ambition and political competition regardless of facts and true conscience for arriving at this situation.

On the other hand, Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, the Vatican's Permanent Observer in the UN in Geneva, said that the right way to achieve real peace was through religious tolerance, stressing that peace and tolerance should be far from force or coercion, and that the promotion of the culture of respect for all



religions is important to have peace-loving generations.

Reverend Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, talked about the concept of the Abrahamic family and the establishment of peaceful coexistence.

Dr. Tveit stressed that members of the Abrahamic family believe in one God who created humans to live together. "We are here today to share these ideas and display together what our belief means in real practice," he added.

Next, Dr. Fawzia Al-Ashmawi, the professor at the University of Geneva, noted that Jews, Christians and Muslims share a common origin and one founding forefather: Abraham. She stressed that followers of the three religions share this belief. Moreover, she said, Islam considers Jews and Christians as "People of the Book," recognizes the Torah and Bible as Holy Books, believes in Moses and Jesus as prophets of God who have outstanding positions in the Qur'an,





and calls the mother of Jesus Virgin Mary.

Al-Ashmawi stressed the importance of looking for commonalities among the three religions and promoting dialogue in order to live in peace.

The first common point shared by the three religions, she said, is that the three Holy Books have common elements which tackle issues of the hereafter, such as resurrection, reckoning, apocalypse, paradise and hell, among other things.

Al-Ashmawi noted that followers of the three religions should always hold fruitful dialogues on the basis of reaching a common approach.

In the forum's second session, Michele John talked about the issue of religion against extremism and terrorism.

John said that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

violence, in all shapes and forms, must be condemned



He also stressed that violence, in all shapes and forms, must be condemned, and cited the Italian author Castiglione, who stood against terrorism and is considered one of the founders of peace among religions.

John condemned the actions of groups which conduct violent acts against Muslims in Myanmar.

The forum called for intensifying Islamic meetings with other religious scholars to study outstanding issues and problems, form common concepts around them, and free themselves from the effects of historical conflict among their followers. The aim is to spread the culture of peace and understanding and reject the culture of violence and hatred.

The participants stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination among the world's major religious institutions and to communicate with political, cultural and social decision-makers to reinforce higher, religious and ethical values.

The participants also emphasized the need to recognize the possibility of coexistence and meetings among various religions and cultures in spite of deep differences. They also stressed the importance of bridging the gaps among different religions and working with political and social organizations in this regard. They called for organizing more such events to spread the word of coexistence and tolerance. The gathering also called for helping refugees, homeless people, and victims of wars.

Peace for some communities is peace for all communities

The forum concluded its sessions by calling for a new international global motto: "Peace for some communities is peace for all communities," based on the fact that the whole world has become so interconnected that the corruption of one part would necessarily extend to spoil the other parts as well. The forum warned that complacency in promoting justice, freedom, tolerance and peace among all religions and cultures would probably form a basis for an extreme idea or terrorist crime.

The forum called in its recommendations for intensifying the meetings between Muslim scholars and scholars from other faiths in order to discuss outstanding issues and problems and form common concepts about them.

The forum also stressed the importance of getting rid of the effects of the historical conflicts to promote peace and mutual understanding and reject the culture of violence and exclusion.

International Symposium on The Role of Religions in Enhancing World Peace

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon His sincere and faithful messenger, and after:

The International Symposium on “The Role of the IAN in the Promotion of World Peace”, held by the Muslim World League in Geneva, Switzerland, was concluded on Tuesday 18 Safar 1439 , corresponding to (7 November 2017), with the participation of distinguished elite of academics, researchers as well as prominent leaders of religious, political and social activities in Europe.

The Symposium was inaugurated by the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League HE Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, who wholeheartedly welcomed the guests and participants of the Symposium, stressing that the very concept peace occupies the central status in Islam. He added that peace meanings in Islamic Shari’ah (Islamic Law) are genuine because they are considered deeply rooted in the hearts of majority of Muslims, who both commit themselves to its rules based on the correct and pure comprehension of

Islam in its original and moderate dimension, as well as keep away from the various types of impact of political maneuvers and changing circumstances that are unduly experienced by the Muslim Nation.

His Excellency expressed that the Muslim World League, which enjoys the qualitative weight and broad relations with the Muslim peoples and institutions, gives due concern to its the active interaction with the whole world, extend the bridges of cooperation and positive coexistence with the members of the international community. The League’s aim behind this is to strive to disseminate peace and achieve noble humanitarian, value and norms as well as confront all negative and destructive projects that promote conflict, extremism, and hatred. Likewise, his Excellency emphasized the pioneering role the Muslim Ummah (nation) played throughout its history in spreading noble values and said, “ The Muslim Ummah is able today to present more humanitarian and ethical enrichment for inhabiting the earth and deterring away corruption from it within the framework of global strategic





partnerships that are created with the world charity powers with which it shares the same principles. This complies with what Allah says in this verse (And cooperate in piety and righteousness and do not cooperate in sin and aggression) Qur'an([5: 2].

The distinguished participants have commended the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its pivotal role in enhancing peace, combating extremism and terrorism, as well as incessant strive to address the various Arab, Islamic and international issues and its support for the just causes, via taking advantage of the confidence and good reputation enjoyed by the said country at Islamic and international levels. Moreover, the participants have applauded the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud for the inception of King Salman World Peace Centre in Kuala Lumpur. They considered the Centre a new beacon for world peace because it is hopefully anticipated to achieve man's safety and preserve his dignity without racial, religious or any other type of discrimination.

The participants presented their research papers on the under mentioned topics of the Symposium:

- The Abrahamic family and the establishment of the values of coexistence and tolerance.
- Religions in the face of extremism and terrorism.
- The need for communities for peace.

The Symposium discussed the various ways of activating the role of the divine religions in enhancing peace across the world, and stressed the following:

- 1 - The divine religions – with their teachings and scholars- possess a notable ability in creating a positive influence in societies; and that ethical and life requirements make it imperative upon their followers to cooperate among themselves and exploit common

denominators and mutual interests.

- 2-Religion has not been the cause of most of the conflicts that our world witnessed. For, religions call for tolerant values, a just life, but the wars of our world are often due to the apparent retreat of religious values, the weakness of the influence of religious institutions on public life, the dominance of material life and temporary personal selfish interests.
3. Dialogue is the most optimum way that we have to pursue to address differences, to reduce social imbalances, to disseminate the culture of tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. This is expected to help move towards alleviating the conflicts escalating at the different parts of the world and to formulate serious projects that enhance world peace, and achieve positive communication as well as mutual understanding among the different components.
- 4 – It is a moral duty and required necessity to fairly protect Islam and its institutions against the distortion they are subjected to at the hands of the extremist groups on both sides of the crisis. For, fighting terrorism and violence should not be pursued with staging conflict with Islam, disseminating the culture of intimidation and promoting Islamophobia, and linking it (Islam) to the crimes of terrorism. The unfortunate adoption of such attitude contradicts the actual situation and is considered flagrant injustice and violation as well as conspicuous aggression on the Muslim Ummah, its civilization, components and condemnation of one and a half billion Muslims with a crime that was perpetrated by a defecting handful of people that is falsely and ignorantly affiliated to Islam.
5. Combating terrorism can be effective only when it is carried out in cooperation with Islamic countries and their respective scholars and institutions, as well as with the due removal of the causes of terrorism.



The most important causes comprise the prejudice to which certain Muslims are exposed in addressing their issues: and silence over the policies of starvation, besiege, destruction and killing imposed on certain Muslim peoples; as well as achieving due equilibrium in justice administration; and lifting of injustice from vulnerable peoples at large.

6. Islam is a message of peace and a religion of mercy for all mankind. It includes universal humanitarian principles that are capable of pleasing man, achieving his aspirations, solving his problems. Therefore, Muslims today are called upon to apply and practically achieve these principles via due interaction with others to establish a world that is dominant with justice, peace, and compassion. Additionally, this helps Muslims open a new page in the positive civilizational relations among nations and peoples on the basis of mutual respect, cooperation in inhabiting the earth and in achieving security and dignity of man.
- 7 – Muslim take pride in the experience of cultural coexistence among the followers of multiple religions in many Islamic and international societies. Furthermore, the enrichment achieved by the said experience necessitates that we should preserve its gains, seek to develop it, and benefit from it in the formulation of more positive relations among the Muslim nation and the rest of the world, and to circulate to among the communities that suffer the scourge of violence against other religious and ethnic minorities.

Recommendations:

The participants concluded with a number of recommendations that called for:

- To launch a new global slogan entitled “The peace of certain societies is peace of all societies”. The world has become closely interconnected as any harm and corruption on any of its part affect immediately and swiftly the approximate and far sites. It is not ben-

eficial at all to practice bias in the application of the values of justice, freedom, tolerance, peace, and discrimination against different religions and cultures. Likewise, it has to reckon that any oppressed who fails to find due support will be a potentially possible nucleus for either an extremist ideology or a terrorist crime.

- To intensify Islamic meetings with scholars of other religions to study outstanding issues and problems; and form common concepts and ground around them, and attempt to liberate from the effects of the historical conflict among their followers.
- To disseminate the culture of peace and understanding as well as refusal to promote a culture of violence and hatred, and non-poisoning of the media space by broadcasting harmful materials or speeches that fuel religious, sectarian and intellectual conflicts.
- To achieve cooperation and coordination among the major religious institutions in the world with a view to interacting with political, cultural and social decision-makers to help high and common religious and ethical values and principles establish themselves firmly.
- To accept the possibility of coexistence and convergence among different religions and cultures despite the remarkable depth of difference, and not allow such difference to be unfortunately exploited or exploded socially through nominal disagreements and sheer historical shades.
- To work with political, social and juridical and human rights activists for the respect of the religious or cultural specialties of the minorities and the majorities. Minorities are particularly called upon them to contribute to the renaissance of their respective countries. They should further be a model of true citizenship by observing good dealing, coexistence, and tolerance; and by serving to be a source of cultural and academic radiation in their countries; and finally by demanding them to keep away from the calls of terrorism, hatred, provocation and cessation tendencies.
- To render cash and in-kind assistance to refugees, the displaced persons, and victims of wars and conflicts; as well as contribute to alleviating their suffering by positive containing so that they can overcome their plight peacefully without being lured by misleading ideological deviations or intellectually snatched by terrorist groups.

Allah grants success and guides to the straight path.



MWL Secretary General lauds Saudi Arabia for opposition to extremism

The Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (MWL), Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, said that Saudi Arabia has established itself as “an international platform to fight extremist ideas” and that the Kingdom has put into place “strong and effective procedures” to prevent the funding of terrorism.

Al-Issa — was speaking to a high-level diplomatic delegation from Belgium headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Derek Ashton, in the presence of Belgian Ambassador to the Kingdom, Geert Criel.

Al-Issa briefed the delegation on the MWL’s own efforts to combat extremism, support moderation and strengthen cultural ties among people, stressing the League’s adoption of programs that promote civilized communication between the Islamic World and those with different political, religious, intellectual and cultural views, in accordance with its new vision.

He described the League as “a global umbrella

for Islamic people that promotes the principles and values of peace, forgiveness, co-existence, and humanitarian cooperation.”

Al-Issa discussed June’s meeting in Makkah — organized by the MWL — of Islamic community leaders from around the world. The historic meeting, he said, resulted in an important report ascertaining that the League promotes religious, intellectual and cultural awareness and positive integration among Muslim minorities, and rejects extremism.

Al-Issa explained that while terrorists and extremists come from different intellectual and religious backgrounds, and some have no link to religion at all, they have unfortunately chosen Islam to be “the umbrella for their crimes that have nothing to do with religion.”

For his part, the Belgian deputy foreign minister praised the League’s new vision, its transparent approach and its efforts to support cultural integration programs.

MWL supports the Arab League Statement: Iran, driven by an ideology of hate and extremism

Makkah

The Muslim World League has supported the statement issued by the ministerial meeting of Foreign Ministers of Arab League pertaining to Iran's meddling in internal affairs of the countries in the region. It has further stated that the acts of terrorism perpetrated by the Iranian axis of evil through the deployment of groups in countries that it interferes for committing a series of subversive crimes and spreading the sectarian strife constituted a threat to the region as a whole.

The Muslim World League called on the Arab League to continue its firm stance by addressing the United Nations to rapidly intervene by imposing deterrent sanctions on the Iranian regime, which has violated international agreements, conventions and principles which provide for the respect of the sovereignty of States and non-

interference in their affairs.

It has shown that the Iranian axis of evil with its hostile crimes within the region through its support for the sectarian agents of the Houthi militia, and the pseudo Hezbollah, particularly providing them with ballistic missiles, exposes to the world the true face of Iran in continuing to spread organized terrorism. The statement further explained that Iran, driven by an ideology of hate and extremism, has become an international worrisome source of trouble, raising the slogan of death and destruction to all who stand in the way of its sectarian project.

At the end of the statement, the Muslim World League emphasizes that the world is faced with the evidence of Iran's conspicuous intervention and flagrant violations in every region it treads. Its terrorist tide to which it has made all criminal methods available must be stopped.

Rabita Roundup



In a lengthy talk HE the MWL's SG met with high ranking German delegation of government, intellectual & media institutions leaders.



HE the MWL's S.G. received in his Makkah's office, HE Mr. Mubarraaz Qurbanly, Azerbaijan's Religious Authority President



His Excellency the MWL's SG received at his Makkah Office HE Sheikh Muhammad Hafiz Annahawi, the Mauritanian Cultural Society President.



His Excellency the S.G. received in his Riyadh Office His Eminence Sheikh Naji Allouche a scholar from Lebanon.



His Excellency the Secretary-General received at his Riyadh Office a high ranking Belgian delegation comprising several government agencies.



HE the MWL's Secretary-General visits the WCC headquarters in Geneva.



Royal Step to Guard Sunnah from Misuse

By M. Nasir Jawed

CUSTODIAN of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman has ordered the establishment of a King Salman Complex for the Prophet's Hadith, in Madinah purportedly to vet Hadith to tackle rising extremism.

The unprecedented decision has been taken to deter extremists to use the Prophet's tradition and sayings to justify violence or terrorism.

Hadith are sayings, actions or habits of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that are used by Muslim scholars, including preachers and jurists, to support teachings and edicts on all aspects of life, hence a source of guidance for Muslims. Muslims believe the Prophet's Sunnah is the second source of "Islamic legislation" after the Qur'an – presenting them with guidance on how they should lead their lives.

According to the Culture and Information Ministry, the center will become a "trusted source of the correct and authenticate Hadith". Describing the move as an "unprecedented initiative", the ministry said the scholars would study Hadith "with the purpose of eliminating fake and extremist texts and any texts that contradict the teachings of Islam and justify the committing of crimes, murders and terrorist acts which have no place in Islam, the religion of peace."

It will serve Islam by creating «a solid scientific reference to the vet and verify the authenticity of the Hadiths," which are second in importance only to the Qur'an in Islam.

Academic Council

An academic council, comprising a group of erudite scholars and experts on the Prophet's Hadith, will be formed in Madinah to oversee the work.

King Salman has appointed Sheikh Muhammad bin Hassan Al-Asheikh as chairman of the complex's scientific council. Members are to be appointed by royal decree. Al-Sheikh is a member of the Council of Senior Scholars, which serves as Saudi Arabia's highest religious body.

A welcome decision

The Muslim World League (MWL) has applauded King Salman for establishing the premium center for Hadith.

MWL Secretary-General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa said the project is signif-

icant as it will be tasked to spruce up the canon of Hadith through a properly managed institution.

Underlining its importance, the MWL chief said the need of the work was felt in the face of prevailing ignorance, limited understanding of Islam and the rising tide of extremism.

Such partial understanding, he said, constitutes an evident threat in the area where Islamic studies either suffer from a vacuum or negative conflict, especially when they are penetrated by non-Islamic concepts. Likewise, the importance of unifying the efforts of these relevant studies and the strength of their support, particularly as all look eagerly forward to the complex to perform this task in the best possible manner.

The decision is an apt response to combat ignorance of the Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) as also to check adulteration in both the narration and body composition of the canon.

Dr. Al-Issa said extremism in its undesirable exploitation strives hard, as led by the motive of apparent academic superficiality and misleading ideology, to justify its mistakes and deviation tendencies via relying on certain texts it considers Islamic in terms of «text body and significance.»

Dr. Al-Issa underlined that this complex is augmented, with due profound appreciation by Muslims, to the invaluable works by King Salman for serving Islam and Muslims with a view to securing a proper intellectual guard for the Shariah sciences against such erroneous activities.

Extremist groups such as Daesh and Al-Qaeda have used interpretations of Hadiths, numbered in the thousands and pored over by scholars for centuries, to justify violence and to urge supporters to carry out attacks.

A clarion call

Calling it an important matter, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Asheikh urged the world scholars for their "full cooperation to the complex."

The grand mufti, who is also the president of

the Council of Senior Scholars, said the complex would be a solid scientific edifice that is concerned with the sciences of Prophet's Tradition, which is free from any deviation.

He called upon the universities in the Muslim world, including those in the Kingdom to cooperate with the complex and communicate with it through its faculties and specialized departments.

The scientific council of the complex is set to monitor interpretations of the Prophet's teachings to prevent them being used to justify violence or terrorism, the ministry noted.

Madinah Governor Prince Faisal bin Salman
Prince Faisal bin Salman Governor of Madinah Region said the decision to establish the Hadith institute would have great cultural and academic impact on the Islamic Nation as a whole.

The general secretariat of the Council of Senior Scholars lauded the King's initiative to set up a comprehensive Hadith complex in Madinah.

"This royal order comes as a continuation of the services being rendered by this blessed nation in serving the Shariah and its sources. It also meets the long-standing demand from Hadith experts to have a complex for it similar to the King Fahd Complex for the Holy Qur'an," said Fahd Al-Majed, Secretary-General of the Council.

