

THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE

# Journal

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International Conference  
for Fatwa Warns  
Against Circulating  
Misleading Fatwas

## Pope Francis Welcomes Leader of Muslim World League to Vatican





# Letter From the Editor

## The historic visit of MWL Secretary General for the Vatican

The Muslim World League (MWL) builds its relations and external cooperation with the followers of other religions and cultures on specific objectives focusing on friendly and brotherly ties that are founded on trust, clarity, confidence and transparency, because it believes in the law of the Sublime Creator regarding difference, diversity and pluralism.

Based on the above, the MWL adopted an openness process towards cultural interaction and humanitarian cooperation with others. This was emphasized by H.E. Dr. Muhammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of MWL in more than a meeting. His Excellency mentioned that difference, diversity and pluralism are ones of the laws of the Creator; and that between civilizations and cultures there is no conflict, but dialogue, understanding and harmony; and this is the very meaning of tolerance in which we all believe.

In the light of these meanings, came the historic meeting between Dr. Muhammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa of the MWL and Pope Francis (Benedict XVI), which has given a new dimension to the cultural interaction, cooperation and understanding among religious leaders in the world.

H. E. Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa has expressed the appreciation of the Muslim World for Pope Francis' fair positions towards the false and isolated allegations that link extremism and violence to Islam. The Pope has indicated in previous relevant statements that these acts of violence have nothing to do with Islam as in all religions there are certain followers who commits such terrorism.

Such equitable positions towards the Islamic religion by prominent non-Muslim personalities must be properly invested and exploited by Muslims for opening a new horizons for cooperation and interaction with them. In fact, we have a good exam-

ple in the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (peace be upon him), who sent a group of his illustrious companions as immigrants to Abyssinia (currently Ethiopia), and said to them, "That country is ruled by a just emperor (King), as no one suffers injustice under his rule". That emperor or King was Negus, who was then a staunch Christian, but despite this, he secured for those immigrant Muslims the due protection they sought at his territory because they were in dire need of it at that time.

Therefore, this meeting has opened between the Vatican and the Muslim world a new page of friendship and cooperation that can be effectively and vigorously utilized to overcome the challenges and dangers facing the entire world today; and this – of course- requires that all should unite in this respect.

One of the outcomes of this meeting was the convention of a meeting with the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Religions and which was followed by an agreement to establish a Permanent Committee on Communication between the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Religions Council and the Muslim World League in order to discuss the various communication and interaction initiatives among the followers of religions; and which are in turn expected to remarkably contribute towards introducing organizations working in this field.

In conclusion, we have to stress that the most important result of this historic visit, subsequent meetings and the previous visits made by the Secretary General of MWL to Europe and the United States of America is the transmission of noble messages that have apparently succeeded in changing the stereotypical negative image of Islam and Muslims, particularly in connection to the unjust, unfounded and baseless accusations attached to the Islam or erroneously leveled against.



# The Muslim World League Journal

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our world

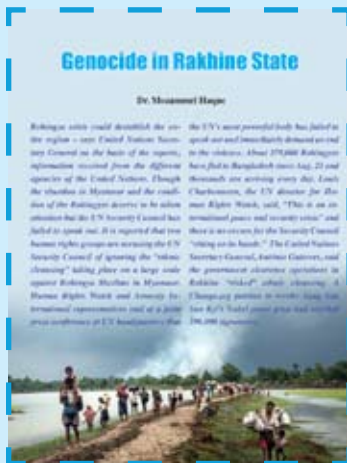


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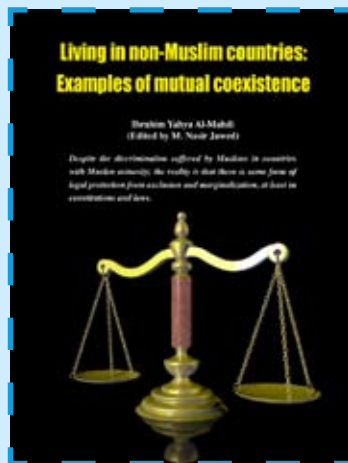
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## Pope Francis Welcomes Leader of Muslim World League to Vatican

Pope Francis received the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, who was on an official visit to the Vatican. During the meeting, Pope Francis and Sheikh Muhammad reviewed views on a number of issues of mutual interest, which is in the interest of international and global peace, especially cooperation between the Vatican and the Islamic world in the issues of coexistence and tolerance. Dr. Muhammad expressed the appreciation of the Islamic World for Pope Francis's fair attitudes towards the false and isolated claims that link extremism and violence to Islam. His Holiness, the Pope, explained in previous statements that these false acts have nothing to do with Islam. At the end of the meeting, His Holiness, the Pope, exchanged gifts with His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad. In addition, during this official visit to Italy, the SG of MWL met members

of the Pontifical Council, Community of Sant'Egidio, the Human Rights Commission, the Interior Minister at Vatican and a number of Italian officials. He also met with a number of religious, cultural and intellectual activities in Rome.

At the end of the meeting, the Pope and Dr. Al-Issa exchanged souvenirs. Dr. Al-Issa presented to the Pope a model symbolizing the Islamic civilization and expressing its communication with other civilizations, particularly the civilizational communication with the Vatican that represents global religious symbolism. In turn, the Pope presented to Dr. Al-Issa a special symbolic gift of a memorial pen marking the 500th anniversary of building Saint Peter Basilica and a memorial medal especially mounted to mark the fifth year of heading the Holy See.

On the other hand Dr. Al-Issa, Secretary General of





the Muslim World League (MWL), held a meeting with President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, in the presence of the Council's Secretary Bishop Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixo and Bishop Khaled Oksha. Both sides decided to form a permanent committee of communication between the Vatican represented in the Pontifical Council and the MWL to discuss a number of initiatives. Cardinal Tauran started the meeting with an address welcoming H.E. Dr. Al-Issa and the accompanied delegation. He praised the historic gathering with Pope Francis and mentioned that the meeting turned a new leaf of friendship and cooperation between the Vatican and the Muslim World to face challenges and threats in the way of the entire world and necessitate everyone's solidarity. On his part, Dr. Al-Issa expressed gratitude to the Vatican and Cardinal Tauran, appreciating the Council's noble efforts aimed at enhancing coexistence and joint cooperation among nations. H.E. MWL Secretary General added that no religion has ever called for extremism and no religion has ever been of some extremist followers. He said that the MWL is pleased to communicate and cooperate with the Vatican via the Pontifical Council with regard to all joint goals, particularly the spread of peace and harmony. On the other hand, MWL Secretary General paid a visit to the Rome-based Headquarters of the Community of Sant'Egidio. He was received by

President of the dialogue committee at the Community of Sant'Egidio Andrea Trentini and the Community's Secretary Issafen.

Mr. Andrea described the humanitarian activities led by the Community inside and outside of Rome and the good ties between the Community and the Muslims. He voiced his happiness with this historic visit that contained the renewable vision for peace and coexistence among countries all around the world. He also made clear that the Community looked forward through the visit to opening new horizons with the east with its entire faiths and cultures so peace would be the major goal of this cooperation for confronting all challenges and obstacles facing humanity. Afterwards, Dr. Al-Issa delivered a speech in which he said he was pleased to visit the Community of Sant'Egidio; the international humanitarian organization, mentioning that it is in the focus of all parties concerned with the humanitarian affair all over the world, especially the MWL that targets the humanitarian work and seeks to whatever is aimed at spreading peace, coexistence and tolerance according to effective and practical mechanisms. H.E. asserted that the MWL is fully ready to establish cooperation with the Community of Sant'Egidio in all fields that serve the civilizational communication between nations and organizations, calling for more cooperation between the MWL and the Community of Sant'Egidio.



## MWL and Vatican to set up permanent liaison body

Following his meeting with Pope Francis in Vatican City, Muslim World League (MWL) Secretary-General Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa met with the head of the Pontifical Council of the Vatican, Cardinal Jean-Laurent Tauran.

The latter meeting was held in the presence of the secretary of the Council of Archbishops, Miguel Iosu, and Archbishop Khalid Akasha.

The meeting established a permanent liaison committee between the Vatican, represented by the Pontifical Council, and the MWL, to discuss various initiatives.

Tauran welcomed Al-Issa and his accompanying delegation, and said the meeting with the pope opened a new chapter of friendship and cooperation between the Vatican and the Islamic world in the face of global challenges and risks.

Al-Issa thanked the Vatican and Tauran, and expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by the Pontifical Council, which he said enhances coexistence and cooperation.

The MWL chief lauded the historic meeting with the pope, and his rejection of claims that Islam is

linked to extremism and terrorism. Al-Issa said no religion espouses extremism, but none is free from extremist elements.

He said the MWL has communicated and cooperated with the Vatican via the Pontifical Council in all areas to achieve common goals, notably the spread of peace and harmony.

The MWL delegation visited the headquarters of the Community of Sant'Egidio, an international Catholic organization based in Rome.

The president and secretary of the dialogue committee briefed Al-Issa on the humanitarian work carried out by the organization inside and outside Italy.

The president expressed pleasure over the MWL's historic visit, which he said carries a new vision of peace and coexistence.

He said the Community of Sant'Egidio looks forward to opening new horizons with the East in religious and cultural spheres.

Al-Issa said the MWL is fully prepared to cooperate with the organization in all areas that serve cultural communication. In this context, he called for more cooperation between the two organizations.

# Italian interior minister lauds MWL's role in fighting extremism

Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti received Muslim World League (MWL) Secretary-General Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and his accompanying delegation in Rome.

They explored a number of topics of common interest including citizenship and positive integration with the promotion of the right of religious freedom guaranteed by law, down to the official recognition of Islam as a religion.

At the outset of the meeting, the Italian minister welcomed the MWL Secretary General and expressed appreciation for the role undertaken by the MWL in fighting extremism, unifying Muslim communities, and promoting moderation.

The Italian official expressed hope that the visit of the MWL chief to Italy will achieve goals that serve humanity, especially after his historic meeting with Pope Francis in Vatican City.

For his part, Al-Issa expressed his appreciation to the Italian minister for his concern over the MWL's role and stressed the MWL's keenness to spread the values of tolerance and coexistence.

The MWL Secretary General said among the goals pursued by the MWL is the positive integration of Muslim communities into their societies and the citizenship they have recognized and committed to.

This has been disseminated through awareness messages, conferences and seminars orga-



nized by the MWL in all countries of the world that affirm Islam as the religion of honesty and loyalty, he said.

Al-Issa also held a meeting with the director of Islamic affairs in Italy. They discussed a number of issues of common interest, including the legal status of many Islamic functions in Italy, cooperation with the MWL to unify the Muslim community, and how to boost representation of Muslims in Italy's government and private institutions.

They discussed positive integration, as well as the promotion of the concept of religious freedom guaranteed by the law, besides the freedom to practice rituals, where Islam is recognized as a culture.

Dr. Al-Issa and his delegation

visited the headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior in Rome, where Minetti spoke of the important role played by the MWL in combatting extremism and unifying the Muslim communities while encouraging them to move towards moderation.

The MWL has called on all followers of various cultures and religions, especially Islam, to respect the Constitution and the laws and culture of the country they reside in while carrying out their Islamic rituals, in accordance with the guarantees, and the constitutional and legal rights of each country.

He hoped that the Secretary-General's visit to Italy would achieve the goals of serving the humanity, especially after his meeting with Pope Francis in the Vatican City.





## Praise in Italy for MWL's role in promoting tolerance

The Muslim World League (MWL) has been praised in Italy for its role in promoting cultural communication and the values of moderation and tolerance.

An MWL delegation led by its Secretary-General, Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, met a number of leading Italian political figures in Rome.

Vincenzo Amindola, Italy's Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and Islamic Affairs, said his government appreciated the MWL's role in supporting citizenship among Muslim communities in Italy. It sought to open new avenues of cooperation between Italy and the Islamic world in the areas of communication and co-existence, he said. These were the ideal solution to the problems and crises of some Muslim minorities worldwide, and he praised the MWL's role.

Al-Issa said the MWL aimed to enhance cultural communication between peoples to achieve more co-existence, tolerance and humanitarian cooperation. The MWL also intended to overcome the obstacles of ideological and racial extremism, he said, which brought hatred and confrontation, and material and moral losses

for all humanity.

The MWL would continue its programs to raise Islamic awareness among Muslim communities based on the culture of positive integration, citizenship and respect for constitutions and the law, he said. This, in principle, did not conflict with Muslims' religious identity, and anyone who believed otherwise should leave the country.

MWL Secretary General also met representatives of Human Rights Watch (HRW) in Italy, and senior officials from the Italian Foreign Ministry.

The meeting explored topics of common concern, notably how to support human rights, build a culture of dialogue and co-existence, and lay down plans for harnessing youthful enthusiasm and putting it on the right path.

The meeting also discussed joint programs to move from a traditional way of working to more modern ways of achieving peace, understanding and cooperation, the spread of tolerance and moderation, and the protection of growing generations from intellectual deviation.



## MWL SG calls for more awareness about dangers threatening our world

**Muhammad Zakir Hossain**

*The Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and Singapore Minister of Interior and Law K. Shanmugam inaugurated the Global Forum for Heads of Cultural Centers. The Forum was organized by the Singaporean Dawa Society, in cooperation with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).*





Speaking on the occasion, the head of the Society, Dr. Hasby Abou Bakr, thanked the Singaporean Minister of Interior and the MML Secretary General for patronizing the international forum. He pointed out that the first forum had been exceptionally successful due to which it was decided to hold a second forum in cooperation with the Singaporean Dawa Society. The Society is well respected by Singaporean officials and the Muslim community in the country, thanks to its moderate approach. He wished even more cooperation with the MWL as it represents Muslim nations and minorities all over the world and advocates coexistence among nations.

ISESCO Secretary General Dr. Abdulaziz bin Othman Al-Tuweijri delivered a speech thanking Shanmugam and Al-Issa for their support to the Forum. He praised the efforts exerted by the Singaporean Dawa Society to organize the Forum. The Singaporean people are a role model for peaceful coexistence, he said, and praised the efforts of the MWL in supporting harmonious relations among nations.

In his address, Dr. Al-Issa praised the meeting organized by two time-honored institutions which promotes moderation, tolerance and coexistence around

the world. He said he was happy to visit Singapore and interact with its people who are known for their tolerance and societal harmony, thanks to its diversity and plurality. He asserted that the MWL adopts programs that create awareness and understanding among human communities.