Sheikh Abdurahman Al-Sudais, head of the Presidency for the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques, said the complex would be instrumental in the effective use of the Hadith.

Underlining the importance of Hadith, Al-Sudais said it is the second source of Shariah in addressing the issues facing Muslims in the contemporary world as well as to resolve their differences and disputes on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Sheikh Abdurahman Al-Sanad, Head of the Commission for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, said the project would help launch huge academic projects in serving the Prophet's Sunnah and enable Muslims all over the world to take advantage of them.

The president of the Islamic University of Madinah, Hatim Al-Marzouqi, said the complex aims at taking proper care of the Shari'ah and consolidate its sciences on its straight path.

The President of Taibah University Abdulaziz Al-Sarrani said the proposed institution is set to play a key role in serving Islam and Muslims around the world, in addition to preventing any misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the Prophet's traditions.

The Secretary-General of the International Organization for the Qur'an and the Sunnah, Abdullah Basfar, said the center would be a beacon of knowledge and reference for Muslims in all parts of the world.

Conclusion

The rising tide of religious extremism globally – helped by a wider use of social media – has taken its toll on the normal social behavior of the people of all faiths in the streets of London to Cairo.

If Muslim worshippers going to mosques are being attacked in several cities in Europe, there have been incidents of Christians being targeted in Egypt and Tunisia.

Worse, the agents of hatred and the perpetrators of violence cite their respective scriptures – mostly fake or fabricated – to justify violence and killings of fellow human beings.

King Salman in this regard has taken an initiative, which deserves global attention. The issue is not only important but seeks redress on an international level if the scourge of hatred and violence has to be checked and nipped in the bud.

Saudi Arabia's approach to religious doctrine is significant because of its symbolic position as the birthplace of Islam.

We have seen our senior clergy in the Kingdom often denouncing militant doctrines.

Jane Kinninmont, a senior research fellow at Chatham House, said: "The new leadership in Saudi cares ... is genuinely trying to get to grips with extremism."

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. in
Arthur Balfour

The Balfour Declaration: Birth, Delivery and Labor

By Ahmed Kamal El-Din Izzeddin

In 1875, at the age of seven, the later Zionist, naturalist and philanthropist Lionel Walter Rothschild (1868 – 1937), who also became a trustee of the British Museum, decided to have a museum of his own. About 50 years later, he opened a public museum at Tring in Hertfordshire, UK, which housed a huge collection of natural life artifacts.

But Lord Rothschild, president of the British Zionist Federation, was to be globally known most for another event of far more impact in the history of the Middle East and the world at large. He was both co-author and prime recipient of the November 2nd, 1917 letter addressed to him by the Scottish statesman and then British foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930), on behalf of his government. The letter, delivered to Lord Rothschild by hand to his London home at 148 Piccadilly in London, declared “sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations” towards “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”, and that the British government “will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object”. Lord Rothschild was requested to bring the declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation. Besides Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, other authors of the declaration letter include Walter Rothschild himself, Leo Amery, and Lord Milner.

An important understanding included in the text of the Balfour Declaration, as it came to be known, is that in the process of establishing such home for the Jews, “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country”. However, the most turbulent and yet unsettled part of the 100-year promise is the issue of rights and peace in Palestine, with intermittent wars and peace efforts that fail to guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people who have been jeopardized by the implementation of the Balfour Declaration.

The Council of the League of Nations confirmed the Mandate for Palestine (“until such time as [it is] able to stand alone”) on 24 July 1922, and its supplement (the Trans-Jordan Memorandum) on 16 September 1922, but it came into force on 29 September 1923. It terminated on 14 May 1948, the day a State of Israel was created, after Resolution 181 on future government of Palestine was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 29 November 1947.

The Jewish home-to-be was therefore assigned to Britain for handing over the future concierge. It was envisaged, however, by the British War Cabinet Meeting No. 261 (Minute No. 12, dated 31 October 1917), that such a handover “... did not necessarily involve the early establishment of an independent Jewish State, which was a matter for gradual development in accordance with the ordinary laws of political evolution”. Indeed, the process took some three decades

and beyond, as full and comprehensive peace is yet to be negotiated and mutually agreed for a sustained nonviolent coexistence in the region.

It is worth mentioning that the British Jewish rapprochement did not only involve pure politics and diplomacy. Science had its part too. Acetone, an important arms production ingredient, was somewhat monopolized by Germany during World War I, which left their enemy, Britain, in dire need of a solution. The substance was, in fact, crucial for deciding the outcome of the war itself. A Zionist Jew, Chaim Weizmann, also a leader of the Zionist movement, invented a fermentation process that enabled the manufacturing of liquid acetone for Britain. This decisive scientific development attracted the attention of the British establishment, as represented by the British minister of armaments, David Lloyd George, and the first lord of the admiralty, Arthur James Balfour.

For a warring Britain, especially at a time when the Russians were too much preoccupied with their own internal disturbance to engage in World War I with Britain, winning the United States into the war to its side was a precious target, which was perceived to be conceivable by sympathizing with the world Jewry, through espousing the idea of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. Supportive Jewish propaganda was in the minds of the War Cabinet members as they were discussing the draft of the declaration. Hence the British policy position towards the whole issue.

This, however, is not to belittle the effect of lobbying within Britain by Jewish political activists towards the homeland target. The idea of establishing a home in Palestine for the Jewish people was brewing decades back in history. It, however, ripened upon the approval of the Basel Programme in the First Zionist Congress in 1897 which stated forthrightly that “Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people on Palestine secured under public law”. This took place one year before an articulate expression of political Zionism was penned in Austria-Hungary by Jewish journalist Theodore Herzl, titled *Der Judenstaat* or “The State of the Jews”. He suggested the establishment of such state as a solution to the Jewish issue, before founding the Zionist Organization in 1897. Later on, the movement turned more active in the United Kingdom, especially through intensified contacts with the British establishment through Jewish and other sympathizing members of the British regime, such as Charles Dreyfus, a Jewish representative for Arthur Balfour, and others. Britain at the time accommodated



some 300,000 Jews.

Palestine was not the only option as a target for the establishment of a home for the Jews. East Africa was first considered, at a time of increased immigration of Jews from the Russian Empire into Britain. As put by British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain in 1903, "If Dr. Herzl was at all inclined to transfer his efforts to East Africa there would be no difficulty in finding land suitable for Jewish settlers". The "efforts" referred to by Chamberlain were those of the Zionist Organization of which Herzl was the leader. The so-called "Uganda Scheme" did not live long. It was rejected by the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905, following the decease of Dr. Herzl.

At a meeting following the declaration of war by Britain against the Ottoman Empire, on 9 November 1914, reference was made by to the "ultimate destiny of Palestine" by David Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time. Ironically, Lloyd George, Roberts and Co, the law office of David Lloyd George, was working on the Uganda Scheme for its client, the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, but by 1917 D. L. George was https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration - cite_note-FOOTNOTEDefries201444-57Prime Minister under whose premiership the Balfour Declaration was made, specifying Palestine rather than Uganda as home for the Jews. The first draft of the Balfour Declaration was in fact prepared by Rothschild and Chaim

Weizmann, upon request from James A. Balfour on 19 June 2017.

It is worth mentioning that an attempt by the foreign office to contribute a draft, which included the establishment of a "sanctuary for Jewish victims of persecution", was utterly rejected by the Zionist and consequently discarded, astonishingly untraceable!

However, no Palestinian was involved in the drafting process, nor the views of any non-Jewish members of the local population of Palestine were heard. Only over two decades later, in 1939, that the British admitted this shattering misadventure which gave birth to the "most intractable conflict situation in United Nations history", as decorously put by Razali Ismail of Malaysia, then President of the United Nations General Assembly, on 9 June 1997.

Coincidentally, in the same UN text, included in "Press Release GA/9250 GA/PAL/761" dated 10 June 1997, we read:

"The prospect of a just and durable peace for the peoples of Palestine and the Middle East is now seriously at risk and has been recently jeopardized due to actions were taken by the Israeli Government."

"The United Nations should be a vocal critic of those who want to derail the peace process. There are milestone United Nations resolutions that recognize the rights of the Palestinian people to manifest their aspirations for the achievement of its inalienable rights. The Palestinians are arguably among the people whose struggle for a homeland continues to be denied. The international community must continue to support their legitimate cause on the basis of international law, the principles of the United Nations Charter and United Nations resolutions."

The sympathy deservedly enjoyed by the post-holocaust persecuted Jewry should be equally deserved by the post-Balfour Declaration Palestinians. Whatever may be said in counter-argument, at least one attribute is common between the Jews and Palestinians - an immensely crucial attribute. It is that both peoples are human beings. The same attribute of humanity is shared by the representatives of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. We are all humans, having the same sour taste for pain and suffering, especially as regards homelessness or persecution. If sympathy or compassion can be afforded a certain group of plighted human beings, it shall be affordable to all humans suffering from any plight, should there be fairness and will.

Interfaith Lecture on Prophet Muhammad as Mercy for Mankind

Dr. Mozammel Haque

During last one month many important conference, symposium, seminar and lecture were held in London, among which the most important was Two-day Chatham House London Conference in which British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson MP delivered keynote address on the first day and H.E. Adel Al-Jubeir Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia delivered keynote speech in the form of discussion with the Director of the Chatham House, international Think-Tank London. Another important One-day Interfaith Symposium on 'Countering Fear and the Rise of Discrimination, Hate Speech and Hate Crimes in the UK' was held at the London Central Mosque in conjunction with Vienna-based KAICIID at the Islamic Cultural Centre London. Thirdly, there were many talks, lectures, seminars and conferences on the very important topic Balfour Declaration 1917 which has now completed hundred years on 2 November 2017. Fourthly, there was an Interfaith lecture at a Church on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as Mercy for Mankind.





As I was asked to contribute one article only instead of two for every issue, I decided to pick up the last one on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). There are three reasons; first of all, this is the month of Rabi Al-Awwal, the month of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Secondly, I used to write on him in the Rabi Al-Awwal issue. Thirdly, this time an interfaith lecture on the Prophet as a Mercy for Mankind was delivered in a Christian Church.

Speech on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) at St. John's Wood Church, Park Road, London

Fr. Anders Bergquist, Vicar of St. John's Wood Church invited the Director General of The London Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre – Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan - to give a lecture on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Guests included Senior Rabbi Alexandra Wright – Liberal Jewish Synagogue and many others. The talk was followed

by a Question and Answer session.

On Sunday, the 12th of November, 2017, an Interfaith Lecture on the Mercy for Mankind Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was organised by St. John's Wood Church, Park Road, London and was held at the Church premises where Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan was invited to give a talk on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Vicar of St. John's Wood Church, Fr. Anders Bergquist, introduced Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan who was the guest to give a lecture on the subject, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as Mercy for Mankind.

Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan

Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan, Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London started by saying, first of all, 'bismillah hir rahman nir rahim' this is the word meaning 'in the name of Most Merciful the Most Compassionate God.' Then he addressed the gatherings by saying 'Assalamualaikum wa rahmatullah,' which again he explained, this is also the

way that we greet in Arabic, that means ‘peace be upon all of you and with you all of you’. The nice lovely day thank you very much.

Then he said, “My friends and neighbors, thank you for this invitation. I am so happy to be here today with you and I am sure what is actually brought us together here this feeling that is we have; we have a lot of things in common and that’s why I am happy to come here to speak and say to you. We are neighbors; always neighbors support actually well—connected time.”

Why I have chosen the Prophet

In the very beginning, Dr. Al-Dubayan explained why he has chosen Prophet Muhammad as a subject to talk about. He said, “There are two reasons; the first one is really the highest personality for Muslims and in Islam. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the model for all Muslims; they try to follow, to learn from his behavior as well as from his manners. Secondly, he is also a person, who actually in many ways misunderstood, sometimes misinterpreted, not only by non-Muslims but by Muslims themselves. That’s why it is very important and I am sure, not sure, maybe some never read anything about him; so that’s why I chose this to talk about.”

Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned that the talk will not be about his biography rather he has chosen all those things of his life which is related to mercy. He said, “I have chosen or picked up, let’s say, about the dimension of mercy in Islam. This is very important. I have chosen this, particularly, actually mercy has spiritual value. It is one of the well-known qualities of Christianity itself; it is also one of the higher values in Islam. It is actually the Mercy when it is in your heart you will feel that is really if in peaceful time and peaceful life. It is also the value the thing that is asking from Allah Himself from God Himself. When we ask for mercy we have to give mercy first. We have actually asked for mercy itself.

“Also there is another reason for choosing mercy. Mercy; it is the value; may be one of the most, not only the most ever, important value for us to live in harmony in one society, to love each other to be actually well-connected to have a better understanding. Because without this value of mercy things will be really miserable and life will not be good at all,” he mentioned.

Then Dr. Al-Dubayan talked about the social side of mercy itself. He said, “There is also the so-

cial side of the mercy itself. Today actually, in our modern life, mercy becomes even more important, with more this connection we have around, all this technology; with all this what we hear, what we do, and what we do every day now, we are very busy may be more than anybody else in the history in the past. Because of all these things we are having and we have in our hands. We have a lot of overwhelming news coming from the media, from the internet etc; so this value is very very important which keep us in the right direction of our campus where to go.”

About the Prophet peace be upon him

After giving an introduction about mercy and its importance in today’s life and in today’s society, Dr. Al-Dubayan started talking about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He said, “Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in Makkah. He actually was called to Islam when he was forty. He was not like Jesus Christ that he was young. He actually started calling to Islam at the age of forty. At the age of forty, he received revelations, the Message. He was asked to call people. He stayed in his hometown Makkah 13 years calling people, telling them and giving them guidance to give up all actually the old religion of the Arabs who used to worship idols and paganism all those things at that time. He actually suffered a lot. His first followers suffered here.”

First Generations of Companions to Abyssinia

Dr. Al-Dubayan then mentioned the Hijrat or migration of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to Madinah. He said, “After this, he moved to Madinah; this is another city which is 400 kilometers away; then he stayed there ten years only and then he died. So the whole actually the age of Islam with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was 23 years only - 13 years in Makkah and ten years in Madinah. All these 23 years he actually used to tell people little by little, verse by verse, chapter by chapter the Qur’an the Holy Book of the Muslims.”

His contact with Christians

Dr. Al-Dubayan then mentioned the Prophet’s first contact with Christians. He mentioned, “Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself actually had the first contact with the Christians when he sent his Companions, the early generation of his Companions, the first Companions actually, sent them to



an African country where Christian king was ruling at that time. He said to them, 'Just go there; there is a king, the Christian king; he is very just king; live here; it is more peaceful than Makkah in your people.' And about 18 people - men and women with their husbands and with their children - sometimes went to Abyssinia, at that time; Ethiopia now or Somalia. They stayed there two years till the situation in Makkah becomes better. Later they came back. They stayed there as Muslims under the protection of Christian king in Ethiopia at that time. Ethiopia and Somalia they now argue where that was actually."

His contact with Jewish community

Speaking about his first contact with the Jewish community, Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned, "When he moved to Madinah then he had contact with the Jewish community. There was a big Jewish community, lived and well in Madinah many years before the Prophet came to Madinah; they were living with some Arabs. The population of Madinah at that time was actually some Arabs who were not Christians but they were not Jew, but they followed their own reli-

gion before the beginning of Islam and a big Jewish community. When the Prophet peace be upon him came to Madinah, he signed a treaty which is called Madinah Treaty; it is a Convention between him and the Muslims and the Jewish community. In the text of this Convention, it was said, "It is today Muslims and Jews are one nation. It means we defend you something happened to you and you defend us when something happened to us."

Dealing with wives

After mentioning about Prophet's first contact with the Christians during his Makkah period and then his contact with the Jewish community when he moved to Madinah, Dr. Al-Dubayan was talking about the value of mercy in his actions, his relations, and sayings. He said, "During his life, we can see the value of mercy in many aspects; in actions; in relations; in his sayings also. For example, he had more than one wife but we don't know about harm doings with his life; in fact, he never hit any of them; he never did anything harm to any of them; he never hit a child; he never raised his hands on animal or a child."

Dealing with servants

After citing his mercy towards his wife, Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned how the Prophet (peace be upon him) dealt with servants. He gave an example, "When Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Madinah, a widow who has a child ten years old, his name is Anas, came to the Prophet. She said to the Prophet - 'Can I leave my boy to you to stay between my home and your home as a servant to stay with you and then to help you if you need things whatever;' then the Prophet said, 'yes, okay'. The boy stayed there. He used to go to his home and Prophet's home every day serving the Prophet, bringing something, sending here and there; and after ten years Prophet died. The servant himself, Anas the boy said himself, 'I stayed with him ten years, he never hit me; he never said to me why did you do this; or why didn't you do this; that was the really very good treatment I got from the Prophet'. Even people used to call him the companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of his life about 80 years; When the prophet died he was at the age of 20 years; he lived 80 years more to reach 100 after the prophet."

"The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to walk on the street; then a woman stopped him to talk to him; he used to stop to listen to her; old ladies, young

ladies sometimes even teenagers, they stopped him on the street and he used to stop to listen to them. To give hear to them, to listen to their some complaints; some needs they need from him; then he said, yes, I will do it; he tried to do it,” Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned.

Dealing with children

Then Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned about his dealings with children. He gave an example, “Once Prophet was actually sitting in his house; then his grandson Al-Hasan who was about five years old; he was playing around him. He used to carry him from the floor and kiss him and put him back and play with him again and hug him as we all do it with children. A man from the desert, a Bedouin, came to visit the Prophet; when he saw this, that was something unusual to him; he said, ‘Muhammad, I never did this to my children that you were doing with him.’ It happened more than one time. The Prophet said, ‘what shall I do to you if Allah does not put mercy on your heart. Your problem; you have to have mercy’.”