He added that the concept of human coexistence is unanimously accepted, but its application differs from place to place, with narrow interests hindering humanitarian justice and global peace. Different constitutions around the world and international agreements are working towards achieving global peace.

Sheikh Al-Issa called for spreading awareness about the risks surrounding the world today. Foremost is the terrorist menace that has penetrated the entire world, often via the social media. He further expressed strong concern over Islamophobia spreading everywhere. The MWL, being a popular and respected organization in the world, exerts relentless efforts to spread the culture of tolerance through all the instruments and means it possesses. It harnesses all its potentials for building bridges of fruitful communication.

Dr. Al-Issa added that the MWL contributes to



all efforts that lead to tolerance. It fights extremism that strikes at the very root of peaceful coexistence. He asserted that the MWL supports the global peace march on behalf of Muslim nations as well as to strengthen humanitarian coexistence through its projects all around the world with Muslim and non-Muslim institutions. “We work with our partners on building coexisting communities linked by values of cooperation,” he said, praying to Almighty Allah for the success of all its efforts. He expressed hope of the Forum fulfilling its expected goals.

Also speaking on the occasion, Shanmugam thanked the audience and organizers of the Forum. He expressed gratitude to the MWL Secretary General for his participation, and agreed with him over the

serious repercussions of Islamophobia in non-Muslim countries and called for more efforts to fight the phenomenon. The Singaporean government stands against those who promote the phenomenon and raises awareness among non-Muslim people against its dangers. He praised the organizations in the world that contribute towards peaceful coexistence, pointing out that Singaporean law ensures religious freedom.

The two-day Forum discussed the role of non-governmental organizations in reinforcing the culture of peace – challenges and horizons. It was held in the presence of several presidents of Islamic and non-Islamic organizations and cultural centers, besides academicians, researchers, and religious leaders.





## Don't link any particular religion with extremism, says Shanmugam



Governments in Asia, Europe and elsewhere must take an active part in dispelling this misconception, at a time when terrorists want to divide Muslims and non-Muslims, Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam said.

Extremism and divisive practices are problems that are not the sole preserve of any one religion, despite what terrorist groups and their actions might seem to suggest.

Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam stressed this, as he pointed out that it is the goal of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria to try and sow “deep divisions” and Islamophobia within society.

“We have to get away from the idea of linking any particular religion with extremism,” he said at the opening of a two-day international conference on the role of Muslim non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in promoting peace.

He cited deep-seated conflicts in the region - between Catholics and Muslims in the Philippines, and Buddhists and Muslims in Myanmar - to illustrate that extremists on all sides abuse religion for nefarious ends.

Mr Shanmugam noted that the “high-profile nature of the attacks in the last few years, linked with terrorists who do it in the name of Islam,

has created this mindset among a lot of people of associating Islam with terrorism”.

Governments in Asia, Europe and elsewhere must take an active part in dispelling this misconception, at a time when terrorists want to divide Muslims and non-Muslims, he said.

It is also important for NGOs, community leaders and religious leaders to come together, he added, saying conferences like this week’s can allow the discussion of “thorny, sensitive issues” that might arise from living in multi-religious societies.

### **THE REALITY**

**Most people are tolerant, most people believe in accommodation, but a small minority today hold the rest of us hostage.**

**HOME AFFAIRS AND LAW MINISTER K. SHANMUGAM**

These include scholars saying that Muslims cannot extend Christmas or Deepavali greetings, and the case of a launderette in Malaysia that said only Muslims could use it - which rulers have said is not acceptable.

It would do Muslims and non-Muslims a great service if these issues are considered at such forums, the minister said, adding that a stamp of authority would make sure the ground does not get confused.

“My understanding is that from the very early years, Muslims co-existed peacefully with others in Mecca and many other places,” said Mr Shanmugam.

“Sometimes, the majority are Muslims and sometimes they are the minority. They all co-existed peacefully and integrated in a way that contributed to society.”

In his 30-minute speech, Mr Shanmugam outlined Singapore’s efforts to maintain harmony among people of different faiths, citing how the police take a firm stand against those who insult religious feelings, as well as how ethnic

quotas in public housing estates ensure that racial enclaves do not develop.

Singapore took a firm stance on those who offend religious sensitivities, he said, adding: “If you suggest some statement that Muslims are terrorists, or Christians are like this, or Jews are like this, my internal security people will come and talk to you straightaway.”

The two-day forum was organised by Jamiyah Singapore and the Morocco-based Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Speaking before the minister, Dr Mohamad Abdul Karim Al-Issa, secretary-general of the Muslim World League, said that according to surveys by his NGO, only 1 per cent of Muslims worldwide can be considered extremists, adding that this was often due to a lack of understanding of Islam.

Mr Shanmugam said this figure was “nothing” compared with the population of Muslims around the world. “Most people are tolerant, most people believe in accommodation, but a small minority today hold the rest of us hostage,” he said.

Jamiyah president Muhammad Hasbi Abu Bakar said it is “religiously incumbent” on Muslims to tell others that to “resort to violence in the pursuance of one’s goals is to cross the ‘red line’ of Islam”.

Mr Mustafa Rasheed, council member of the Muslim Youth Ambassadors for Peace - a Jamiyah initiative to get volunteers to steer their peers away from extremism - said he does just that, by organising dialogues with different religious communities. More Muslims have to follow suit, engage other communities and dispel misconceptions about Muslims, said Mr Mustafa.

“We need to say, ‘I am a human being, just like you’. I like the same things, I also get hungry, I also like to have fun,” he said.





## International Conference for Fatwa Warns Against Circulating Misleading Fatwas

The International Conference for Fatwa under the title of “The Role of Fatwa in Creating a Stable Society” launched under the auspices of President Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi as a part of his call for renewing religious discourse.

The three-day conference, held by General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide, was attended by delegations from 80 countries to face misleading fatwas and their impacts on societies.

Grand Imam of Azhar Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, Egypt’s Mufti Shawqi Allam, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (MWL) Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, and the chairman of the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments (GAI-AE) in the UAE Muhammad Matar Al-Kaab Issa all inaugurated the conference earlier in the day.

The role of fatwas has become vital for the stability of Islamic communities, said MWL Secretary General Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa in his keynote address at the opening session of a major fatwa conference in Cairo.

Al-Issa added that a unified solution to fatwa issues has become a pressing demand for all Muslim scholars, noting that prolonged failure to put forward an agreed-upon mechanism to regulate the fatwa-issuing process, especially when it comes to public interest, has turned into a serious dilemma that is aggravating day by day. Such a situation, he asserted, has an adverse impact on the security and stability of societies, not only in the Islamic states, but also in non-Islamic nations with sizeable Muslim communities.



In his speech, Egypt's Mufti Shawky Allam said that the challenges Egypt and the world are facing are due to "misleading fatwas" that threaten security and peace.

"Since the world rises up against terrorism, religious intellectuals too should confront extremist thoughts and spread the teachings of our tolerant religion instead," Allam added.

He further noted that the conference is considered an "opportunity to achieve this goal, as the conference's importance is not limited to discussing the issues of terrorism and extremism, but it expands to include misleading fatwas that confuse our society."

For his part, Sheikh Abdel Latif Derian, the Grand Mufti of Lebanon stated that fatwa issuances should be in coordination with the state in order to protect human rights and put an end to any threat to the state's safety and security."

"We cannot address the injustice and hostile campaigns faced by Islam, and the distortion of our religion caused by misguided fatwas. However, with God on our side we can face all challenges," stated Derian.

Derian added that a large number of Egyptian Muslims represent the modesty of Islam, thanking Al-Azhar for exerting huge efforts in achieving peace; indicating that the Arab world is at a critical stage facing violations committed against the Rohingya Muslims, and against the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem.

During the opening session, the chairman of the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments (GAIAE) in the UAE, Muhammad Matar Al-Kaabi confirmed that legislations must be enacted to control fatwa, especially on TV and internet websites.

Kaabi declared during the conference that the UAE imposed strict regulations to control fatwa issuance; stressing that charters must be set on websites and TV channels to prevent them from hosting people who are unqualified to dispense religious edicts.

These charters were implemented to prevent unsuitable spiritual intellectual content from spreading, and to separate fatwas from politics.

Chairman of General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endow-

ments (GAIAE) in UAE Mohamed Matar al-Kaabi – File photo

In the same context, Minister of Religious Endowments Mohamed Mokhtar Gomaa stressed, in a speech on behalf of the prime minister Sherif Ismail, the necessity of regulating fatwas to achieve stability and promote peace and coexistence.

Scholars should join forces to counter extremist thoughts facing society; highlighting the role of scholars in promoting moderate teachings of Islam in light of the latest developments witnessed by societies.

Terrorism has no religion or homeland, Ismail stressed, noting that it requires intensified international efforts to be uprooted.

Egypt's Grand Imam and head of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed El Tayeb, closed the opening session by stating that fatwa is a very serious responsibility; pointing out that a mufti may prohibit halal matters or validate haram matters.

He warned against individuals who feign religious knowledge and their dependency on misinterpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Tayeb added that throughout his one and a half year as a mufti, he had been working freely with no pressures or instructions. "I was told to just follow my conscience," he added.

He recommended that the conference establish a separate department in Al-Azhar for fatwas and their related sciences; noting that this can commence qualified scholars for fatwa.

The session was attended by Grand Imam of Azhar Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, Egypt's Mufti Shawqi Allam and several leaders of Islamic bodies and institutions from around the world.





## MWL rejects UN report on children in conflict

The Muslim World League has thoroughly reviewed the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on children and armed conflict issued on 16/1/1439 H corresponding to 6/10/2017 which accused the Anti-Terrorist Arabic and Islamic States Alliance, currently participating in the restoration of legitimacy in the Republic of Yemen, with the violation of children rights. It is surprising that the said report directs such accusations to the above Alliance, which is considered among the bodies that have taken measures and steps for enhancing the protection of children. However, it is remarked that the report has deservedly applauded the cooperation of the Alliance with the United Nations and expressed the hope that such cooperation would continue to enhance such protection of children. Furthermore, such deserving commendation was emphasized in consideration of the sincere efforts made by the Alliance,

which is led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in this area. These efforts were represented in the special tasks performed by King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Works, whose approved programs regarding the Rehabilitation of Yemeni children were dully praised in last August by the members of the Security Council.

In the name of the Muslim peoples, represented in the Muslim World League (MWL) ; and in the name of a number of the MWL's affiliate organizations, Islamic and non-Islamic Councils in the world, as well as its other specialized religious, academic, political, legal and human rights bodies, the Muslim World League does appreciate greatly what was issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in this connection. However, the Leagues underlines that these bodies and organizations collectively reject completely the unilateral – source information car-



ried out by the said Report and which lacks documentary work with the requirements of its international justice that is supposed to determine with correct investigating means the realm of negligence responsibility. The daily scene has proven with tangible evidences and incidences that Houthis militias had not only obstructed the relief aid, but they also looted it. In fact, these militias recorded between 2015 - 2017, with documents that are now available for inspection by everyone, the confiscation of 65 ships, 124 relief convoys, 628 trucks, 5,500 food baskets and 6,000 basic commodities.

Likewise, in the same period, the said militias attacked United Nations specialized agencies and other relief organizations in the cities of Sana'a, Taiz, Hajjah, Hodeidah, Ibb and Aden, where they practiced brutality which was represented in carrying out killings, kidnappings and closure as well as looting of outlets and relief offices. All this came as an extension of the criminal actions that have been mercilessly perpetrated by the Houthis militias against the Yemeni people since they have hijacked its legitimacy with their sectarian treason that was paid by the Iranian axis of evil. Furthermore, this Iranian axis of evil has taken upon itself, since the very inception of its abominable and evil entity, to export its malicious revolution with its expansionist and destructive ambitions, because this constitutes one of the basic principles enshrined in its constitution, whose barbarism and sectarian backwardness price was dearly paid by the Iranian people itself before others.

Furthermore, the treacherous Houthi militias would not spare any possible effort to hasten to commit against the Yemeni people, especially its children, such crimes particularly those pertaining to corruption, tyranny and oppression against the Yemeni people. For, these militias have usurped the legitimacy of this Yemeni people, carried out due corruption and destruction acts on its territory, led it to suffer successive tragedies and public chaos in the full view of the entire world.

Human decadence reaches its lowest despicable level of brutality when innocent children become victims for exploitation of political calculations which are used as bargain by these militias, and those behind them, in securing open, cheap political as well as sectarian gain.

It would have been more appropriate if the UN Secretary General's Report had taken into account all these conspicuous material evidences as well as the

catastrophes and challenges associated with them, but unfortunately it didn't. The United Nations, with its internationally recognizable weight, is anticipated to effectively and justly contribute with the member States of the Alliance to surpassing and overcoming all these tragedies and challenges as well as exposing their real perpetrators and culprits.

The member states of Anti- Terrorist Islamic Arab Alliance, under the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, will indeed be happier than any other countries, when they see that Yemen is happy as it is known to all (as it has been termed since long time); and that its children narrate lively and fearlessly their aspirations in an atmosphere of security and stability, leading to a prosperous future of their country under its recognized legitimacy. This legitimacy, with its comprehensive umbrella, has taken upon itself to abide by the embracing national horizon that encompasses all components of the Yemeni spectrum under one banner. Furthermore, the said countries don't see in its multiplicity and diversification nothing but further enrichment and motivation for the good of the country (Yemen) and enhancement of its integrity, security and increment of its development and prosperity as well as renewal of its political, ideological and social harmony in the horizon of a civilized state, with full sovereignty, whose viable and tangible existence, is naturally looked forward to- with due great eagerness- by everyone loving Yemen and its people.

Therefore, the Muslim World League (MWL), in its name and in the name of all its above affiliate bodies and organizations, sincerely hope that the UN Secretariat General will investigate extensively the real situation in Yemen, including that pertaining to the children of Yemen. It should take into consideration the Arab Alliance's historical tasks performed by the Arab Alliance to restore Yemeni legitimacy and to help Happy Yemen avoid the evil of political and sectarian ambitions that have completely destroyed and adversely affected its security, stability, economy and social fabric. We should not forget the timely and humanitarian and relief work rendered by the Arab Alliance for the support of the Yemeni citizens, especially efforts pertaining to the protection and care of the children of Yemen via the implementation of the Alliance's continuous programs, which have been crowned by the qualitative, generous and expanded assistance activities rendered by King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Works.