Dr. Al-Dubayan then mentioned the first Hadith, the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He said, Muslims used to study the Qur’an and after this, they used to study the Hadith, the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The chief of the Islamic Cultural Centre (ICC) said, “The first Hadith tradition started always with is the Hadith when he said those who have mercy in their hearts Allah will give them mercy. Merciful people will have mercy on Allah. We have to have mercy on people on earth Allah will then have mercy.”

Dr. Al-Dubayan also mentioned another incident when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shortened his prayer so that the mother can take care of her crying baby. He mentioned, “Once the Prophet was in the mosque praying; he decided at that prayer a long prayer. When he started, then a child took crying in the back with his mother; then the Prophet did the prayer quickly; the companions enquired what happened Rasoolullah that you prayed very quickly today. The Prophet said, ‘Have you heard the child crying? The mother was worried about him, so I made my prayer quickly; so that she can make her prayer quickly and go to the child to see.’ This is an example.”

Adopting or fostering an orphan

Dr. Al-Dubayan also mentioned another saying of

the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding adopting or fostering an orphan. He said, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said; ‘Anybody who adopts an orphan or fosters an orphan he will come with me in paradise the distance is like this two fingers together.’ That means together in paradise.”

The ICC Director-General also mentioned another saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about taking care of children, the especially daughter. He mentioned, “The Prophet said, ‘Take care of children, especially daughters. Anybody who had two daughters, three daughters or four daughters; then he takes care of them till they are adult; their life is okay; then I guarantee that you will be in paradise.’ Especially the daughters; why? Of course, boys have mercy; but why daughters, because in that society at that time daughters and women they really need support in order to have their life in order.”

Take care of three things, the Prophet said

Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned, “One of the last word the Prophet said, ‘Take care of three things; number one prayer, never forget it; number two, you have to treat woman very well, very good way; number three, do it the best with the servant; the people who worked; stay most of the servant slaves sometimes; let them to eat from your food; let them have clothes like yours clothes; whenever you cook something or they help you to cook have them first because they are the one who cooks it; they are the one who serves in the fire, in the smoke; and you just come in and eat it and they don’t. These are some of the practical things he used to have to do in his daily life.”

Mercy on Animals and Birds

What about animals? Animals are also important. Dr. Al-Dubayan spoke about the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) mercy on animals. He gave an example. He said, “I will give you a story which shows how much mercy he had. Once when he went to Makkah about ten thousand people were going towards Makkah that time and when they returned back in one of the valleys between the two cities they found a dog actually with puppies in one of the valleys; when this ten thousand people or the armies come it will destroy all of them. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw the female dog; he advised people, ‘hold on’ and then he changed the direction of the army all of it ten thousand people and he asked

one of his friends 'to stay there to guard the dog and their puppies till everyone was moved from that area'. Think about the change of direction of the whole army because of the dog in the way."

The ICC chief mentioned another instance to show Prophet's mercy on birds. He said, "Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sitting with one of his companions; then he saw a bird there flying around from this wall to that wall in this area. The Prophet said, 'anything has happened to this bird; someone has taken the chick of this bird'. One of the men sitting there said, yes. The Prophet said, 'Put the chick back and children or something.' All these stories and others show that this man had mercy for everything around him."

Earlier Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, wherein the Prophet said, 'Those who have mercy Allah will have mercy on them'. In order to elaborate that, Dr. Al-Dubayan gave an example, he said, "Once a woman who used to be working as a prostitute profession or word in Arabic which shows that this woman is working or doing this work. She was walking happily. She found a dog. This story was told by him. She found a dog, the dog was so thirsty; there was a well; you know the wells were too deep, and then the dog was going around the well because she was so thirsty trying to find a way to quench thirst, or access to the water but the water was so deep down. The Prophet said, 'When the woman sees the dog; she thought my god; the dog is very thirsty; then she took her shoes, went down to the well, put water into the shoes and give it to the dog'. Actually, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'Allah thanks for this and everything she has done'; compare between the sin itself is very big and see the action for which she was forgiven is very small compared to that, just giving water to the dog. How merciful is Allah? God Himself is very Merciful."

Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned another story which was said by the Prophet peace be upon him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told the story: "A woman actually was put in the fire because she locked a cat in her home. She did not feed the cat, she did not release the cat out; she locked the cat that is a very big sin of the woman." Another example was: "A man said, 'I wanted to slaughter a goat for food when I saw her, the goat, I had mercy on my heart. He hesitates to slaughter. He has mercy; because of this mercy Allah will have mercy on him.'"

That's why, because of this, Allah Himself told us that 'We only send you, Muhammad, as Rahmatun Lil Alamin, Mercy for Mankind.' The Prophet (peace be upon him), all his life, whenever he was hit he never reported. He never treated people in his house or companions, or children or women in a bad way at all. This is actually all encouraging people the value of mercy. This is very important for us or for all religions and all religions, either way, talk about mercy," mentioned Dr. Al-Dubayan.

The ICC chief said, "The problem always comes in the practice; when it comes to implementing this into our daily activities, in our daily communications; in our daily sayings what we say; it is not easy. We have to remember this value. I believe Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself throws the aspect that we have mentioned to you in his life is a very good model or the best model actually the value of mercy."

Dr. Al-Dubayan also mentioned, "We connect this, of course, with Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) who also well known for his mercy; his messages on the mercy of course. But I am not going to preach Jesus Christ in the Church. If we connect also to other Prophets - Zakariyah, Joseph, Abraham, Moses (peace be upon them all) - all of them we will find actually this taking care of other people is always there; at all time and always available; you may see here, you may hear here neither hidden written into some interpretations. It is always there. Because we believe Allah chosen; God chosen all these Prophets because they have the ability; they have actually strengthened this message; they can deliver this message; first the value is the only thing really we need today connection with other people. This is also not only the Prophet said this is not for Muslims; this is for everyone; it is for any human being; for the mankind."

"This mercy is not only for human beings, for animals only but for everybody, of course, it is even for nature itself; there are rules in Islam how to protect natural resources; not wasting things," said Dr. Al-Dubayan and mentioned one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), "If anybody kills a bird or small bird (sometimes people do it just for fun), who kills a bird without any need a small bird like the small sparrow, whatever that may be, he will be asked in the day of judgement, 'why you kill this bird.' We have to remember this in our communication in our relation."

IOHQIS Conducts Training courses and Holy Qur'an Memorization Competitions

Translated by Mahdi Hamadi Wadi

The Muslim World League (MWL), via its affiliate International Organization for the Holy Qur'an & Immaculate Sunnah (IOHQIS) and in cooperation with a number of associations and organizations in the world, has conducted Training Courses and Holy Qur'an Memorization Competitions in different parts of the world.



Dr. Sheikh Abdullah Basfar, Secretary General of the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an & Immaculate Sunnah (IOHQIS) said, "In implementation of the directives of the Secretary General of the Muslim World League HE Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an & Immaculate Sunnah (IOHQIS) has conducted the under mentioned training courses and Holy Qur'an Memorization Competitions".

A Training Course in Kyrgyzstan:

In cooperation with both the Charity Association and Abdullah Ibn Abbas Institute in Kyrgyzstan, IOHQIS has conducted an eleven-day Training Course on the perfect intonation (*Tajweed*) of the Holy Qur'an based on the primary book of (*Tohfatul Atfal* – Children Gift). 39 Qur'anic learners, hailing from the different parts of Kyrgyzstan, have actively taken part in the said training course. The Course syllabus components comprised memorization and explanation of the said book "Children Gift", as well as teaching learners how to memorize and recite in perfect intonation Annaba (Surat) (Qur'an: Chapter 78). The course subjects were given by an elite of prominent Qur'anic professors. The refresher course was concluded by the delivery of certain speeches and conduct of a ceremony for the participants as well as distribution of attendance certificates and prizes among the learners.

In cooperation with both the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan and Charity Association in Kyrgyzstan, a Qur'anic

competition was conducted with the participation of 68 contestants. It comprised three sections:

1-Memorization of both the whole Qur'an and Jazriah booklet on perfect intonation 2-Memorization of twenty chapters of the Qur'an 3-Memorization of ten chapters of the Holy Qur'an. A jury was formed to referee the performance of the contestants. Dr. Abdullah Basfar pointed out

among the winners .

Qur'anic Contest in the Republic of Chad:

The MWL has conducted, via its affiliate International Organization for Holy Qur'an Memorization, (a body that has been merged into IOHQIS), and in collaboration with Taiba Institute for Holy Qur'an Memorizers in the Republic of Chad, a Qur'anic contest in which 320 contestants



that after declaring final results of the competition, a ceremony was held for the participants. The event was attended by His Eminence Acting Deputy Mufti Sheikh Jurabayo, the representative of the Religious Affairs Committee Sheikh Shakur Bakshar Matov, the supervisor of the Faculty of the Qur'an Dr. Ali Mansour, the Director of the Charity Association Mr. Musa Mirza, the Director of the Institute Musa Jabara, representative of IOHQIS Mr. Adel Rifai and a number of scholars, Holy Qur'an memorizers and other citizens. At the conclusion of the ceremony, prizes and gifts were distributed

participated. It was composed of four sections: 1-Memorization of the Holy Qur'an according to the ten recognized version of readings 2- Memorization of ten chapters of the Qur'an and Jazriah booklet on perfect intonation 3-Memorization of the Holy Qur'an and the respective meanings of its words 4-Memorization of children for the Holy Qur'an.

A five-member panel was set up to referee the performance of the contestants. After announcing the final results of the contest, a ceremony was held for the participants. It was attended by Dr. Hassan Hussein Abakar, Chairman of the Supreme Council for

Islamic Affairs, Sheikh Muhammad Mahmoud Hassan Flattah, Director of the Office of the International Islamic Relief Organization in Chad, Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Asil, representative of the Minister of Education, Professor Zain Al-Abideen Sulaiman, the envoy of IOHQIS, and a number of scholars, thinkers, preachers, students and parents. The ceremony began with a recitation from the Holy Qur'an,

cluding 18 fully licensed as reciters of the whole Qur'an with due perfect intonation, was duly conducted. The religious event was attended by His Eminence the Grand Mufti Sheikh Radavi, President of All Ceylon Jamiyyat Al-Ulama, Sheikh Mahmoud Fathi Alian, the envoy from Al-Azhar and Sheikh Nasr, a lecturer at the Nazimia Jamiah, Sheikh Nasr, Director of Al-Rahma Complex in Sri Lanka, and a number

tificates and gifts were distributed among the graduates and those who have been fully licensed as reciters of the whole Qur'an with due perfect intonation.

Qur'anic Contest in Cooperation with Al-Azhar in Egypt :

The MWL has conducted, via its affiliate IOHQIS and in collaboration with Al-Azhar, the ceremony of the competition of the philanthropist Zeinab titled (The Skillful learner of the Qur'an), in which 500 young females students participated.

The Contest comprised four sections:

- 1-Memorization of the Holy Qur'an with the ten recognized version of perfect readings.
- 2- Memorization of the whole Qur'an and Jazriah booklet on perfect intonation.
- 3- Memorization of the Holy Qur'an and the respective meanings of its words.
- 4-Memorization of children for the Holy Qur'an. A six-member refereeing panel was formed for the contest. After announcing the final results of the contest, a ceremony was held for the participants. It was attended by Sheikh Jabir Taei, Under-Secretary for the Ministry of Endowment, on behalf of the Minister, HE Sheikh Muhammad Shalabi, advisor of HE Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, HE Muhammad Abuzaid Al-Ameer, Chairman of the Sector of Al-Azhar Institutes, on behalf of the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, HE Prof. Dr. Sami Abdulfattah Hilal, Dean of the College of the Holy Qur'an & its Sciences at Al-Azhar University and member of the Academic Council of the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an Memorization, representing IOHQIS and a



followed by addresses delivered by certain speakers, who emphasized the significance of learning, memorizing and caring for the Holy Qur'an and finally advised contestants to pay particular to this blessing they have been endowed.

The Ceremony for Holy Qur'an Memorizers (Hafizs) in Sri Lanka:

In cooperation with Obai Ibn Ka'b Center in Sri Lanka, a graduation ceremony celebrating 47 graduates of the said Center, in-

of people interested in Qur'anic affairs, students and parents. Certain speeches were given, and the speakers tackled the benefits that the learners could derive from joining such organized study at this Centre. They discussed the virtue of competing in the memorization of the Holy Qur'an, as an undisputable rewarding act and also encouraged students to make further efforts in memorizing with perfect intonation the Holy Qur'an and practice the morals and principles mentioned in its various verses. Finally, cer-



number of scholars, intellectuals, preachers, female students and parents. The ceremony began with a recitation from the Holy Qur'an, followed by addresses delivered by certain speakers, who emphasized the significance of learning, memorizing and caring for the Holy Qur'an as well as giving special care to those reciting the Holy Qur'an and advised contestants to pay particular attention to this blessing and thank them for the perseverance they showed in memorization.

Competition for the Holy Qur'an in Ethiopia:

In Ethiopia, in cooperation with the Society for Serving, Memorization and Learning of the Holy Qur'an, a Qur'anic Competition was conducted at the mosque of the Society's Peace Center for Education, in which 30 students participated. This Competition included four sections: 1-memorization of the entire Qur'an 2-Memorization of twenty chapters of the Qur'an 3 memorization of ten chapters of the Qur'an 4-memorization of five chapters. It was conducted under the supervision of a four-member refereeing panel.

A ceremony was held in honour of the participants. The event was attended by Sheikh Muhammad Adam Ali, Deputy Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in the city, Sheikh Shamil Sheikh

Mahmoud, a prominent dignitary in the city and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Barati, a judge at the Supreme Court and a number of citizens and parents of students. The speeches given have highlighted the virtues of learning the Holy Qur'an and encouraged students to make further efforts in proper memorization and perfect recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Students have also been urged to do their level best to observe the good ethics, morals and behavior and to set good example in their respect communities. Male and female students reciters have given certain examples of their particular recitations of the Holy Qur'an during the ceremony. At the end, awards and gifts were distributed among the winners.

36 contestants participating in a Qur'anic Contestants in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, in cooperation with the Dar Al-Ifta Al-A'm, a Qur'anic Contest, in which 36 male and female contestants participated, was conducted. It consisted of six sections;

1-Memorization of the entire Qur'an. 2-memorization of fifteen chapters of the Holy Qur'an. 3-Memorization of five chapters of the Qur'an. 4-Memorization of thirtieth part (*Juz' Amma*) of the Qur'an for those who were above fifteen year old. 5- memorization of the thirtieth part (*Juz' Amma*) of the Qur'an for those who were under fifteen years old, together with the recitation of perfect intonation.

At the conclusion of the Competition, awards and gifts were distributed among the winners. The event was attended by His Eminence the Grand Mufti of the Muslims of Bulgaria Dr. Mustapha Hajji, the two Deputies of the Grand Mufti Sheikh Bar Ali Mo'men Bar and Sheikh and Mr. Ahmed Hasanov as well as Mayor of Madan Municipality Mr. Khairi Sadikov and the number of citizens along with male and female students, and their parents. The ceremony commenced with recitation from the Holy Qur'an. It was followed by the speeches delivered by the invited dignitaries, who expressed their happiness with attending this kind occasion, congratulated the winners as well as encouraged them to both observe good ethics and manners as stipulated in the Holy Qur'an and continue making due effort on memorization as well as perfect recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Furthermore, they expressed their gladness over the incessant progress they remarked year after year in

the proper conduct of the Qur'anic Competition in Bulgaria.

Qur'anic Contest in the Republic of Ghana:

The League has conducted, in cooperation with the College of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic Studies functioning under the supervision of the Dhia' Society in Ghana, the ceremony of the Holy Qur'an Competition, in which 22 students took part.

The competition was composed of three sections: 1- memorization of the Holy Qur'an according to the recognized versions of perfect readings 2-Memorization of the Holy Qur'an with the meaning of words. 3-Memorization of the Holy Qur'an, with Jazriah booklet on perfect intonation. A three-member refereeing panel was set up ; and a ceremony honouring the participants was conducted. It was attended by the President of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs Sheikh Ahmad Omar Abdullah, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs Sheikh Musa Abdulqader and the President of the Madinah University of Science and Technology Dr. Hassan Qadi, and a number of scholars who are interested in caring for the affairs of the Holy Qur'an, and a number of citizens and parents of students.

The given speeches have highlighted the virtues of memorizing the Holy Qur'an and giving proper care to the Holy Qur'an. In their respective addresses, the speakers encouraged students to make further efforts in the proper memorization and perfect reading of the Holy Qur'an. Students have also been urged to follow the good ethics, morals and behavior stipulated in the Holy Qur'an and to set a good example for people in their respective communities. During the ceremony, the audience listened to examples of the participants' recitation. At the end, awards and gifts were distributed among the winners.

Qur'anic Training Course for Qur'anic Female Teachers in Malawi:

In cooperation with the Omar bin Al-Khattab Institute in Malawi, the League has conducted a ten-day Qur'anic Training Course for Qur'anic female teachers. During the course, participants were taught Al-Qaedah Al-noraniah, recitation correction methods, Arabic language, teaching methods and practical attendance of classes for due revision of memorized verses. The closing ceremony of the

session was attended by Sheikh Ali Kindi, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Muslim Society of Malawi and Sheikh Qasim Shengulu Secretary General of the Council of Ulama of Malawi and representative of IOHQIS Mr. Muhammad Attiyah. The delivered speeches have commended the continuous development of Qur'anic memorization activities in Malawi as pioneered by the robust efforts of Omar bin Al-Khattab Institute. Finally, the female participants have been given certificates and prizes.