## IIROSA provides humanitarian assistance around the world

**Afshan Abdulaziz**

The Muslim World League (MWL), represented by the International Islamic Relief Organization, Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) always place a pioneer role in fighting hunger crises, sponsoring orphans and providing educational and health services in the world especially that the number of poor and needy people is steadily increasing and the situation urges the international organization to work together and save the lives of million people.

IIROSA Secretary General, Hassan Darweesh Shahbar said, "IIROSA implemented several services in education, health, social welfare and emergency relief sectors that have greatly helped millions of beneficiaries. Moreover, the organization is one of the pioneering charity organizations in Saudi Arabia

and is providing its assistance with the support of generous people."

IIROSA is always at forefront to tackle the root causes of poverty and make sure that the world's most vulnerable people is provided with the necessary assistance that develop their capabilities and resources.

Moreover, recently as many countries suffer from wars and conflicts, IIROSA is keen at delivering its services to the largest number possible of orphans. In order to achieve such goals. The organization established a 29 storey endowment buildings in Makkah for a total cost of SR 293,110,000 with annual revenue of SR 50 million to be utilized for the need of the people around the world.

Besides, IIROSA in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, held a medical camp for eye cataract surgeries in collaboration with the Zimbabwean Ministry of Health and in coordination with the Central Government Hospital.

“This camp is MWL’s second of its kind in Zimbabwe,” IIROSA Secretary-General Hassan Shahbar said, “it was carried out as a response to the many requests which MWL received two years ago.”

“The Secretary-General of the Muslim World League, Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, requested the continuation of these medical camps which are part of a huge project in Africa organized and fully funded by the MWL to prevent blindness,” Hassan Shahbar added.

Zimbabwean Health Minister Dr. David Parirenyatwa, who has visited the medical camp, extended his government’s appreciation to the MWL for its efforts in carrying out these camps which provide treatment to those who cannot afford it. “Zimbabwe is looking forward to more medical camps, of which the country is in vital need,” he also said.

Minister of State and Gov. of Harare Maryam Shikukua expressed her appreciation for the MWL’s relief efforts in Zimbabwe and her personal interest in the league’s programs and projects in the country.

IIROSA’s medical team, with the participation of consultant doctors, technical assistants and medical staff, carried out 500 cataract surgeries after examining 1,500 patients, and provided the rest with medications and eyeglasses.

## **IIROSA participates in UNHCR’s Nansen Refugee Award**

The Muslim World League, represented by the International Islamic Relief Organization, Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) participated in the UNHCR’s Nansen Refugee Award event held on October 2, 2017, in Geneva, Switzerland, recently.

Hassan Darweesh Shabhar, on behalf of IIROSA, extended its warm congratulations to Barrister Zanna B. Mustapha, Director of the Future Prowess Islamic Foundation, Maiduguri, Borno State on winning the prestigious UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award for opening schools amid conflict in north-eastern Nigeria.



He said, “Mustapha’s work in the region also includes negotiating the release of hostages. When the 21 young women who had been held captive by Boko Haram for more than two years were released, Mustapha was there. He had been instrumental in securing their freedom – as well as the release of 82 additional Chibok girls in May 2017.”

During the event, Mr. Hassan Shabhar said: “IIROSA is one of the main players in the humanitarian arena and has always aimed at identifying the best practices and experiences in the field of humanitarian action.”

He added that hopefully IIROSA and Future Prowess Islamic Foundation will strengthen the relations and make the most of the opportunities created by such initiatives and bring together relevant efforts in reducing poverty throughout the world, especially in the rural area in Africa where poverty can be addressed in multilateral context.

Mustapha and his volunteer group of educators know the risks they face, but their work is too important not to soldier on. “This school promotes peace,” Mustapha said. “It is a place where every child matters,” he added. “These children should be empowered in such a way that they can stand on their own.”

UNHCR’s Nansen Refugee Award recognizes extraordinary humanitarian work on behalf of refugees, internally displaced or stateless people. The award includes a commemorative medal and a US\$150,000 monetary prize. In close consultation with UNHCR, the laureate uses the monetary prize to fund a project that complements their existing work.

The Nansen Refugee Award program is funded in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Swiss Government, the Norwegian Government and the IKEA Foundation.



# Militants and their media strategy



## Osman Mohamed Osman

THE Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) at the Institute for Middle East Studies, George Washington University, published in February 2017 a new collection of essays, entitled “New Islamic Media”.

Collectively, POMEPS Studies 23, containing 12 articles, offers an exceptionally rich, interdisciplinary look at the evolution of Islamic media.

The article under review — ‘Does the Islamic State have a Media Doctrine?’ — has been writ-

ten by Marwan M. Kraidy, University of Pennsylvania.

Islamic State, mentioned in the title of the article is another name for Daesh.

The professional level, with which Daesh uses the “graphic violence”, has shocked the world, according to the author.

Much has been written about Daesh’s exploitation of information, yet very little attention has been given to Daesh’s media strategy, which Mar-

wan describes as “a potent blend of weaponized images and creative poaching from American popular culture.”

By examining several media documents issued by the militants, Marwan concludes: Daesh “has a clear media doctrine intended to do as much damage as its bullets and bombs”.

The article refers to a book “The Management of Savagery” by Abu Bakr Naji, which emphasizes the intent of the militants to show savagery in their actions in order to “attract extensive media coverage.” Although the book referred to the militant’s media strategy, it has not shed enough light on their media campaigns directed at a large audience of (Mujahideen).

Marwan also refers to a document issued by Daesh “Ayyuha Al-E lamy Anta Mujahidun (Oh Media Worker, You are a Mujahid)” describing it as an “inspirational tome, field manual, revolutionary pamphlet and philosophical manifesto”.

Moreover, the document “mixes technical instructions with bursts of indoctrination, all peppered with religious quotes”.

“Imagine, an undergraduate media production textbook on ideological steroids,” the author says.

### **The virtual battlefield**

Marwan cites texts from the above-mentioned document in order to emphasize the importance of the media as a virtual arena for militancy; its weapon is the word and an image that has a greater impact than nuclear weapons. These texts such as “the weapon of the word can be more devastating than nuclear weapons: war “of the tongue” over “jihad of the self”; and “achieving a media triumph hand in hand with a military victory”.

According to Marwan, Daesh leadership has emphasized the importance of the media battle. The Iraqi leader, Abu Hamza Al-Mujahid, said in “the military front, and ... the confrontation with the demonic media ... media rockets ex-

ceed in their ferocity and danger the flames of bombs dropped from airplanes.”

Al-Qaeda, the nucleus on which Daesh was founded, also used media as a virtual battlefield. In this regard, Marwan points out that “after the US-UK invasion of Iraq, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq championed high-quality, high-brutality images, especially compared to Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations poorly produced videos, post-Zarqawi Daesh videos are often described as “slick” and “sophisticated”.

In order to understand how media material performs the same effect as deadly weapons, Marwan said: “We could learn much about how images operate as weapons by shifting our attention from the messages images convey to the affects they impart”.

What is the impact of the Daesh’s media battle on the public, in general?

The article answers this question by pointing out “Individuals first experience affects as bodily sensations. By the time people can make sense of these stirrings and give them names, affects become emotions”.

According to Marwan, the aim of repeating videos showing bodies scattered here and there, and Western hostages on the brink of slaughter, is to make terrorism a common form.

“Wrapping images of atrocity in a familiar visual and narrative format makes them more accessible, and thus more potent, inflicting the affect of terror on viewers.”

Marwan observes the above-mentioned document represents the media doctrine of Daesh. Explaining that the danger lies in that Daesh “brings us the affect of terror in familiar form”. Many have noted that Daesh videos have a “Hollywood visual style,” particularly when it comes to images of death, he concluded.

— *Osman Mohamed Osman is researcher in the Media Section of the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

## MWL resumes its blindness prevention programs in Africa



JEDDAH: The Muslim World League (MWL), represented by the International Islamic Relief Organization, Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, held a medical camp for eye cataract surgeries between Sept. 25 and Oct. 1, 2017 in collaboration with the Zimbabwean Ministry of Health and in coordination with the Central Government Hospital.

“This camp is MWL’s second of its kind in Zimbabwe,” IIROSA Secretary-General Hassan Shahbar said, “it was carried out as a response to the many requests which MWL received two years ago.”

“The secretary-general of the Muslim World League, Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, requested the continuation of these medical camps which are part of a huge project in Africa — organized and fully funded by the MWL to prevent blindness,”

Dr. Shahbar continued.

For his part, Zimbabwean Health Minister Dr. David Parirenyatwa, who has visited the medical camp, extended his government’s appreciation to the MWL for its efforts in carrying out these camps which provide treatment to those who cannot afford it. “Zimbabwe is looking forward to more medical camps, of which the country is in vital need,” he said.

Minister of State and Gov. of Harare Maryam Shikukua expressed her appreciation for the MWL’s relief efforts in Zimbabwe and her personal interest in the league’s programs and projects in the country.

IIROSA’s medical team, with the participation of consultant doctors, technical assistants and medical staff, carried out 500 cataract surgeries after examining 1,500 patients, and provided the rest with medications and eyeglasses.





## Singaporean Muslims are socially cohesive community

**Aftab Husain Kola**

*Rambling along the alleyways of Arab Street in Singapore gives the tourist a feeling that Singapore has a sizeable Muslim population. Part of culturally rich Kampong Glam heritage trail this stretch include Bus-sorah Street, Haji and Bali Lanes and Muscat Street and surrounded by lively colored fabrics and textiles, hand-woven Persian rugs, elegant curios, restaurants and aromatic Arab teas. This Singapore's Muslim quarter is home to Masjid Sultan, country's biggest mosque. The original Masjid Sultan was pulled down after about a century to make way for the current building, which was completed in 1932.*

Singapore was named the friendliest destination for Muslim travelers among non-Muslim countries for the fourth successive year beginning 2013. The Global Muslim Travel Index gave Singapore high scores for its safe travel environment, ease of access to prayer spaces and number of halal dining options. The 2014 report by Pew named the city-state as the most religiously diverse among the 232 countries studied.

### **Secular state**

Singapore is a secular state with ten officially recognized religions, with a population of 5.5 million. Ethnically the republic is comprised of 74% Chinese, 13.4% Malays and 9.2% Indians, with an additional 3.3% from other races.

The state is obliged to treat all individuals as equal citizens regardless of religion. The state's role is to ensure the moral and material well-being of its citizens.

There are ten officially recognized religions in Singapore, including Islam. Muslims constitute 14% of the population, of which Malays form 84% and Indians form 12% (Indians here refer to citizens and permanent residents of South Asian descent who have settled in Singapore).

Islam first came to Southeast Asia and Singapore through Muslim traders and preachers from China and Gujarat in India in the 12th century, and Arab traders and scholars from Hadramaut in Yemen in the 17th century.

Singapore Muslims are a resilient, socially cohesive, community that thrives with diversity and manifests pro-humanity values yet certain issues that disturb the peace do occur though rarely. Recent controversy over an imam's remarks did have its impact on the over-all peaceful situation in Singapore. Last month, investment associate Terence Nunis posted a video online of an imam at Jamae Mosque who, after a sermon, reportedly recited a prayer in Arabic that said "God grant us victory over Jews and Christians", among other things.

The video gained traction online and offline and, as part of due process, the imam has been placed on leave while investigations, which Muis is assisting in, are ongoing.

It has also sparked a storm in the community, and

Minister Dr. Yaacob noted: "Many in our community felt angry, because they believe that the postings could be used to cast aspersions on Islam and the *asatizah* (religious teachers) in our mosques." Many others believed that the imam's recitation had been taken out of context.

But the fire was doused with the intervention of Muslim leaders. Muslim leaders made clear their stand against religious extremism and called for calm amid the ongoing controversy. Singapore's top Muslim leader, Mufti Fatri Bakaram, said in a Facebook post that while the community holds fast to its faith, it has to ensure its religious texts are read appropriately and not misunderstood, as this would smear the good name of Islam and Muslims here.

Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam had welcomed these statements, saying in comments to Malay daily *Berita Harian* that they "show clearly that the Muslim community strongly values our commitment to religious harmony in Singapore".

His comments came a day after the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) said there can be no room for discourse that promotes intolerance, enmity or violence against other communities.

The Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), also known as the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, established as a statutory body in 1968 when the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) came into effect, is engaged in creating a harmonious setting for Singapore's Muslim community. Under AMLA, MUIS is to advise the President of Singapore on all matters relating to Islam in Singapore.

Its website states that the role of MUIS is to see that the many and varied interests of Singapore's Muslim community are looked after. The statutory Board, as stated on its website, is responsible for the promotion of religious, social, educational, economic and cultural activities in accordance with the principles and traditions of Islam as enshrined in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah.

The Council of MUIS is the overall decision-making body and is responsible for the formulation of policies and operational plans. The Council comprises the President of MUIS, the Mufti of Singapore, persons recommended by the Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs and other persons nominated by Muslim organisations. All members of the Council

are appointed by the President of Singapore.

**The principal functions of MUIS are as follows:**

- Administration of zakat, wakf (endowment), pilgrimage affairs, halal certification and da'wah activities
- Construction and administration of mosques development and management
- Administration of Madrasah and Islamic education
- Issuance of fatwas (religious rulings)
- Provision of financial relief to poor and needy Muslims
- Provision of developmental grants to organisations
- Building Religious Harmony and Community Cohesion

Speaking recently Haji Abdul Razak Maricar, chief executive of MUIS, at the MUIS WAKAF DISBURSEMENT CEREMONY 2017, said, "I am pleased to announce that Muis is disbursing more than \$3.1 million to various beneficiaries including mosques, madrasahs and Muslim organisations. This is an increase of 3% compared to last year.