The Holy Qur'an Contest in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

In cooperation with the Islamic Meshiakhah in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ceremony of the Holy Qur'an Contest, in which 50 male and female students took part, was dully conducted. It included four sections:

1-Memorization of the whole Holy Qur'an with the interpretation of all the verses of Surat Baqra (the Cow), (Qur'an:2). 2- Memorization of the whole Holy Qur'an with perfect intonation in recitation (Tajweed). 3-memorization of fifteen parts of the Holy Qur'an. 4- Memorization of the five parts of the Holy Qur'an. Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Basfar said that the concluding ceremony of the Contest was held in the attendance of Sheikh Hassan Samayich, Vice-President of the Scholars, Khalid Al-Jubeishi, an attache at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Nasser Al-Mutairi, Ambassador of Kuwait, Mr. Nusrat Abdi Begović, Director of the Religious Affairs Department of the Mashiekat and representative of (IOHQIS) Dr. Jamal Khalil Muslih.

The Applaud of the efforts of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Ibn Abdulaziz:

Those who, delivered speeches at the ceremony, have applauded the sincere efforts made by the Government of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Ibn Abdulaziz Al-Saud in the service of Islam and Muslims and in giving due the care to the promotion of status of the book of Allah Almighty (The Holy Qur'an). Furthermore, they have praised the prominent role played by both the Muslim World League and the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an & Immaculate Sunnah (IOHQIS) in the development of Qur'anic work.

Turkmenistan's Merv was world's biggest city in 1200 AD

Aftab Hussain Kola

It is a classic lost city buried in drifts of earth with little vestiges on the ground. The wind-weathered turquoise dome of the mausoleum of Sanjar the Great, sultan of the Seljuq Empire, still looms large on the horizon at the desolate, lost city of Merv strategically sited in the Karakum desert of Turkmenistan.

Many of the central Asian cities were main hubs of trade on the Silk Road, linking Eastern and Western civilizations. In

its 12th-century bygone splendor, Merv straddled the prosperous trade routes of the Silk Road. It was a capital of the Seljuk sultanate that extended from central Asia to the Mediterranean. Home to a population of more than half a people, Merv was probably the biggest city in the world in 1200 AD.

Ancient Merv is a series of towns sprawled over 48-square-mile site that succeeded one another throughout the



course of history: Erk Kala fortress citadel, Gyaur Kala, Sultan Kala, Abdullakhan Kala and Bayramalykhan Kala. At the beginning of the XIX century the new city moved to the modern location of Merv city.

But when the flourishing Merv came to the notice of Mongol leader Genghis Khan who built an empire that stretched from the east coast of China to the Aral Sea in the west the city it was destroyed by his armies in a grisly conquest killing its inhabitants.

The earliest city at Merv is known today by its Persian name, Erk Kala (“Citadel Castle”) but it is widely known in historic texts first as Margush, an Old Persian name. In the eighth century, Merv was ruled by Abu Muslim Al-Khurasani, who served the Baghdad-based Abbasid caliphate — though not without tension, as Merv’s population continued to rise and its wealth, cultural fertility and importance was on par with that of Baghdad’s. It was in this era that the population began to expand across the canal that formed the western perimeter of Gyaur Kala to found Sultan Kala. Under Abbasid rule and then under the Seljuqs, over the next several centuries, Sultan Kala grew into the greatest city the region had ever known, called Marv-ash-Shahijan, or “Royal Merv.”

Conservation Programs

More remarkable are the vernacular buildings constructed of fragile mudbricks in Merv. These include uniquely Central Asian buildings, fortresses, palaces, pavilions, and icehouses. The site is threatened by development pressures and from the high water



table which in the past 40 years has accelerated the rate of decay of the earthen structures. Merv, 220 miles from the modern capital, Ashgabat, caught the attention of World Monuments Fund. The WMF joined the project to assist in a comprehensive program of documentation, condition assessment, site management planning, conservation, and training that began in 2002 and concluded in 2008. With grants from WMF, UCL conserved and stabilized several monuments, backfilled some archaeological areas to protect historic elements, created a management plan for the site, and conducted an intensive training course in site management planning for the directors of all major archaeological parks in the country. Now, Merv has become a hot spot on Turkmenistan’s tourism map.

A Project named, The State Historical and Cultural Park “Ancient Merv” was created by decree in 1987 and has additional protection at the national level granted by the provisions of the 1992 Law on the Protection of Turkmenistan Historical and Cultural Monuments. The Park is the property of

the Republic of Turkmenistan and all its components are included in the National Heritage List.

The present state of conservation is good. The property is maintained and preserved through regular and rigorous repair and conservation programmes.

Clean Streets

Celebrated 10th-century Persian geographer and traveller Al-Istakhri had to say, “For its cleanliness, its good streets, the divisions of its buildings and quarters among the rivers ... their city [Merv] is superior to the rest of the cities of Khurasan. Its markets are good.”

We learn from the pages of history that the urban occupation of the area dates as far back as the sixth century BC. Under Muslim rule from the seventh century onwards, the locus of urban activity shifted west across the Razik canal to what would become Marv-i-Shahijan (also known as Sultan-kala, “fortress of the sultan”). Many of Gyaur-kala’s structures were probably cannibalised for material in the construction of the new Merv, and industrial workshops, kilns and furnaces sprung



up amid its ruins.

Life in the Merv oasis has always depended on the waters of the Murghab. The river flows northward from the mountains of Afghanistan until it ends in a swampy delta in the middle of the desert. Du Huan, a Chinese soldier who lived in captivity in Merv for a decade in the eighth century AD, described the fertility of the oasis: "A big river ... flows into its territory, where it divides into several hundred canals irrigating the whole area. Villages and fences touch each other and everywhere there are trees."

Merv's residents were mercantile in nature and the place had such a strong reputation for commerce and the pursuit of wealth that the 14th-century Egyptian scribe Al-Nuwayri described the city's chief characteristic as "misserliness".

In its days of glory of Seljuk rule, Merv served as a cultural capital, attracting the brightest thinkers and artists from around the Islamic world. It set trends not only in scientific and astronomical investigation, but in architecture, fashion and music. To be *marwazi*

(from Merv) suggested a degree of cultivation and sophistication. Its residents probably possessed a very broad frame of reference. Though secluded in an oasis in the Karakum desert, Merv was a worldly city, an exemplar of the commercial and intellectual culture that flourished along the Silk Road.

Merv exported textiles

Its strategic position on the crossroads of transcontinental trade accelerated Merv's prosperity and growth. Textiles from Merv reveal the creativity of its artists while also traced the history of trade and cultural exchanges during the time when Merv might be said to have clothed the Region. The 12th-century famous Arab geographer Al-Idrisi noted, "From this country is derived much silk as well as cotton of a superior quality under the name of Merv cotton, which is extremely soft," Robes and turbans made from Merv cloth were popular around the Islamic world.

Merv had a chequered history having fallen under the sway of

competing polities and dynasties throughout its long history. No conquest was as traumatic as its pillage by the Mongols in 1221. This changed its course of history.

Merv bounced back again only to be short-lived in the 15th century when in 1409 the Timurid ruler Shah Rukh, heir to Tamerlane and, more distantly, to the same Genghis Khan who had destroyed the city, set about building a new city a few kilometers south of the ruined Seljuq capital. Although the Timurid rulers favored Bukhara, Samarkand and Herat, Merv remained significant because it was the only oasis between the Kopet Mountains of Iran and the Amu Darya, or Oxus River, and its value as a trading and agricultural center was largely a matter of geographical, not political, fact.

For a time this Timurid city, known today as Abdullah Khan Kala, grew and prospered, but it never approached the significance of its predecessors. As maritime trade began to supplant Silk Road traffic in the 16th and 17th centuries, Merv declined like a modern small town bypassed by a new highway. In the late 18th century its dam was breached during regional strife and its agriculture ruined, and it was largely abandoned by the time Russia took control of the region in 1884.

Today, Turkmenistan's third-largest city, Mary, sits some 30 kilometers (18 mi) away, and a smaller city, Bairam Ali, nestles close to the ancient sites of Merv. The population of the delta-in-the-desert is now little above one million, roughly the same as it was on the eve of the Mongol invasion 775 years ago.

UN calls on Myanmar to rein in its military campaign in Rakhine state

New York (OIC-UNA) - The U.N. Security Council on Monday called on Myanmar to rein in its military campaign in Rakhine state and allow hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims driven from their homes to return.

In a unanimous statement backed by China, the council strongly condemned the violence that has forced more than 600,000 Rohingya to flee across the border to Bangladesh.

The council expressed “grave concern” over human rights violations, “including by the Myanmar security forces” against the Rohingya such as killing, sexual violence and burning of homes and property.

It called on the government “to ensure no further excessive use of military force in Rakhine state, to restore civilian administration and apply the rule of law.” The statement included most of the demands contained in a draft resolution presented last month by Britain and France, but that measure ran into strong opposition from China, a supporter of Myanmar’s former ruling junta.

China had indicated it was willing to resort to its veto power to block a resolution, but Beijing finally agreed to a statement during negotiations, diplomats said.

Since late August, more than 600,000 Rohingya have been driven from their homes by an army campaign that the United Nations has described as ethnic cleansing.

The Rohingya have faced decades of discrimination in Buddhist-majority Myanmar and have been denied citizenship since 1982, which has effectively rendered them stateless, according to media reports.

Council members called for full access for humanitarian aid workers to Rakhine and said the government must address the root causes of the crisis by allowing “equal access to full citizenship.”

The statement did not, however, threaten sanctions.

Addressing the council, Myanmar’s Ambassador Hau Do Suan said the statement “exerts undue political pressure on Myanmar” and warned it could exacerbate religious tensions. During negotiations with China, the language on citizenship rights was watered down, along with a demand that Myanmar allows a U.N. human rights mission into the country, diplomats said.

The statement calls on Myanmar to cooperate with the United Nations and encourages U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to appoint a special advisor on the crisis.

France and Britain stressed that the top U.N. body was issuing “demands” to Myanmar and that Guterres would report on progress in 30 days.

Through the statement, “the Security Council expresses a strong and unanimous message to end the ethnic cleansing that is taking place before our eyes in Myanmar,” said French Ambassador Francois Delattre.

“We will judge Myanmar on how they act. They have 30 days before the secretary-general will report,” said British Deputy U.N. Ambassador Jonathan Allen.

The council statement was clinched as Guterres prepares to travel to Manila this week to join leaders of the Southeast Asian bloc ASEAN for a summit during which the Rohingya crisis will be a top issue.

Rights groups have accused the Security Council of dragging its feet and are calling for sanctions against those involved in the atrocities in Rakhine.

“Going forward, council members should be clear that they won’t be held hostage by China’s objections, and will instead be driven by the needs of victims and realities on the ground, not what makes China comfortable,” said Akshaya Kumar, Human Rights Watch deputy U.N. director.

Esoterism And Exoterism in Perspective - A Scholastic Approach



NO TERRORISM

Dr. Busari, K.K.

Islam is said to be “the way of God’ in the Qur’an, which includes both esoterism and exoterism. But the path to God mentioned in Q73:19 and Q76:29:

“Verily, this is a reminder, therefore whosoever will, let him take a path to his lord” is clearly the esoteric path which has “reminder” as its driving – wheel and produces remembrance (dhikr) which itself is a foundation of ‘esotersim. In modern times, esoterism in relation with Islam, is viewed as an exotic growth that has its various elements traced to one external source or the other. For instance, its ascetic practices are traceable to Christianity and its exercise in self – annihilation to Buddhism, its aspiration to know transcendental realities through purification of the soul and illumina-

tion to Gnosticism, its vision of multiplication proceeding from an ultimate unity to neo – Platonism and its monastic theosophy to Indian Vedanta. Esoterism is also viewed as an authentic expression of Islamic phenomenon. This is because, the practices of the esoterists, like abstinence and poverty are divine guidance inspired by the life of prophet and his companions, that their seclusion from society is approved by the Shari’ah as a measure to save themselves from contacting corruption and degeneration in society, that their occupation with devotion, contemplation and dhikr has been applauded by the Prophet, and that the concepts of their philosophy of pantheism and their theosophical vision are suggested by various Qur’anic verses and prophetic traditions.

The Origin and Development of Esoterism

Al-kindī (d. tenth century) refers to the appearance of a small community in Alexandria in Egypt in the ninth century, which enjoined good and spoke out against evil. They were called esoterists. According to Muruj adh – Dhahab Al-Mas’udi, Sufis first appeared during the time of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mun. According to Abu’l-Qushayri, esoterism appeared in the ninth century, about two hundred years after the death of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The question arises, why did it apparently take so many years for people to take serious interest in the inner science? A brief retrospective glance at the early history of Islam may shed some light on this matter.

Let us transpose ourselves to Arabia at the beginning of seventh century A.D. What we find is a society of disunited Arab tribes who for centuries had been involved in an established tradition of warfare, idol worship and other tribal values. Although the Arabs of that time engaged in commerce outside Arabia, they were little influenced by the other cultures. The Byzantine Empire and the forays of Nebuchadnezzar into Arabia really had little impact upon them. So we find a people who had been carrying on their traditional nomadic way of life for centuries with little change. Suddenly an incredible ‘Prophetic light’ manifested before them. This light began to clearly identify and destroy the inhumanities and injustices in their society.

The incredible being who brought this new light of knowledge was Prophet Muhammad. For 23 years Muhammad sang the eternal truth that man is born into this world in order to learn the ways of creation while journeying back to his source, the one creator; for although man is free in his essence he is constrained and restricted by the outer laws that govern existence.

Muhammad spoke the same eternal truth, which was spoken by thousands of divine messengers before him, and he spoke it in the contemporary language of his hand, a language which was the highest cultural achievement and gift to those people.

Sincere and pious Muslims could not tolerate injustice and oppression indefinitely, and there emerged a movement led by Abu Muslim Khurasani committed to re-establishing justice and the true way of Islam. To begin with, it was a popular revolutionary movement against the Umayyads in favour of the Hashimites and the immediate family of the Prophet. However, when the cause was won, and the Umayyad dynasty was brought to an end in 749, the rulership of Muslim

society was usurped by the Abbasids on the pretext of their being related to the family of Muhammad, although the connection was remote.

It was these circumstances of blatant political and social contradiction that gave rise to the emergence of the pious and thoughtful Muslims under the general umbrella of Islam, wanting to distinguish themselves from the ruling party and their worldly supporters. So we find the esoteric movement beginning as a natural consequence of Muslim society accepting and following corrupt dynasty rulership rather than following the king of kings, God the Almighty, through following its true representatives on this earth.

Muslims, who were aware of the real prophetic teachings, but unable to change the existing situation, started devoting their life to prayers and discipline of inner purification. Imam Ali Zayn Al-Abidin, the son of Imam Huseyn, is just one of many prominent examples. These Muslims could not turn their energy outwardly against the evil regimes, so they were compelled to turn it inwardly against the evil within the human self. These are the people who later came to be called the Esoterists.

The Qur’anic Origin of Esoterism

Some orientalist scholars believed that esoterism was essentially the result of Islam evolving in a more mystic direction. For example, Annemarie Schimmel proposes that esoterism in its early stages of development meant nothing but the interiorization of Islam. According to Louis Massignon: “it is from the Qur’an constantly recited, meditated, and experienced, that esoterism proceeded in its origin and its development”.

Islam is said to be ‘the way of God’ in the Qur’an, which includes both esoterism and exoterism. But Tarqiah (the path of God) mentioned in Q73:19 and Q76:29.

Verily this is a reminder, therefore whosoever will, let him take path to His Lord

is clearly the esoteric path which has ‘Reminder’ as its driving-wheel and produces remembrance (dhikr) which is itself the foundation of esoterism (Victor D. n.d.).

The decisive argument in favour of the prophetic origin of esoterism lies in esoterism itself. If esoteric wisdom came from an external source into Islam, those who aspire to that wisdom—which is assuredly neither bookish nor purely mental in its nature could not rely on the symbolism of the Qur’an for realizing



that wisdom ever afresh, whereas in fact everything that forms an integral part of the spiritual method of esoterism is constantly and of necessity drawn out of the teachings of the Prophet and the Qur'an.

The fact that in the first centuries of Islam, esoteric doctrine does not appear with all the metaphysical development found in later times does not confirm the thesis of a non-Muslim origin of esoterism. Now, in so far as this point is valid for an esoteric tradition, that is, which is mainly transmitted by oral instruction – it proves the very contrary of what the theory tries to maintain. The first esoterists expressed themselves in a language very close to that of Qur'an and their concise and synthetic expressions already imply all the essentials of the doctrine. If at a later stage, the doctrine became more explicit and was further elaborated, this is something perfectly normal to which parallels can be found in every spiritual tradition. Doctrine grows, not so much by the addition of a new knowledge, as by the need to refute errors and the reanimate a diminishing power of intuition. (Titus, B. n.d.).

From the foregoing, it is clear that esoteric doctrine comes from Muhammad, but as no esoterism without certain divine guidance, the doctrine is continually manifested afresh by the mouth of masters. Oral teaching is moreover superior, since it is personal and direct to what can be gathered from writing. Writings play only a secondary part as a preparation, and aid or a complement to memory and for this reason the researches of scholars sometimes avoid the historical continuity of esoteric teaching.

The succinct inference one can make here, is that the Islamic message can be viewed from the perspective of the exoteric, a purely affirmation of the oneness of God and esoteric, the mystical content of the doctrine of oneness of God. Both the Qur'an and the message of the Prophet have exoteric and esoteric interpretation. However, to be an example for all in the community, the Prophet had to balance the contemplative and active life (Titus, B. n.d.).