About \$1.5 million will be channelled to 27 mosques in Singapore to help in funding mosque upgrading projects, programmes and daily operations. Among those assisted by Wakf are mosques that are undergoing renovation and upgrading works such as Masjid arul Ghufuran which will be receiving close to \$50,000 to upgrade their current premises to house more than 5,000 congregants. Other mosques to benefit from the disbursement include Wak Tanjong, Hasanah and Malabar mosques. The Wakf funds also assist smaller mosques such as Masjid Pusara Aman that rely mostly on Friday collections for their daily operations." He added, "I am equally pleased to inform that our six full-time madrasahs and the part-time mosque madrasahs will be receiving more than \$390,000 this year. Muis will be disbursing close to \$321,000 to 29 Muslim and voluntary welfare organisations this year to help support their programmes aimed at enhancing socio-religious life of different facets within the Muslim com-

munity."

Muis is studying plans to develop a Singapore Islamic college which will play a key role in nurturing the future teachers who understand Singapore's multi-racial and multi-religious context.

Minister for Communications and Information Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim has supported the idea. Dr Yaacob, who is also Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, had once stated: "The various Islamic universities in the Middle East and the region have served us well, but there is a need for homegrown religious leaders anchored in our local multi-racial, multi-religious context and attuned to the concerns of our community in the ever-changing global environment."

Among the achievements of the Muis in the last two years (2016 - 2017) are:

- Opening of two new mosques – providing 9,000 additional prayer spaces to Muslim in Singapore.
- International Fatwa Conference - World renowned speakers & launch of first compilation of fatwas entitled "Fatwas of Singapore: Science, Medicine & Health"
- Wakf Disbursement - SGD3M disbursed to beneficiaries
- Zakat recipient's Empowerment Scheme – 73% of former zakat recipients completed training and have become financially independent
- Inaugural Madrasah Teachers Symposium – Asatizahs are equipped with latest teaching pedagogy
- Asatizah Recognition Scheme – upgrading of knowledge and skills in tandem with contemporary changes
- PRISM Programme – Sharing of best practices with Muslim minority communities in Asia Pacific region, such as Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand
- Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation - SGD810,000 collected from local Muslim community disbursed in emergency relief and rebuilding of communities hit by disaster, including the South Asian Floods of 2016
- Distinguished Visitor Programme – engagements by Shaikh Abdullah bin Bayyah and Shaikh Hamza Yusuf



# Genocide in Rakhine State

**Dr. Mozammel Haque**

*Rohingya crisis could destabilish the entire region – says United Nations Secretary General on the basis of the reports, information received from the different agencies of the United Nations. Though the situation in Myanmar and the condition of the Rohingyas deserve to be taken attention but the UN Security Council has failed to speak out. It is reported that two human rights groups are accusing the UN Security Council of ignoring the “ethnic cleansing” taking place on a large scale against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International representatives said at a joint press conference at UN headquarters that the UN’s most powerful body has failed to speak out and immediately demand an end to the violence. About 370,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh since Aug. 25 and thousands are arriving every day. Louis Charbonneau, the UN director for Human Rights Watch, said, “This is an international peace and security crisis” and there is no excuse for the Security Council “sitting on its hands.” The United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, said the government clearance operations in Rakhine “risked” ethnic cleansing. A Change.org petition to revoke Aung San Suu Kyi’s Nobel peace prize had reached 390,000 signatures.*



## Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing

The attacks on Rohingya villages on 25 August, 2017 appear to many to have been a systematic effort to drive them out. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has described it as ethnic cleansing. The UN human rights chief has described the systematic attacks against the Rohingya minority by the security forces of Myanmar as a “textbook example of ethnic cleansing.” Amnesty International regional Director James Gomez accused Suu Kyi of “a mix of untruths and victim-blaming.” “There is overwhelming evidence that security forces are engaged in a campaign of ethnic cleansing,” Gomez said. The top UN human rights official, Zeid Ra’ad Al-Hussein, said. “The situation seems a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.”

Heads of States of different countries also said there is genocide in Rakhine state. French President Emmanuel Macron said attacks on Myanmar’s Rohingya minority amounted to “genocide.” Macron said in an interview with the French TV channel TMC. Macron’s use of the word “genocide” marks his strongest verbal attack yet on the military drive against the Rohingya. France will work with other members of the UN Security Council for a condemnation of “this genocide which is unfolding, this ethnic cleansing,” The Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said in a statement: “You watched the situation that Myanmar and Muslims are in. You saw how villages have been burned ... Humanity remained silent to the massacre in Myanmar.” Turkish President Erdoğan has accused Myanmar of “genocide” against the Rohingya Muslim minority, who have fled in the tens of thousands across the border into Bangladesh to escape ethnic cleansing. There is a genocide there,” Erdoğan said in a speech in Istanbul during the Islamic Eid Al-Adha feast. “Those who close their eyes to this genocide perpetuated under the cover of democracy are its collaborators.”

His Holiness Pope Francis said that he is following the “sad news of the religious persecution of Rohingya community... he asked that the members of the ethnic group be given full rights.”

Bangladesh’s Foreign Minister said “genocide” is being waged in the country’s violence-hit Rakhine state. “The international community is saying it is genocide. We also say it is a genocide,” AH Mahmood Ali told reporters. “The international community is saying it is a genocide. We also say it is a

genocide,” AH Mahmood Ali told reporters.

## UN Secretary General

The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, is pushing hard for concerted action and warns of the risk of ethnic cleansing (several Nobel peace prize laureates say that point) has already been reached. But Myanmar has said openly that it is working with China and Russia to prevent a Security Council rebuke. The UN Secretary General, António Guterres, warned that the violence in the country verged on ethnic cleansing and could destabilise the wider region.

## United Nations Report

United Nations Report released this year detailed what happened to those that stayed. The report described mass killings and gang rapes by the armed forces in actions that “very likely” amounted to crimes against humanity. A security crackdown launched last October in Maungdaw led to the U.N. report on human rights violations by security forces that indicated crimes against humanity. *Al-Jazeera* reported, “The U.N. documented mass gang-rape, killings -- including infants and young children -- brutal beatings, and disappearances. Rohingya representatives have said approximately 400 people have been slain during the crackdown.”

While writing petitions to stop the genocide by Hussein Mohamed and Najma Maxamed of London UK, said, “Upon the documentations of the crime against humanity being conducted in Myanmar by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in a ‘flash report’ which was released on 3 February 2017, no serious action seems to have been taken to end this genocide since then. This is regardless of the fact that another recent report made on the 30th August 2017 seems to have found that indeed the violence being shown towards the Rohingya population in Rakhine State throughout this protracted crackdown could “very likely” amount to crimes against humanity.”

“According to OHCHR more than half of the women its human rights team interviewed reported having suffered rape or other forms of sexual violence. Many other interviewees reported witnessing killings, including of family members and having family who were missing.”

## United Nations Human Rights

The top UN human rights official has urged Myanmar to end “brutal security operation” against Rohingyas in Rakhine state, calling it “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing”. Zeid Ra’ad Al-Hussein, addressing the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva said, “I call on the government to end its current cruel military operation, with accountability for all violations that have occurred, and to reverse the pattern of severe and widespread discrimination against the Rohingya population.” Zeid also said. “The situation seems a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.”

### **UNHCR**

“A spokeswoman for the UN high commissioner for refugees, Vivian Tan, told Agence France-Presse, “The numbers are so alarming. It really means we have to step up our response and that the situation in Myanmar has to be addressed urgently.”