The Apostolic Origin

Esoterism is generally believed to have originated among Muslims near Basra in modern Iraq, though there is a history of esoterists in Transoxania dating from shortly after the time of Muhammad. By the time that Islam had been firmly established in Madinah, the esoterists were few in number. This is clear from a verse of the Qur'an that was sent to the Prophet not long after Hijrah; which discussed a group of those who were with the Prophet who followed most closely his practices and who may therefore be considered to form a spiritual elect. The message of the verse was to modify the long vigils where Allah says:

Verily your lord knows that you do stand (to pray at night) a little less than two thirds of the night or half the night, or a third of the night, and also a party of those with you.... (Q73:20)

This modification is not to be considered merely as a concession to exoterism. It should be juxtaposed with another verse revealed almost the same time,

"We have appointed you a middle nation" (Q2:143).

As evidence that the new religion should lean towards moderation and normality. A conversation between the Prophet and one of his companions in madinah is also of importance. Othman bin Maz'un was according to Omar – this brother – in – law, "the severest of us all in abstaining from the things of his world" the Prophet was reported to have said to him: "have you not in me an example. And when 'Othman passionately assented, the prophet told him to cease his practice of fasting everyday and keeping vigil every night. He then asked Othman to pray and sleep, and fast and breakfast. (Abu Bakr, S.E. n.d.).

Also, the question of the development of esoterism needs to be considered in connection with its nature. If the esoterism of every religion is a prolongation of the presence of its founder, it must also be something of a compensation for his absence. And if the root of esoterism is that of Apostolic age and also draws its

substance from that age, it has also been enriched directly and vertically, in various domains, by the inspirations with which the great spiritual masters have been blessed throughout the centuries. And what the esoterists claim is that all essential aspects of esoteric method are of Apostolic origin (Abu Bakr, S.E. n.d).

The message of Islam can be looked at from two different but complementary perspectives, the esoteric and the exoteric. Both dimensions are to be found in the foundations of the law (Shari'ah) of Islam, Qur'an and Sunnah. In essence, there is an esoteric spiritual interpretation of the revealed Book and of the Sunnah of the Prophet that is addressed to a small mystical minority of contemplative. And there is an esoteric explanation that reaches out to an enormous believers, who are not preoccupied with contemplation for many reasons, but who are attractive to the commandments and prohibitions contained in the Shari'ah of Islam. Since exoteric Islam embraces the overwhelming mass of believers, it is not surprising that the Qur'an and Sunnah seem exclusively addressed to them with apparently no provision for the contemplatives of the community. The path that the Prophet of Islam brought to the community was a spiritual path based on the realization of the knowledge and love of Allah. The Sunnah left behind by the Prophet is addressed to all and sundry in his community and contains directives for both the non-contemplative and the contemplative life, the former covering warfare, commerce, marriage, liturgy, morality, government, and a host of commandments and prohibitions addressed to the individual and society in general. It is clear that the mystical and non-mystical facets of his Sunnah are not always in harmonious balance or that they cannot be pursued simultaneously to the limit without sooner or later extinguishing the inner life altogether. ("For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life, according to the Gospel"). However, for the prophet to be a complete example of all in his community, he has to maintain balance between the active life and contemplative so as to incorporate into the faith the most modest spiritual aspirations among his Nation (Victor, D. n.d.).

Mysticism in Islam is a woven round tawhid, oneness of God, which is the central doctrine of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The method often employed in realizing tawhid has always been the remembrance of God, dhikr Allah which extends from recitation of the Qur'an to the permanent invocation of the divine name, Allah. So, the essence of the Islamic faith is noted in tawhid and dhikr. While the latter negates the

tendency towards forgetfulness (ghaflah), the former removes every tendency towards associating partners with Allah, Shirk. In Sufism, the Prophet's tawhid and dhikr embraced both the mystical and non-mystical levels of Islam for he was a model for his entire community. This is bay'at 'al – ridwan (the pact of divine contentment), which is purely spiritual. This is contained in the Qur'an where Allah says:

"Verily those who give pledge (bay'ah) to you (Muhammad), they are giving bay'ah to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands Q48:10".

The Prophet's Companions and the Tabi'un

After the transition of the holy Prophet (in 11 A.H./632 C.E), Islam was transmitted to generations by the companions. The numerical strength of the companions has not been fixed by the tradition. Not all of them have ever been found to be mystics, especially when they are viewed from the extensive point of view. Muhawiyah (d. 60A.H./680 C.E), the first Umayyad caliph is a companion whose life is not attributable to any contemplative trait while that of the first rightly guided caliphs of Islam (reign from 11A.H.-40 A.H./632 C.E.-661 C.E) are considered to be mystical to a large extent. In essence, some of the companions of the prophet, especially when their number was quite small, and a handful of the prophet's wives are seen as mystics; the four orthodox caliph and Khadijah, Aysha as well as Zaynab are examples.

Despite the link between these companions and spouses of the prophet with mystical life, no comprehensive literature on the spiritual life has been reported to have come from them. However, the arrival of Imam Ali's caliphate brought with it compilations of his sermons and letters found to have satisfactory details about mysticism. Regrettably, all these could only be found in scanty forms in Arabic literature.

Next in rank after the companions are their followers, in a technical term, 'Al-Tabi'un. These followers did not see the Prophet, neither did they receive any teaching or message from him, but were taught by whom the Prophet tutored, the companions. By this singular honor, they assumed the dual feature or characteristic of authoritative spirituality and direct transmission of what they received from the companions.

If there is no certainty as regards the exact number of the companions, it is equally difficult to ascertain the number of the followers. It can however, be conveniently put that those who are esoterists or mystics are very few. Two of these esoteric followers are the

Sunmi, Hassan al – basri (d.110 A.H. /728 C.E) and the fourth Imam of the Shiites, Ali Zayn’al Abidin (d. 95 A.H. / 714 C.E.) Hassan Al-Basri’s existence was both ascetic and mystical as revealed by his constant preoccupation with the terrible events of judgement. Going by this, it could also be acceptably put that his outward life radiated the fear of God (khawf).

The Ascetics after the Followers

The unified and cohesive Islam evaporated with the death of the followers of the companions. What followed was Islam in different sects: Kharijites, Shiites, Sunnis,

Mu’tazlites and so forth each claiming to be the real representation of authentic Islam. This is what the Qur’an asserts where Allah says:

But they (men) have broken their religion among them into sects, each group rejoicing in what is with it (as its beliefs) (Q23:53).

The different sects all pointed to the elect (‘Al-khassah) in their midst, who were seen as ascetics very common in Umayyad days. Asceticism was seen as a reaction to the increasing worldliness/materialism generated by the expanding Islamic civilization in towns and cities, where new wealth and peoples embraced Islam. (Q45:24).

The rank of these ascetics as claimed by the esoteric tradition included Dawud Al-Taai (d. 162 A.H./ 777 C.E), Fudayl bin Iyad (d. 187 A.H./ 802 C.E) Shaiq Al-Balkhi (d. 194 A.H./810 C.E) Habib ‘Al-Ajami (d. 156 A.H./ C.E) Ibrahim bin Adham (d. 165 A.H/ 780 C.E). Their asceticism was subordinated to their devotional aspirations. It was a discipline in view of the love and knowledge of God. This asceticism has been found by scholars to be discordant with the social Sunnah the Holy Prophet left behind without considering his mystical Sunnah.

The Emergence of Esoterism as the Integral Spiritual Path

Abu Nasr Al-Sarraj in his book, Kitab ‘Al-luma’ points out that the word mysticism was already known in the days of Hassan Al-Basri, but what could not be ascertained is, at what time, in his ninety years of existence, was the term first used. It was, however, certain that in the middle of the second/eighth century, the term was identified with some individuals such as Jabir ibn Hayyan, a disciple of the sixth Imam, Ja’far ‘Al-Sadiq (d.148 A.H. / 765 C.E) and Abu Hashim Al-Kufi (d. 160 A.H. / 776 C.E).



To identify the real emergence of mysticism, it is pertinent to examine a number of historical events, which took place in the third/ninety century.

First is the tendency to confuse asceticism with the path. This arose from the incredible exp which brought millions into the community. This magnificent Islam conquest gave birth to hordes of sects trying to dispute the articles of faith, and as such asceticism was getting out of hand, tending to be likened with the path and threatening the existence of its mystical nature. To distinguish the sages of the integral path from the droves of ascetic partisans, the former decided to call themselves mystics and their discipline mysticism. So, the term mystics was exclusive to those who preached the total spiritual path with its aspect of love, action and knowledge.

Second is the establishment of great Sunni of jurisprudence, madhahib, such as the great four Imams: Hanafi, Shafi, and the Hambali. None of these schools, regarded as the crystallizations of the Shari’ah of Islam in its exotic form, preceded the term mysticism. So, exoterism gave birth to esoterism and consequently the appearance of mysticism in the community.

The third factor, as pointed out earlier, the Shiites regarded their Imams as not only infallible in religious and political matters but also exclusive in the guardianship of the integral message of the faith, reducing every one else including masters of the tariqah to a peripheral, function. Therefore, to dissect the concept of

the path from the Shiites conception about their Imams, and ensure that the existence of tariqah was not dependent on the Imams alone, esoterism manifested itself as the bearer of the complete spiritual message of Revelation. So, after the seventh and eight Imams, Musa Al-Qasim (d. 183 AH. /799 C.E) and Ali Al-Rida (d. 203 A.H. / 765 C.E) respectively, the interaction between the remaining Imams of mysticism and the sages waned considerably. After the demise of the sixth Imam, Ja'far Al-Sadiq (d. 148 A.H./765 C.E), mysticism started ramifying the community with an unprecedented speed.

With the rise of Islamic philosophical schools, there are translation of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic, thus generating a lively interest in Greek wisdom which later encouraged an enquiry into the tenets of the faith. This singular factor, the fourth in the series of factors, pushed mysticism to distinguish itself from the rationalistic school.

Put succinctly, the coming of philosophical thinking in Islam, which reduces knowledge to abstract, mental categories, lacking in spiritual vision of the Real sped up the realization of mysticism as an embodiment of spiritual wisdom. And so, from the third to ninth century, the term (gnosis) started to push aside Ilm (knowledge) as the central focus of the path.

The fifth factor attributed to the public emergence of esoterism could be linked with the formalism of the 'Ulama' which created the schools of jurisprudence and the irrational inference that the doctors of the law only could interpret the revealed message. These religious leaders of Islam never embraced the Umayyah Dynasty for reasons. However, the rise of Abbasid regime saw the 'Ulama' wielding tremendous power in the administrative, executive and judicial functions of the state, so much that they claimed exclusive monopoly of the contents of the Islamic revelation. Consequently, esoterism had to assert itself and claim that it represented the contemplative message of Islam, regarding exoterism as a dogmatic version of the faith.

Lastly in the series of the factors is the birth of mysticism as the authoritative representation of Islam to avoid total creature of spiritual teaching. This is because as days rolled by the original synthetic message of action, love and knowledge as found in the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet was being reduced by limitations of men to a mere devotion or salvation through observance of the commandments and prohibitions of the law. The 'Ulama' were gaining followership because majority of the believers were not interested in

treading the spiritual path.

However, the birth of the fourth/tenth century saw esoterism networking the Muslim world. The limit of the Islamic exoterism and fragility of its representative manifested in the collision between the doctors of the law and esoterism. This really showed that exoterism could not exist independently of all spiritual influences of mysticism two was not definitive is clear from the later reconciliation by Al-Ghazali (d. 606/111) followed by that of Abdulqadir Al-Jilani (d. 561/1166) in his book Al-Ghunyah (The Self sufficient).

In the fifth/eleventh century, Al-Ghazzali has to put all these different esoteric concepts together in a well-defined manner. After his enlightenment in esoterism, he wrote his famous treatise, Ihya'uluum 'al-din (The revival of the Religious sciences) where he anchored the Islamic religion on the Shari'ah and mysticism. After 'al-Ghazzali had left the scene, it became extremely difficult for knowledgeable Islamic scholars to reject the path without betraying their dearth of knowledge of the spiritual content of the Islamic message. (Victor, D. n.d)

Therefore, later critics of mysticism could only criticize particular mystics or some of their teachings and not the path itself.

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The Muslim World Today

MWL Journal Desk Report

The Islamic Affairs in the Modern world is currently practiced and taught in a compatible way. The language used to explain religion is relevant to peace, guidance and harmony for the humanity. However, at present, it has been alleged of fanaticism, extremism, regression, violence and so on.

Islam today is facing challenges from

within and from the wider world. The critical problems are the fundamental tensions within Islam. The attitudes and criticisms common in the outside world can be ignored as misguided or hostile, but the tensions within Islam throughout the world must be confronted. In a simple geographical sense, Islam has to come to grips with its changing centers.



It is also noted that Islam is the only religion growing faster than the world's population, and it will be the largest in the world by 2070 according to the US-based Pew Research Center. It analyzed demographic change among the world's major religions and found that the world's population of Muslims will grow by 73 per cent between 2010 and 2050, compared to 35 per cent for Christians, the next fastest-growing faith.

Since the world's population will grow by 37 per cent over the same period and if it continues to grow by past 2050, Muslims will outnumber Christians by 2070, the report found.

In such a case it is important to explain the major challenges faced by Islam in the contemporary world, and what are the true teachings of Islam regarding these allegations. The message of Islam that is full of love, peace, learning and progression.

For many Muslims and non-Muslims alike, it is clear that the contemporary Muslim world is in crisis. Despite the invention of scientific innovation, political and economic success, and cosmopolitan tolerance, the Muslim world now lags behind much of the rest of the world in numerous significant areas including the sciences, and artistic and cultural production. A particularly disturbing (and often cited) measure comes from the United Nations Development Program, which reports that the total number of books translated into Arabic since the 9th century is around 100,000, or about as many books as are translated in a single year in Spain.

According to a report, it is mentioned that governance is also a major problem throughout the Muslim world, where true democracies are rare and the vast majority of states routinely deny basic human rights to their citizens. Of the 46 Muslim-majority countries, Freedom House deems only 7 percent (three countries) to be "free," while 43 percent (20 countries) are deemed "partially free" and 50 percent (23 countries) are "not free." These proportions are virtually reversed for the rest of the world, such that 46 percent of all countries are considered "free," 30 percent are "partially free," and only 24 percent are "not free."

From Palestine, Iraq, and Sudan to Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Somalia, the borders between the Muslim world and the West have become flashpoints for major conflict. Russia has fought multiple battles in the majority-Muslim province of Chechnya.

The United States is now fighting major conflicts in two Muslim countries, Iraq and Afghanistan. Indeed, since 9/11 the United States and other Western countries have devoted substantial resources and attention to fighting conflicts in the Muslim world, leading to accusations from some Muslims that the West is engaged in a battle against Islam itself. To its credit, the United States has consistently denied these claims, arguing that U.S. interventions in Muslim countries have been based on legitimate national security concerns. Nonetheless, there exists throughout the Muslim world a pervasive sense of humiliation and foreign domination—a feeling that has heightened volatility among communities and individuals already aware of their relative deficiencies in the sciences, art, and politics.

Given the linguistic, geographic, and cultural diversity of the Muslim world, it is superficial and not appropriate to suggest that Islam is the source of all these problems. There is after all very little relationship between the Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia and that practiced in Egypt, Malaysia, or the United States in overall.

Nevertheless, although Islam is not the source of the Muslim world's problems, there is an important and relevant relationship between Islam and many of the oppressive laws and practices that are prevalent throughout the Muslim world. Political Islam is under challenge from its own rhetoric and message to be self-critical, to live up to its own standards, to live up to the principles it espouses and demands of others, to avoid and denounce excesses committed by the governments and movements that identify themselves as Islamic as well as to take or share responsibility for the failures of Muslim societies and not simply to blame the west for all the problem.

Perversely, the vast majority of Muslims—who indeed reject violence and extremism—are increasingly marginalized and caught between the narratives promoted by radicals within their own faith community and conservatives from outside their communities. The roots of these dual misinterpretations of shari'ah come from a specific set of historical circumstances that have cast a long shadow on the Muslim world and its interaction with the West. The truth is that shari'ah if implemented correctly, can protect human rights. But understanding the proper application of shari'ah requires, in the first instance, a brief introduction to the origins and sources of Islamic law.



Prophet, the bright moon

Amal Al-Sibai

His face; his soft dark eyes, the twinkle in his face when he smiled, was just as beautiful as the radiant full moon in a clear, black night sky. I wish I saw his bright, glowing face. I wish I had been Asmaa bint Abu Bakr who brought food and provisions to the cave for her father and the Prophet as they hid before their escape from Makkah.

I wish I had been Anas who served the Prophet (peace be upon him), or Abu Bakr who supported him, or Omar bin Al-Khattab who defended him, or Ali bin Abi Talib who sacrificed his own life for the Prophet's life, or Khalid bin Al-Walid who fought in battles with him. I wish I heard Bilal's melodious voice call to prayer so that I can pray behind the Prophet (peace be upon him). I wish I had been the little girl, Rubay bint Muaw-

width, who took to the Prophet a plate of fresh dates and small cucumbers and then he gave her a handful of jewelry in return. Years and centuries separate us from them; our generation from those fortunate ones who surrounded the Prophet (peace be upon him) and who, despite their extreme physical hardships, felt blissful and content because he (peace be upon him) was among them.

All that we have is a flickering hope that we will meet him in Paradise, and we have very vivid descriptions of him, as his companions described him (peace be upon him).

One of the Prophet's companions, Jabir bin Samurah, said about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), "I saw him on one full moon night. I looked at him and I looked at the moon. He was dressed in a red garment. I compared him to the moon and found that he was better [looking] than the moon." As for his physical appearance, his cousin, Ali bin Abi Talib, said that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was neither excessively tall nor extremely short; he was of medium height. His hair was neither curly nor wavy. It was not too curly nor was it plain straight, and his hair was black and quite long, reaching to under his earlobes. His face was not swollen, but it was fairly round. He had large, black eyes with long eyelashes. He had broad shoulders and thick palms, fingers, and toes. There was the seal, the marking, of a Prophet between his shoulders, and it was the size of a pigeon's egg.

Ali bin Abi Talib, said about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), "He is the Seal of Prophets, the most generous and the bravest of all. His speech was the most reliable. He was the keenest, most trustworthy, and the most attentive to people's needs and he was very careful to pay people's due in full. The Prophet was the most well-mannered, polite, and the most yielding companion. Seeing him from afar you would fear and venerate him, but he who has acquaintance with him will love him."

Anas bin Malik, who lived in the Prophet's home, described the Prophet's skin color as being neither white nor dark brown. By the time of his death, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had only 20 white hairs scattered on his head and beard. Rubay bint Muawwidh, the young girl who brought the Prophet (peace

be upon him) a plate of dates and cucumbers, and later became a scholar, said, "Had you seen him, you would have felt that the sun was shining."

Abu Huraira who was keen on staying close to the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "I have never seen a thing nicer than Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him). It seems as if the sunlight were moving within his face. I have never seen one who is faster in pace than Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him). It seemed as if the earth had folded itself up to shorten the distance for him, for we used to wear ourselves out while he was at full ease." Ka'ab bin Malik described the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying, "When he was pleased, his face would shine with so bright a light that you would believe that it was a piece of the moon."

As for his character, no writer's words can make justice, but Ali ibn Abi Talib eloquently described the Prophet's character. Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet (peace be upon him), asked his father, Ali, about the Prophet's conduct. Ali bin Abi Talib replied, "He was always cheerful, gentle, and mild. There was no rigidity or coarseness in his conduct. He was not loud. He was not a fault finder and he steered away from profane language and futile engagements. The Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged his companions. He refrained from boasting, hoarding wealth, and involvement in matters that did not concern him, and from using sharp rebukes and exposing people with the intention to disgrace and defame."

"While speaking, he addressed matters constructively with the objective of good for all. His audience remained motionless as they gave him their undivided attention. None of his listeners would interrupt while he spoke. They waited until he completed his discussion and the person who then requested to participate was allowed to address the group. Participants were treated with respect - each was allowed to finish his statement without objection or interference." "The Prophet (peace be upon him) was patient and tolerant. He laughed at things that were humorous and was excited by what excited his companions. With regards to the needy, he encouraged the wealthy to support the poor. He objected to being praised excessively and tolerated it only as a way of being shown thanks for his kindness." That was the Prophet (peace be upon him), brighter than the bright moon.

A Comparative Analysis of the Western Ethics and Islamic Ethics

Shajeda Islam

The Western Ethics is the branch of philosophy concerned with the good life and with moral value and moral reasoning.¹ Ethics studies the differences between right and wrong, and through these studies the Western Philosophers have developed several theories. Some of the major ethical theories are Egoism, Hedonism, Utilitarianism, intuitionism, and so on. Western ethics grew from the rejection of the traditional worldview of medieval Christian civilization and is based on human reason and the senses independent of revelation does not have a parallel within the Islamic world and is something unique to Western civilization.²



According to the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, (peace be upon him), the concept of ethics in Islam centers around on certain basic beliefs and principles:

- (1) God is the Creator and source of all goodness, truth, and beauty.
- (2) Man is a responsible, dignified, and honorable agent of his Creator.
- (3) God has put everything in the heaven and earth in the service of mankind.
- (4) By His Mercy and Wisdom, God does not expect the impossible from man or hold him accountable for anything beyond his power. Nor does God forbid man to enjoy the good things of life.
- (5) Moderation, practicality, and balances are the guarantees of high integrity and sound morality.
- (6) All things are permissible in principle except what is singled out as obligatory, which must be observed and what is single out as forbidden, which must be avoided.

Man's ultimate responsibility is to God and his highest goal is the pleasure of his Creator.

So it is obvious that the dimensions of ethics in Islam are numerous, far-reaching and comprehensive. It deals with the relationship between man and God, man and his fellow men, man and the other elements and creatures of the universe, man and his innermost self.³

Imām Malik reported that the Prophet, (peace be upon him) had stated that the foremost purpose of his being sent down as a prophet in this world and the method of his call to the people was nothing else but to strengthen the moral character of the people: "I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good moral."⁴

Therefore, the fundamental difference between the Western ethics and the Islamic ethics is that the Western ethics is based on men of knowledge or philosophers' own wisdom, intellect and learning. But the Islamic ethics is based on Will and Command of God and Prophet Muhammad's, (peace be upon him) practical demonstration of Allah's Command.

The followings are the brief details of the comparative analysis of the Western Ethics and Islamic Ethics, which further clarifies the differences between these two ethical principles and concepts:

The Means or Source of Obtaining the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong: the Western philosophers have no agreed answer to this subject or concept. Each one of them has a different answer. For

examples:

The viewpoint of empiricism says that the true knowledge is derived exclusively from human sense experience and it is the only reliable source of the knowledge of good and evil. For these philosophers, all significant knowledge is a posterior, and a priori knowledge is either nonexistent or tautological.⁵

The school of thought is known as intuitionism says that fundamental moral principles or rightness of acts is apprehended by intuition.⁶

But in Islam, the source of man's knowledge of good and evil is found in the guidance furnished by God through His Book, Qur'an and His Prophet, (peace be upon him). For example, Allah has commanded all Muslims to follow the excellent habits and the best traits of the Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him), and to take guidance from his life:

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the meeting with) Allah and the Last day, and remembers Allah much."⁷

The Principles and Methods of Teaching: the Western philosophers' teaching of the ethics, there is investigation of cause and effect, there is discussion on psychological properties, there is an aim, purpose and object of moral conduct, and there is delineation of action and the like; but beyond theory and discussion, the practical application in non-existent.⁸

In Islam, all of the Prophets, (peace be upon them) including the last Prophet of Allah, Muhammad, (peace be upon him), based their teachings of ethics directly from the Commandments of God and based their instruction on nothing else besides. As Allah says about Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him).

"He does not speak from his desires, verily it is divinely revealed revelation."⁹

The fundamental difference, which distinguishes the Prophets, (peace be upon them), from philosophers, is that the Prophets, (peace be upon them) in addition to giving moral guidance, provide practical examples from their sinless lives.

The Status of Man in the Universe: the Western ethics or moral philosophy, which developed on human reason and senses independent of revelation, does not have the correct answer or true information about man's place and status in the universe.

The first problem to be settled is that of man's place and status in the universe. This problem enjoys priority over all others, because it would be mean-



ingless to build up any ethical system without first deciding as to the real position of man in this world. The question about standards of conduct will defy all solutions unless the status and the position of man are correctly determined. Not only the question of status is decisive in determining the nature of man's conduct vis-à-vis the world in question but on this very point will rest another very fundamental question; who would be the proper authority to determine man's conduct in relation to it, for example, whether man himself enjoy this authority, or it would be enjoyed by the God Whose agent he is. Instead of beginning the ethics with the first question of man's status or position in the universe, the Western philosophers have jumped into the middle and lodged themselves into a muddle.¹⁰

But Islam takes up this very question, man's place and status in the universe, before anything else and explained clearly that the status of man in this world is that of an 'abd (God's servant and slave) who is also khalifatul Allah (Allah's deputy and vicegerent). All things in the world with which he comes in contact belong to God. Even his body and the capacities with which he is endowed are not, in fact, his own but are a trust from the Lord. As Allah says,

"Allah who created the heavens and earth and sent down rain from the sky and with it brought out fruit

*for your provision. He has put ships in your service sailing through the sea by His command; and likewise He has put the rivers in your service. He has also put the sun and moon in their orbits to be of service to you; and He made the night and day in your service."*¹¹

"Similarly, Imām Muslim recorded that the Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him) said, "The world is beautiful and green, and Allah – be He exalted – has made you governors over it to see how you will act."¹²

This being man's real position in the world, it logically follows that he is not the master—but the agent and the deputy. Sovereignty belongs to the God alone; man is His vicegerent and the only moral course open to him is to fulfill the task, which the Sovereign has assigned to him.

The motive of Moral Conduct: the Western philosophers of ethics did not give the one agreed answer to the question of what is the motive, which induces a man to obey moral law even against his natural inclinations or personal interest. For examples, according to the school of egoism, the motive behind all moral acts ought to be self-interest.

For the school of hedonism, the motive behind all acts of moral ought to be a pleasure.

Altruism is the view that morality sometimes en-

joins us to sacrifice our own interests in the name of the interest of others.¹³

Therefore, it is certain that the Western philosophers of ethics could not produce one universal motive, which could induce human beings to follow the path of truth and virtue and abstain from the falsehood even in the face of adversity.

In Islam, the real motive-force, which would impel a Muslim to observe the canons of morality and to abstain from immoral conduct would be the love of God, the desire to seek His Pleasure, the fear of His Displeasure and the consequences—good or otherwise—which are to follow in the Hereafter. As Allah says,

*“And there is the type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is full of kindness to (His) devotees.”*¹⁴

Similarly, Imām Bukhari and Muslim recorded that the Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him) said, “Surely, all actions are but driven by intentions and, verily, every man shall have but that which he intended. Thus, he whose migration was for Allah and His Messenger, [then] his migration was for Allah and His Messenger; and he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take a woman in marriage, his migration was for that which he migrated.”¹⁵

In short, if the motive behind Muslims’ good conduct and actions is self-interest or some kind of personal gain, then that conduct is devoid of the beneficial spirit of morality. The ethical teachings of Islam are far removed from such base purposes. It is at this point that the distinction between Western philosophies of ethics and that of Islam become prominent.

Uniform and Comprehensive Rules of Ethics: the fundamental weakness of the Western ethics is that there is no uniform and universally accepted agreed rules and standard of ethics. The Western philosophers of ethics fail to build up simultaneously a firm and comprehensive basic moral norms and values, which could be used to guide and control the entire gamut of human’s life and activity. The different groups of thinkers gave different principles of ethics; their ideas are conflicting and even contradictory to each other, in theory as well as in practice. For examples, According to the school of emotivism moral judgments are neither true or false, and are merely verbal manifestations of the feelings of those who utter them and evocative of the feelings of those who hear them.¹⁶

The school of cultural relativism denies that there

can be any absolute or objective moral values on the grounds that moral values are the products of individual cultures, which differ from one another in such a fashion that the values central to each society differ from one another.¹⁷

As a result of that, neither of these groups’ principles of ethics is sufficient by itself could be taken as a universally authoritative and reliable source of the moral value, which could give a comprehensive moral guidance to every sphere of human life and society as a whole.

But Islam on the other hand gives such a comprehensive moral guidance, embodied in the Book of God and the Sunnah (way of life) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him) which ensures progress to the highest pinnacle in every sphere of human life and activity. It provides basic moral norms and values to guide and control the entire aspect of man’s life. For example, in the seventeenth chapter of the Qur’an there are twelve moral commandments, which every Muslim is supposed to obey. They are summarized as follows:

1. “Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him.”
2. “That you be dutiful to your parents.”
3. “That you give to the relative his due and to the poor and the traveler,” but a warning is given at the same time: “Do not indulge in willful extravagance.”
4. “That you do not let your hand be tied so tightly to your neck (that you do not help others), nor let it be so wide open that nothing is left (with you to meet your own needs) so that you are reduced to destitution.”
5. “That you do not kill your children for fear of being reduced to poverty. It is We who provide both for them and for you.”
6. “That you do not let even the thought come to you of fornication, for surely it is an indecent act and filthy behavior.”
7. “That you do not take anyone’s life which Allah holds sacred except for a just cause.”
8. “That you do not touch the property of the orphan (who is under your guardianship), unless it be to his benefit.”
9. “That you fulfill your undertakings. For every undertaking will have to be answered for (on the Day of Judgment).”
10. “That you give a full measure whenever you measure, and you weigh with an even balance.”

11. "That you do not follow that of which you have no knowledge."
12. "That you do not walk proudly on earth, for you cannot cleave the earth, nor shall you ever attain the stature of mountains."18

Therefore, it is a proven fact that Islam gives a comprehensive code of behavior for the individual and shows him the way to the highest possible moral excellence and also gives ethical principles on which the edifice of a truly righteous society can be raised.

Conclusion:

The above brief comparative analysis clearly shows that the Islamic ethics stands in sharp contrast with the Western ethics with every aspect of its principles and values. The Islamic ethics completely based on the Divine revelation, whereas the Western ethics is based on human reason and the senses independent of revelation, which makes the Western ethics incompatible with the values and principles of Islamic ethics.

In addition, the Western philosophers of ethics having made themselves independent of God, they have not been able to discover any alternative basis for building up basic moral norms and values to guide and control every sphere of human life. As a result of that, every individual or group of thinker has its own standard of ethics, which caused conflict with each other's theory as well as practice. This chaos has left the Western ethics or morality without any solid basis and threatening the Western world with moral and social disintegration.

Islamic ethics, on the other hand, free from the weakness and fallacies from which the viewpoint expressed by Western philosophies alike suffer. Islam provides the perfect ethical standard to mankind. It provides the human being with a stable and flawless set of values with a definite source, the Divine Revelation, as embodied in the Book of God and the Sunnah (way of life) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him), which remains unaltered under all circumstances. Moreover, with making the "Pleasure of God" as the object of man's life, the highest and noblest objective is set before humanity and thus unlimited possibilities are opened for man's moral evolution, untainted at any stage by any shadow of narrow selfishness or bigoted race or nation worship.

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A journey into the gardens of Islam

By Dr. Fatima Taneem Ruknuddin

“On the Day you shall see Believing men and women: their light running forward before them and in their right hand. Glad tidings for you this day... Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever... Truly! This is great success.” --- Surat Al-Hadid 57:12



The above Qur'anic verse is one among the many verses of the Qur'an mentioning 'Jannah', the heavenly abode, which is commonly translated as 'Paradise' which itself is derived from the Persian word "Paridaaeza" meaning "surrounding wall". 'Jannah' is almost always mentioned with 'rivers flowing under it' in several verses in different chapters (Surats) of the Qur'an. A few Surahs also describe the 'Jannah' in detail like Surat Fatir, Surat Yaseen, Surat Al-Rahman, Surat Al-Waqi'ah, Surat Al-Ghashiyah and so on wherein "the various comforts and pleasures" reserved for the inheritors of Jannah, living in eternal bliss, are described.

Below are mentioned a few of these verses:

- * In Surat Fatir 35:33 "Jannat Al-Adn" will they enter, therein will they be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls, their garments therein will be of silk."
- * In Surat Yaseen 36:55-57 "Verily the dwellers of 'Jannah' that day will be busy with joyful things." "They and their wives will be in pleasant shade, reclining on thrones", "They will have therein fruits of all kinds and all they ask for".
- * In Surat Al-Ghashiyah 88:10-16 "In Lofty Jannah." "Where they shall neither hear harmful speech nor falsehood." "Therein will be a running spring." "Therein will be thrones raised high." "And cups set at hand." "And rich carpets spread out."

Such vivid imagery of 'Jannah' with finer details mentioned else where in the Qur'an, prompted the Early Muslims to replicate the heavenly "Jannah" on Earth, and thus the lovely Islamic Gar-



dens were created. These were secluded havens of 'nature's beauty' where the Muslims could rest, contemplate and glorify God and His creations. These Islamic Gardens encompassed the key elements specifically mentioned in the Qur'an; namely Water, Shade and Greenery; the trio being symbolic for physical refreshment and spiritual upliftment as well. Most of these gardens were usually created in hostile conditions of extreme heat within arid deserts; yet they were 'spectacular creations' possessing luxuriant vegetation, specialised water systems and marvelous solid-structures; all built in harmony with nature. This was because the Muslims of the Medieval period deemed it proper to spend extravagantly to create these 'special replicas' of the heavenly 'Jannah'.

Persian style gardens

The Islamic Gardens of the earliest century were designed along the traditional Persian style of architecture 'the four-fold' or 'Char-bagh' designs. As Islam spread further in East and West; these gardens adapting the Persian theme also

began to incorporate distinct features reflecting the cultural diversity of the Muslim world. By the 10th century, different cities of the Muslim world were blooming with splendid Islamic gardens and landscapes in the countries which today are Iran, Iraq, Syria and Spain. The entry of the Mongols in Persia in the 13th century and their invasion into the Indian Sub-continent thereafter resulted in the "Persian Islamic Gardens" developing in the Indian Sub-continent with additional local features creating the Mughal Gardens. Example, the Shalimar Gardens in today's India and Pakistan and of course, the famous Taj Mahal at Agra in India.

The spread of the Islamic art of gardening across the Muslim world resulted in the dispersion of Islamic landscapes and gardens from Spain to India; from the Ummayyads to Ottomans and Mughals.

City of Gardens

Early Islamic cities like Baghdad and Damascus were labeled as 'city of gardens'. Basra in Iraq was described as 'Venice of the East' for its never-ending miles of canals criss-crossing the gardens



and orchards. In Spain, Cordoba Seville and Granada had famous gardens with Valencia labeled as 'scent bottle of Al-Andalus for its numerous flower gardens. Even Old Cairo, with its multi-storey buildings had thousands of private gardens; attesting to the popularity of the gardens even in downtown areas as opposed to suburbs. In North-Africa, multitude of gardens in cities not famous for their greenery in present times such as Tunis, Algiers, Tiemcen, Marakash. Shiraz and Isfahan in Persia and Nisbin too in Iraq were famous for their splendid gardens. These mentioned cities were just a few among the hundreds of cities boasting of the lush gardens.

Muslims named their gardens according to the purpose they served and they were as the following :

- *BUSTAN- Formal garden with pools and water channels present in the inner court of a house.
- *Jannah- Orchards with palms, oranges and vines; irrigated by canals.
- *RAWDAH- Vegetable garden producing food for the cooks.

*GULISTAN- Rose or any other flower dominated garden.

*BAGH- This term was generally used for gardens of mixed types.

'Charbagh' is a Persian word meaning '4 gardens'; which meant that a garden was divided into 4 quarters by water channels or pathways, usually with a fountain or pond at the center. The 'Islamic Charbaghs' symbolised the 4 rivers of Jannah' mentioned in the Qur'an in Surat Muhammad. These are the River of Water, River of Milk, River of Wine and River of Honey. One of the most famous Islamic Charbagh designs is seen in the gardens of Taj Mahal at Agra in India. The common features of this include courtyards, paths, fountains, abundant greenery of plants and trees and solid structures for shade and decoration but devoid of statues as Islam forbids such artwork. Some of the gardens also had pavilions and 'kiosks' and play areas with a few gardens housing zoos and race courses too. In the later centuries, 'royal mausoleums' were built amidst these lush beautifully serene gardens.

Use of water in gardens

The water features being the main theme of the gardens were made to flow in different ways throughout to enhance their appeal and elegance. Water displayed in the form of fountains, brooks, pools, winding streams, waterfalls and ponds practically watered the entire landscape and made the air cool, pleasant and fresh. It also provided dimension and sound to the garden. Fountain bearers were fixtures of the gardens and became the cornerstones of Islamic art and architecture. For example, The Lion Fountain at Al-Hamra in Spain was one of the marvels of its time and continues to rapture on-lookers even today. But the basis of gardening lay on engineering techniques through which water was distributed to the entire area via canals, aqueducts, waterwheels, shaduf and qanats. Islamic garden plants included date-palms and other kinds of palms, melons, grafted fruit-trees, herbs, other trees and vegetables and flowers of various kinds, all geometrically arranged.

These walled gardens with lush trees, scented flowers, shades and amazing water features became the popular 'hangout places' for the Muslims, playing host to numerous sports and cultural activities. This resulted in extensive development of leisure gardens, well-defined kitchen gardens, gardens in small courtyard and eventually huge gardens as big as cities. All this was made possible by the advances in agriculture and its techniques brought about by the Agricultural Revolution in the Mediterranean region; sparked off by the 'Royals' interest in botanical research and agricultural innovation leading to purchase and exchange of rare plants among the Arab rulers.



This Agricultural Revolution outlasted the European Agricultural Revolution by several centuries. Medieval Muslims were pioneers in establishing 'botanical gardens' and plant collections as endorsed by the following facts :

*In the garden of first Umayyad Amir of Spain, grew rare exotic flowers and plants from different regions of the world with even a new variety of pomegranate introduced into Spain through him. He is also credited with making date palm common throughout Spain.

*The Mamluk Sultan Qalawun of Cairo introduced Syrian plants onto his garden.

*A 13th century King of Kanem (North Africa) experimented with growing of sugarcane in his gardens.

*A Yemeni Sultan was famous for importing exotic trees; being the first to plant rice in the valley of Zabid. Another Yemeni Sultan was accredited with writing an agricultural treatise.

*In Tabriz, Persia, the gardens of 11-Khans were known to acclimatized rare fruit-trees from India, China, Malaysia and Central Asia.

Hence, these 'royal gardens' besides being spectacularly beautiful and grand, became the early 'botanical gardens' of Islam with varied fields for experimentation with seeds, cuttings and roots imported from distant regions of the world. They were often in the charge of leading scientists of their times. For example-

*Al-Tignari, author of an important Andalusian farming manual made botanical garden for a Spanish Taifa King and later on for Almoravid prince Tamin.

*In 12th century, the famous botanist and physician, Al-Shafran collected plants from distinct Spanish regions for the garden of Al-Mohad Sultan at Guadi.

*Tu Huerta del Rey in Toledo was directed by 2

leading Spanish agronomes, Ibn Bassal and Ibn Wafid, both of whom undertook agricultural experiments and wrote important manuals on farming.

During the Islamic Medieval period, the common farmers, the wise scholars and the 'royals', all took keen interest in cultivated gardens and landscapes as evidenced by numerous written works on Botany, Agriculture, Water and Land management. The love for plants even gave rise to the popular 'Rawdiya' or 'Garden poem' which conjured up the images of 'heavenly Jannah'. Thus, these 'Islamic Gardens'; more so 'Royal Gardens', became sites of serious scientific activity as well as places of rest, amusement and recreation. These gardens by being a part of a network linking the scientific agricultural activities of distinct Muslim regions played a definite role in the diffusion of useful plants and through them the iris, tulips, carnations and other plants entered Europe and made it their homes.

These 'Royal Gardens' were indeed enchanted places where nature was tamed. A few of them are mentioned below :

*The Gardens of Al-Mu'tasim at Samarra.

*The Great Royal Parks of the Aghlabid Amirs of Tunisia.

*The Gardens of many Taifa Kings of Spain.

*The Gardens of the Fatimid Caliphs of Egypt and of Vizir Al-Afdal.

*The Great Botanical Garden of 'Abdulrahman', the first Ummayyad Amir of Spain.

*The Gardens surrounding the Royal palaces at Fez and Marakash.

*The Huerta del Rey in Toledo.

*The Gardens of 11 Khans and Timurids at Tabriz and elsewhere.

*The Garden of Mahmud of Ghazni at Balkh.

Unfortunately, all of the above mentioned Islamic Gardens are lost to us; being recaptured only in the pages of historical records. Those that remain are surviving as 'ruins and archeological sites' with a few still existing as continued gardens bearing almost or traces of the original layout but with modern plantings. These, surviving formal gardens are seen beautifying a wide belt extending from Spain and Morocco in the West to India in the East.

Hence, these aesthetically beautiful Islamic Gardens have become symbols of the glorious Muslim heritage and have passed down a legacy of planting traditions that helped to make the Muslim world of yesteryears a greener better place to live.



Ottawa police plan to add hijabs to inclusion policy

First and only Muslim woman officer in Ottawa called for revision.

The Ottawa Police Service is looking into revising its inclusion policy after an officer told CBC News she wanted the hijab included in official policy.

Cst. Lila Shibley — the first and only Muslim woman with the Ottawa police — told All in a Day she thought a hijab policy would encourage more young girls to apply to become police officers.

After the interview, Chief Charles Bordeleau tweeted to-do list included drafting a hijab policy.

While the current stance is hijabs are acceptable, he said he plans on looking into how to make the force's cultural and religious inclusion policy more explicit about allowing officers to wear the head coverings.

"We just want to make sure that, from a safety perspective, whatever dress an officer wears is appropriate for their job," he said.

Bordeleau added that Shibley will have to make a formal request as a part of the process, but the discussion came from her conversation with CBC and not Quebec's new face covering ban.

There are no "specific differences" between the existing policy and the notion of a hijab-specific ruling, said Bordeleau.

"We have a policy that speaks generally to respecting cultural and religious differences, but we want to make it clear in our policy that it is acceptable."

Officer Shibley said she was surprised.

"I feel like it was lightning speed and that's the best I could ask for, a very responsive chief that's passion-

ate about diversity and building the service to be reflective of the community we have," she said.

Shibley said she hopes the new policy will encourage more Muslim women to apply to the police force.

"I think it gives a lot of those female candidates something to strive for," she said.

"If there isn't something explicitly out there that says 'we will take Muslim females wearing a hijab to be police officers,' there are people out there thinking that's a barrier."

Shibley said she believes it's important to eliminate any barriers in order for the force to get the best possible candidates.

There are men in the Ottawa Police Service who wear turbans, but, according to Shibley, the policy only came into place after a man wearing a turban applied.

"What we want to do is get ahead of what policies could be, rather than wait for someone to get hired to change the policy to be more inclusive," she said.

Over the weekend, Shibley was given an award from the Canadian Council of Muslim Women recognizing her contributions to policing.

A decade after she joined Ottawa police, she's still the only Muslim woman on the force.

She's heard from young girls in Ottawa who say they want to become police officers because of her, she said.

"This is a possibility, even though it's not a traditional role for a Muslim female, it's something you can do to make a difference in your community."



American Muslims are concerned – but also satisfied with their lives

Afshan Abdulaziz

Around more than two-thirds of Muslim are Americans. The majority of them are although worried and nurture a great concern about their place in U.S. society, but still most are holding on to their belief in the American dream.

The Pew Research Center estimates that 3.3 million Muslims live in the U.S., which makes Islam the nation's third-largest faith, behind Christianity and Ju-

daism. It's a diverse population primarily divided among African-Americans, South Asians, and Arabs, and a well-educated one: About 40 percent of U.S. Muslims hold college degrees, as opposed to 29 percent of Americans overall. A lot of American Muslims believe that if one works hard they can get ahead be a part of American Dream.

However, despite being content, according to the new survey

the U.S. Muslim community is facing numerous challenges. Around 55 per cent of people claimed that most Americans are friendly to Muslims, whereas 48 per cent mentioned that they had been racially discriminated against at least once in the past year.

Moreover, half of America's Muslims said being Muslim in the U.S. has gotten more difficult in recent years and this number of figure claiming this statement has

remained fairly constant over the past 10 years, according to Pew.

In a recent findings and reports, many respondents overwhelming said that they are proud American and that they can get ahead in society with hard work. They are satisfied with the direction of their own lives since they have been settled and living the United States for years. Only two-thirds of America's Muslims claimed that they are dissatisfied with the direction of the country.

On both of these counts, Muslim opinion has undergone a stark reversal since 2011, when Barack Obama was a president, at which point most Muslims thought the country was headed in the right direction and viewed the president as friendly toward them.

While Muslims say that they face a variety of challenges and obstacles in the U.S over the past 10 years as they claim that its getting harder to be a Muslim in America and has hovered around 50%, so this situation from the Donald Trump's presidency is nothing new. Besides, many of the Muslims consistently say, that the American media is biased against them; the coverage of Islam and Muslims by American news organization is "unfair."

U.S. Muslims are concerned about extremism and overwhelmingly opposed to the use of violence against civilians. As per the Pew Research, several U.S. Muslims say that for them, personally, being Muslim is about more than these core religious beliefs. Roughly seven-in-ten, for instance, say "working for justice and equality in society" is an essential part of their Muslim identity, and 62% say the same about "working to protect the environ-



ment" – which is higher than the share of U.S. Christians who said protecting the environment is essential to their Christian identity in response to a similar question (22%).

Additionally, those who said that there is a conflict was asked to explain, in their own words, why they think Islam and democracy clash. Some said that Islam and democracy have fundamentally incompatible principles and values, whereas others say the apparent conflict is because non-Muslims don't understand Islam or because terrorists give Islam a bad name and still others said that democracy in any way is incompatible with all types of religion.

In addition, the intense focus on Muslims is one part of a

broader identity crisis, which is spanning race or religion that this polarizing election has brought on. Driven by Donald Trump's scattershot statements, the divisive politics has drawn battle lines, of sorts, drawing supporters as well as detractors. That resulted in unpredictable things.

However, the concerned American Muslims have said that this was a political election and not a religious one. It's all about, not to make the country more Muslim, but instead to bring more financial resources to the country. The Muslim crowd is satisfied because they are most of the fellow non-Muslim Americans who believe that U.S is a place where diverse people live next to each other.

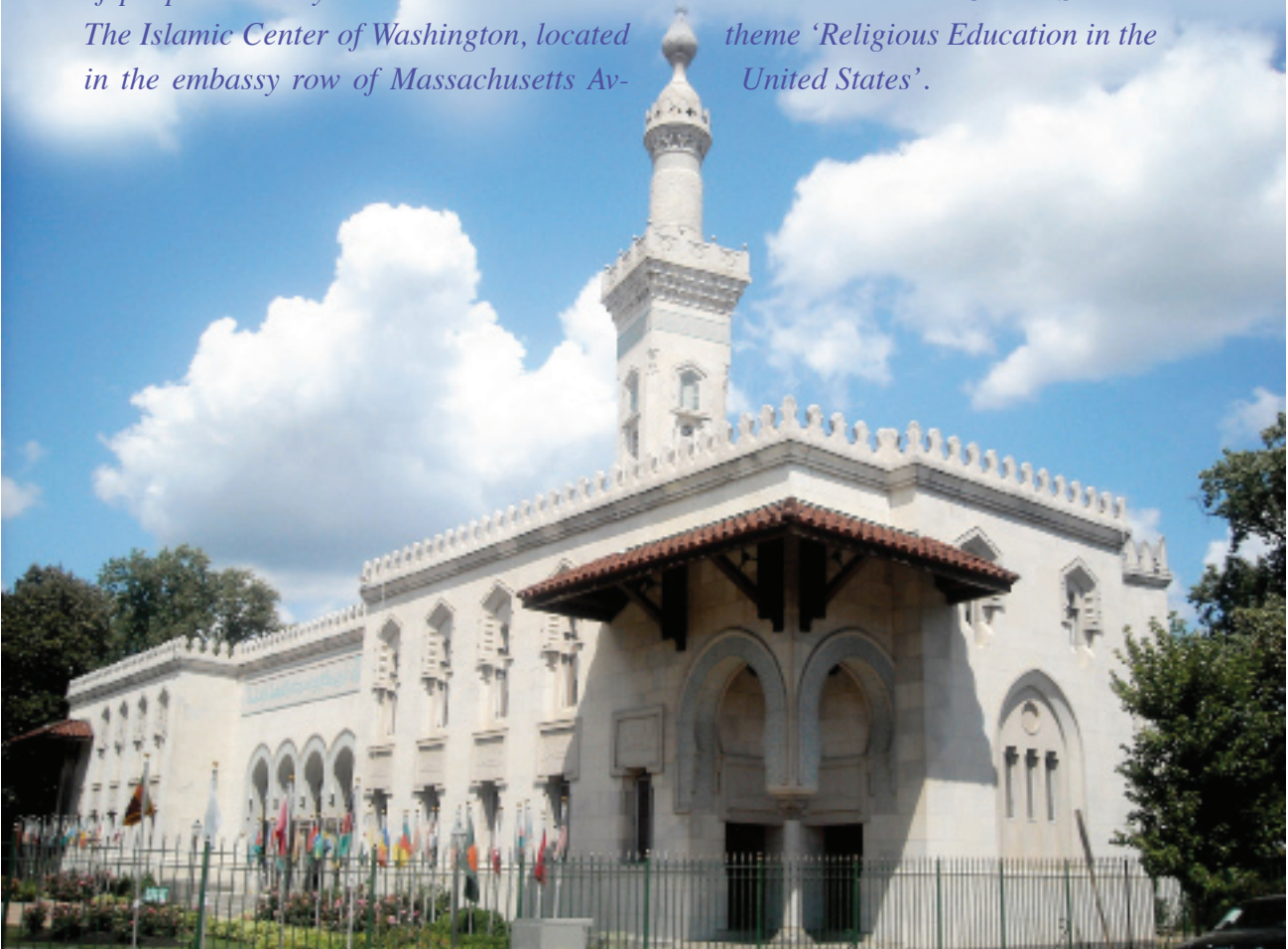


Washington Islamic Center: Signify peace and beauty

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Hossain

The Washington, D.C. is small on the basis of land, but everybody knows the importance of the city in global context. Potomac River surrounded Washington D.C. is the capital of the United States of America. The city is mainly located for the offices of the Federal Government, the offices of the Ambassadors, and the offices of various non-government organizations. The numbers of people are only six hundred thousand. The Islamic Center of Washington, located in the embassy row of Massachusetts Av-

enue in the heart of this city. This delightful mosque is not only the place of worship of the Muslims, but the nation has come to the center of the interest of visitors of all irrespective of religion. Islamic Center became one of the best tourist places among the many tourist attractions in Washington D.C. Islamic Center was also on my priority list. Remember that, I was state department invitee to visit the United States on theme 'Religious Education in the United States'.



In the last century, Muslims did not have a mosque in Washington since 1940 although the history of Muslims in the United States began in 1528 AD. Historians expressed their opinion that Muslims had come as slaves from Africa on the coastal areas, especially in the Texas area. Being Washington's federal capital there weren't huge Muslims community to establish Islamic center. The ambassadors of all countries of the Muslim world and their officials were in this city due to their consistency. As a result, there was a need for obligatory prayer including weekly sermon and the need for practice Islamic culture.

It is also necessary that Mr. Abdullah Al-Hawa and Egyptian Ambassador Hassan Pasha are also concerned about this demand. A foundation was formed to transform their thinking into reality, and in this, many Muslims could afford. Especially after the death of Turkish Ambassador Munir Erdogan in 1944 and his funeral in an open place, the work of establishing this mosque got speed. All ambassadors took a joint plan to build a mosque and Islamic center for Islam and their own needs. Ambassador Hassan Pasha Succeeded in the US, newly appointed Egyptian ambassador, Kamal Abdul Rahim took effective steps to establish this mosque. All the ambassadors of the Muslim world responded to his invitation and he was appointed as the president of this proposed mosque and Islamic center. He traveled to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and several other states to raise fund for the mosque. In the sense of paying Muslim community in advance, the land was purchased on 30 April 1946 by fixing a place for the mosque and on January 11, 1949, the construction of the mosque was inaugurated in the presence of all ambassadors.

With the zeal of the Middle East's ambassadors, the mosque continues to build rapidly. Muslim states provided overall support to build this mosque. The Egyptian government sent skilled carpenters to write in the wall artwork. The skilled craftsmen came from Turkey to set up all the tiles in the mosque, and some other country sent them all marble to their traditional craftsmanship. In the collective and sincere efforts of all and in the design of the Italian architect professor Mario Rosie, the construction of the mosque was completed by 1957. On June 28, 1957, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower inaugurated the activities of the mosque through a stylish ceremony. In the inaugural historic speech, the President said, "traditions of learning and rich culture" which have "for centuries contributed to the building of civilization." He affirmed America's

foundling principle of religious freedom and stated that: "America would fight with her whole strength for your right to have here your own church and worship according to your own conscience. This concept is indeed a part of America, and without that concept, we would be something else than what we are." The Muslim community in Washington got an Islamic center despite it was too late.

Since its inception, the Center has been proclaiming the truth, equality, and peace of Islam with great fame. The words of the present director and Imam Abdullah Khuyz mentioned very strongly in his message. He said 'many people misunderstood about Islam in the West, they believe that the Muslims are backward and they are very violent or quick react. But most of the people have a positive idea about Islam and Muslim. They do not blame everyone for some straying Muslims. Islam has brought peace and equality to all humanity. The teachings of Islam are the peace and prosperity of whole humanity. It must be proclaimed this great theme of Islam in a very patient and peaceful manner. "After the Khutbah in the mosque, all ambassadors became involved in discussions between themselves.

After the destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11, Muslims fall into the socio-economic crisis in America. The Islamic Center played an important role during this crisis. President Bush came to the center and announced that American Muslims are part of this country. Islam is not responsible for some terrorists. After his announcement, the crisis was gradually cut. President Barak Obama and important state leaders of the world visited this mosque.

Many of the other religions came to this center during the Friday sermon from the curiosity of hearing Khutbah of Imam. There are arrangements for sitting guests in attendance and listening to khutbah in English. The Mosque has also undertaken several social activities along with five times the Prayer like (1) Arabic language education courses for children and adults (2) Counseling if need anyone (3) Welcoming the visitors and providing the basic idea of Islam to the visitors. (4) Providing food for the poor and insolvent (5) Research activities and library services related to Islam. (6) Participate in all social activities with the United States government and other religious people. I felt joy after seeing the flag of Bangladesh fluttered with the flags of the major Muslim states in front of the beautiful mosque and Islamic center in Washington D.C.



Ancient garments reveal Islamic influence among Vikings

KARACHI: Work carried out by a Swedish researcher on garments found in graves dating back to the ninth and 10th centuries has thrown up groundbreaking insights into linkages between Vikings and the Muslim world.

Patterns woven into the garments with silk and silver threads have been found to spell the words “Allah” and “Ali”.

According to a BBC report, the researcher responsible for the breakthrough is textile archaeologist Annika Larsson of the Uppsala University. She got her “Eureka moment” when she was re-examining the remnants of burial costumes from male and female boat and chamber graves originally excavated in Birka and Gamla Uppsala in Sweden in the late 19th and mid-20th centuries.

The discovery has raised new questions about the influence of Islam in Scandinavia, says journalist Tharik Hussain.

The garments used in the research were kept in storage for more than 100 years, dismissed as typical examples of Viking Age funeral clothes.

Larsson became interested in the forgotten fragments after realising the material had come from central Asia, Persia and China.

She says that tiny geometric designs on the garments — no more than 1.5cm high — resembled nothing she had come across in Scandinavia before.

“I couldn’t quite make sense of them and then I remembered where I had seen similar designs — in Spain, on Moorish textiles.”

Larsson then realised she was not looking at Vi-

king patterns at all, but ancient Arabic Kufic script.

But the realisation came rather slowly, as initially she couldn’t decipher the two recurring words. To unlock the puzzle, she enlarged the letters and examined them from all angles, including from behind.

“I suddenly saw that the word ‘Allah’ [God] had been written in mirrored lettering,” she says.

Larsson has so far found the two names on at least 10 of the nearly 100 pieces she is working through. The finding raises fascinating questions about the graves’ occupants.

“The possibility that some of those in the graves were Muslim cannot be completely ruled out,” she says. “We know from other Viking tomb excavations that DNA analysis has shown some of the people buried in them originated from places like Persia, where Islam was very dominant.

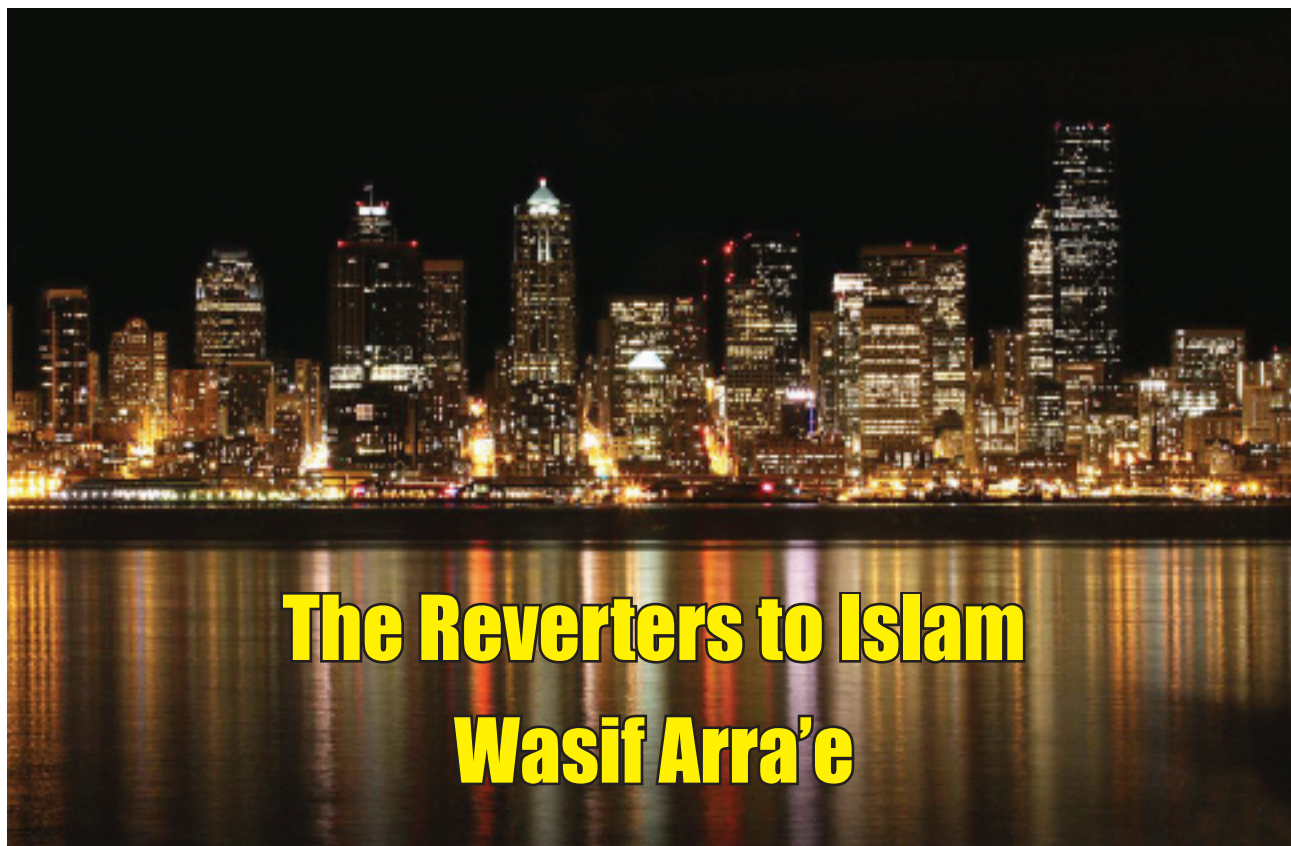
“However, it is more likely these findings show that Viking age burial customs were influenced by Islamic ideas such as eternal life in paradise after death.”

Contact between the Viking and the Muslim world has been established by historic accounts and the discovery of Islamic coins across the northern hemisphere.

Two years ago, researchers re-examined a silver ring from a female tomb at Birka and found the phrase “for Allah” inscribed on the stone.

But what makes Larsson’s discovery so interesting is that it is the first time historic items mentioning “Ali” have been unearthed in Scandinavia.

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The Reverters to Islam

Wasif Arra'e

Dr. Munqidh Assaqar
Translated by:
Sadok Salehi

In Amman, the capital of Jordan, Wasif Arra'e was born to a Catholic couple, who taught their child the love of Christianity and dedication towards its ritual. When he reached school age, they enrolled him in the American mission school "Terra Sainte," where mainly religious education was taught. Using their smart ways, teachers strengthen the belief of Wasif and his school mates to Christianity.

Many times the religious education teachers presented pictures of Christ, his mother and also pictures of the so-called saints on the projector. Wasif and his friends enjoyed immensely these presentations.

However, this situation changed when one of the teachers showed them a picture of a very old man with long hair and a bushy beard. He was sitting on the clouds. The teacher then asked them who this man was. Wasif expected many answers, except one. Calmly, the teacher answered it is the picture of God.

Glory be to Him; he has no partner and no equal.

"I have been shocked; I haven't known that people kept a picture of God." It was a defining moment added to the many questions in the mind of the intelligent boy. Ten years of cramming religious courses led Wasif to one conclusion. "Religion is mystery...as if faith has been revealed in a divine vernacular, hardly known to anyone, except God and his alleged vicegerents on earth. They interpret it according to their whims and desires." They have transformed religion into mumble jumble similar to the murmur and grunt of charlatans and sorcerers.

On one occasion, seeking some clarification about a religious matter, someone told him: "You may not argue with me about the texts of the bible. Their meanings are ostensibly different, and their symbols to things are unfathomable by laymen." Thus, asking a question about religion could entail one of the follow-

ing. Either it would be tabooed, evidence of profanation; doubt or suspicion or what the infamous inquisition termed as (heresy).

Initiating conversations with Wasif and his classmates, teachers or priests usually impose axioms that must be considered as dictums and must be obeyed. Even if one realizes that they are in absolute contradiction to reason and logic. One day, Wasif asked the priest: Why do we need an innocent man parading as God on the earth to receive forgiveness from him. Yet this presumed “God” would be killed and crucified in his place? Is God unable to forgive us with a single word from him?

The priest raised his voice with what he considered it to be the axiom: forgiveness of a sin comes only with a price. The spilled Christ’s blood on the cross is the ransom.

Wasif tried in vain to learn more about this wrong fallacy and a proof to this erroneous myth upon which Christianity is built. Who said this? Is this really true? Does God need a swap to grant us forgiveness?

As for Islam, the misunderstood religion, Wasif suckled its hate with his mother’s milk. Then, his missionary school completed what his parents have started. They filled his head with various malicious stories about Islam. They fed him with fabricated and not so fabricated stories. “I have never asked myself once whether this religion deserves mine or someone else’s hatred and hostility. I swore my resentment to a religion that I know nothing about. I only have done so obeying those whose hearts were filled with hatred towards Islam through sheer ignorance, deceit and blind imitation,” he said.

Wasif has not been a religious young man in the true sense of the word, despite his sparse visits to the church. He has tried to apply the Christian morality taught by the teachers or priest. They have told him Christianity was the religion of forgiveness and tolerance. He heard many times what Mathew has said about Jesus: “But *I* say unto you, not to resist evil; but whoever shall strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other; and to him that would go to law with thee and take thy body coat, leave him thy cloak also. And whoever will compel thee to go one mile, go with him too. But *I* say unto you, Love your enemies, [bless those who curse you,] do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who [insult you and] persecute you, (5-39-44).” However, when matters become serious, who would turn his left cheek to someone who slapped him on the right? Who would

give up his assets to someone who takes it forcibly through theft or coercion? Who would love his enemies or bless those who curse him? And who is among Christians that apply these teachings today?

Besides, such values are submerged in fantasy. They will put the foundation a society where injustice, corruption, subservience reign supreme.

It happened that Wasif’s father had an argument with the missionary school’s management. He moved his son from this school to a private one called “Al-Aqsa schools” known to be of good reputation. This decision will put Wasif side by side with the Muslims he hated. To avoid troubles, his parents advised him not to participate in any religious discussions.

The weekly Islamic education period hasn’t been a compulsory subject on Wasif as he was a Christian and had been exempted from taking part in it. However, the humble and nice manner of the teacher, (Muhammad Helail) has drawn Wasif to this course and stuck to it uninterrupted. He started memorizing verses of the Qur’an and the Prophet’s Sunnah. As a matter of fact, he was an excellent student. He surpassed his Muslim classmates in all subjects, including Islamic education.

He participated in many school excursions and field trips; he was also a boys’ scouts’ member. He took part in symposia, lectures, and camps with his Muslim schoolmates. He saw them praying and shared with them a day of fasting. Wasif observed his friends talk about religion; ask and get answers. Their religion has no secrets or specificities. “Islam has seemed to me a religion of reason and logic; a religion of strength, pride and realism. With strength and pride, you’ll find kindness and mercy.”

What Wasif has seen during two years was sufficient enough to refute the erroneous image about Islam. For long years, his head has been crammed with misleading notions about Muslims and Islam. How dare anyone to accuse Islam of Injustice against non-Muslims. Even so, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Who-soever does injustice to an ally (Mua’ahad); decrease his dues; overburdens him more than he can bear and takes away anything from him without consent; I will be his foe on the Day of Judgment.”

Furthermore, Wasif has been stunned by the Caliph Omar’ Bin Al-Khattab’s attitude towards the Jew when he saw him begging. He told the Exchequer: “By God, we haven’t been fair to him. We have used him in his youth and neglected him in his old age. [The alms are meant only for the poor and the needy] (Su-

rat, Al-Tawba, verse 60). The poor are the Muslims, and this man is among the needy people. He canceled his tribute, and that of the people like him.” (Didn’t understand this part)

Two years of education with Muslims have taught Wasif a lot about Islam. Gone are most of the falsehoods that burdened him; however, something more astonishing happened to him. He has become a refined thinker. Now, where would all this lead to? “It would be impossible for my mind to the new knowledge I have acquired to accept Christianity and its incantations, secrets and trinity. It would be difficult to be convinced of the “son of God” and the “mother of God.” It would be hard to confess sins to the priest and swallow bread dipped in wine... there are also many other things that man transcends to accept unless it was locked in intolerance and transmitted blind imitation,” Wasif said to himself.

The idea of accepting Islam started to germinate in Wasif’s mind. Nevertheless, he rejected it because it collided with his Christian zeal. This step would open a gate of fear of what might come. “To accept Islam would mean leaving behind familiar principles and beliefs and lifestyle to unknown ones. This matter needs wisdom and courage.” However, he could no longer carry on being Christian after uncovering its invalidity. To face up to the struggle between his mind and his prejudice, he opted for atheism. He has decided to become an atheist. He couldn’t hold this decision for long. He soon changed. He reverted to the belief in God. It was clear to him the necessity to believe in the existence of Allah, and some of his attributes that supported the majestic splendor in His creations.

Wasif acknowledged many of God’s attributes, such as “The Creator; the all-knowing; the all-wise; the Omnipotent.” He decided to look for them in the books of the three monotheistic religions, (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). Only in Islam did he find what he wanted. It also happened that he found a book titled “Muslim doctrine,” written by Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali. Within its pages, he discovered that Islam emphasizes that Allah is unparalleled in Himself; incomparable in His attributes; unique in His actions. Nothing equals him in Himself, in His attribute, and actions.

He said, “I have found in this transcendence, my long pursued aim. I knew then that what Islam says about Allah is acceptable to every reasonable person. Furthermore, the writing of Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali about the doctrine of a Muslim was compat-

ible with my own long research findings. With that, I have asserted that Islam is the only true religion that respects my intelligence. It’s indeed a religion from God.”

Fearing the future and the harm, hardship and expected tribulations, petrified Wasif in accepting Islam. Then, to escape this dilemma a bizarre idea came to his mind. He decided to mix Islam and Christianity in a strange combination. He will leave out what contradicts Islam in Christianity and becomes a sort of “Muslim Catholic”!

Wasif carried on with his Bible readings. However, a text drew his attention in which Christ warns- according to Mathew- about false prophets. He gives a clear sign to tell them apart from true prophets. Their impact on the earth and the consequences left among humans are the real measures and standards. “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits, ye shall know them. [Mathew, 7/16-20].

Wasif compared this text that describes prophets to Islam. He said: “I have found in these expressions the conclusive evidence that Islam is a divine message and that Prophet Muhammad bin Abdullah is the real and honest messenger of Allah. Furthermore, the expression “by their fruits ye shall know them” indeed distinguishes true to false among prophets. I reviewed Islam [in it; I have found advantages I haven’t found in other religions]. With this convincing proof, I have simply to say: Islam is a valid and excellent fruit. Only a good tree will bear such fruit. Then I said: I bear witness, that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness, that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

At the chemistry period, Wasif uttered the declaration of faith. It was a beautiful day of the year 1966; he was merely twenty years of age. He moved to Riyadh where he worked and had children. He told the story of his guidance to Islam in a book titled [I was a Christian.] that “God has blessed me with Islam after a bitter psychological struggle. I hesitated many times to take the definite step. I have faced various trials and tribulations throughout my journey. However, Allah has been kind to me and saved me before it was too late.”



Catholic Cardinal Declares Muhammad A True Prophet of God

Source: knightstemplarinternational.com

He served as Archbishop of Washington, D.C.(imagine that) from 2001 to 2006, and was elevated to the cardinalate in 2001. In Catholic theology, to be a prophet, to earn that title, one must be divinely inspired. To call Mohammed “The Prophet”, as he does, is to claim that Mohammed is a true prophet, inspired by God.

Catholic Cardinal Theodore McCarrick offered Islamic religious phrases and insisted that Islam shares foundational rules with Christianity, during a Sept. 10 press conference in D.C.

“In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate,” McCarrick said as he introduced himself to the audience at a meeting arranged by the Muslim Public Affairs Council.

That praise of the Islamic deity is an important phrase in Islam, is found more than 100 times in the Koran, and is akin to the Catholic prayer, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

McCarrick next claimed that “Catholic social teaching is based on the dignity of the human person... [and] as you study the holy Koran, as you study Islam, basically, this is what Muhammad the prophet, peace be upon him, has been teaching.”

McCarrick was 71 when 19 Muslims brought Islam to the public eye by murdering 3,000 Americans on 9/11. He is one of the 213 Cardinals of the Catholic church but is too old to vote in church debates.

The San Luis Mosque