It is clear by now that there have been serious human rights laws both local and international that have been violated by the Myanmar government through its security forces. It is also clear that these violations which have resulted in approximately more than tens of thousands of people murdered from a specific community alongside the displacement of even more people certainly amounts to genocide as opposed to just being termed as being “very likely” to amount to crimes against humanity.

### **OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation)**

The world’s largest Muslim body, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), condemns abuses of Rohingyas in Myanmar. It was urging Myanmar to allow in UN monitors so they can investigate what it alleges is systematic brutality against the Rohingya ethnic minority. “The Organization of Islamic Cooperation issued its statement Tuesday after an emergency meeting on the sidelines of a technology conference in Astana, Kazakhstan.”

### **Heads of States**

Besides the United Nations and its different organs and agencies, the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the heads of states of different countries such as the United States, France, Iran and Saudi Arabia, were concerned and wanted the United Nations to take immediate action.

### **United States of America**

US President Donald Trump wants the United Nations Security Council to take “strong and swift action” to end the violence, Vice President Mike Pence said. Diplomats say the Security Council could consider adopting a formal statement if the situation does not improve, but China and Russia are unlikely to agree to stronger action that would require the adoption of a resolution they could veto, it is reported in Arab News.

The US has dispatched an envoy to Myanmar to express its “grave concern” with the violence in Rakhine. Patrick Murphy, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southeast Asia, will meet with government leaders and travel to the state capital of Rakhine but not the conflict zone further north, the official said.

### **France**

French President Emmanuel Macron said attacks on Myanmar’s Rohingya minority amounted to “genocide.” France will work with other members of the UN Security Council for a condemnation of “this genocide which is unfolding, this ethnic cleansing,” Macron said in an interview with the French TV channel TMC. Macron’s use of the word “genocide” marks his strongest verbal attack yet on the military drive against the Rohingyas. “We must condemn the ethnic purification which is under way and act,” Macron said. “Asking for the violence to end, asking for humanitarian access... progressively enables an escalation” under UN auspices, Macron said. “When the UN issues a condemnation, there are consequences which can provide a framework for intervention under the UN,” Macron said.

### **Saudi Arabia said the issue of the Muslim minority in Myanmar is a top concern for the Kingdom**

Saudi Arabia said the issue of the Muslim minority in Myanmar is a top concern for the Kingdom and calls on the international community to intensify its efforts to stop the apparently systematic ethnic cleaning campaign against the Rohingya Muslims.

It also stressed the need to intervene to find a humanitarian solution to protect the Rohingya minority from acts of violence and collective punishment they experience.

This came in the Kingdom’s speech before the 36th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) during the interactive dialogue with the independent internationally mandated fact-finding



mission on Myanmar.

The Kingdom's speech was delivered by Saudi Ambassador at the UN in Geneva Abdul Aziz bin Muhammad Al-Wasel. Al-Wasel strongly condemned the recent violence against the Rohingya Muslim minority. He stressed the Kingdom's position that the UNHRC should address these violations and alleviate the suffering of the Rohingya Muslims and compel Myanmar to respect its international obligations to promote and protect human rights without discrimination based on race, sex or religion. "Myanmar is asked to cooperate fully with the fact-finding mission to look at human rights violations there and to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence in all sectors of the state," Al-Wasel said.

### **Human Rights Groups**

The Human Rights Groups are very much critical of the Myanmar's brutalities on Rohingyas. "The government has to stop this offensive," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director for Human Rights Watch. "It has to allow humanitarian assistance and let journalists into this area. We have to actually see what's happened because quite clearly human rights violations have taken place."

An Amnesty International report this month, based on extensive interviews with Rohingya as well as analysis of satellite imagery, claimed that actions by Myanmar's military may constitute crimes against humanity.

### **Nobel Prize Laureate**

More than a dozen fellow Nobel laureates have criticized Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's de facto leader, for a bloody military crackdown on minority Rohingya people, warning of a tragedy "amounting to ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity". It is reported in The Guardian, "The open letter to the UN Security Council from a group of 23 activists, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Malala Yousafzai, warned that the army offensive had killed of hundreds of people, including children, and left women raped, houses burned and many civilians arbitrarily arrested. It was delivered as Bangladesh announced around 50,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled the violence across its border."

"Access for humanitarian aid organisations has been almost completely denied, creating an appalling humanitarian crisis in an area already extremely

poor," reads the letter, whose signatories include current and former political and business leaders and campaigners such as Yousafzai, the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. "Some international experts have warned of the potential for genocide. It has all the hallmarks of recent past tragedies – Rwanda, Darfur, Bosnia, Kosovo," the letter reads. "If we fail to take action, people may starve to death if they are not killed with bullets."

But the signatories to the letter said the army's response had been "grossly disproportionate". "It would be one thing to round up suspects, interrogate them and put them on trial," the letter said. "It is quite another to unleash helicopter gunships on thousands of ordinary civilians and to rape women and throw babies into a fire."

### **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

The Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu joined the growing list of voices calling on Aung San Suu Kyi to do more to protect Myanmar's persecuted Muslim minority. He issued heartfelt letter to fellow peace prize winner calling for her to speak up for Rohingya in Myanmar. He has called on Aung San Suu Kyi to end military-led operations against Myanmar's Rohingya minority. It is reported in The Guardian, "The 85-year old archbishop said the "unfolding horror" and "ethnic cleansing" in the country's Rakhine region had forced him to speak out against the woman he admired and considered "a dearly beloved sister". "I am now elderly, decrepit and formally retired, but breaking my vow to remain silent on public affairs out of profound sadness," he wrote in a letter posted on social media. "For years I had a photograph of you on my desk to remind me of the injustice and sacrifice you endured out of your love and commitment for Myanmar's people. You symbolised righteousness."

"Your emergence into public life allayed our concerns about violence being perpetrated against members of the Rohingya. But what some have called 'ethnic cleansing' and others 'a slow genocide' has persisted – and recently accelerated. "It is incongruous for a symbol of righteousness to lead such a country," said the anti-apartheid activist. "If the political price of your ascension to the highest office in Myanmar is your silence, the price is surely too steep," reported by Naaman Zhou and Michael Safi in The Guardian.

Tutu used his open letter to urge Aung San Suu Kyi to “As we witness the unfolding horror we pray for you to be courageous and resilient again,” he said. “We pray for you to speak out for justice, human rights and the unity of your people. We pray for you to intervene in the escalating crisis and guide your people back towards the path of righteousness again.

### **Malala**

“Every time I see the news, my heart breaks at the suffering of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar,” Yousafzai, who survived being shot in the head by the Taliban, said on Twitter. “Over the last several years I have repeatedly condemned this tragic and shameful treatment. I am still waiting for my fellow Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to do the same.” The Malaysian foreign minister, Anifah Aman, said: “Very frankly, I am dissatisfied with Aung San Suu Kyi,” he told Agence France-Presse. “She stood up for the principles of human rights. Now it seems she is doing nothing.”

### **Peaceful protest and demonstration**

Besides the reaction of the UN agencies, Human Rights groups and the Presidents of USA, France, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey against the Myanmar’s brutalities towards the Rohingya Muslims; there were peaceful demonstrations, protests and petitions in different countries.

### **UN described Rohingya Muslim as the most ‘persecuted minority on earth’,**

In Oxford, Oxford Information Centre organized a peaceful demonstration in support of Myanmar Rohingya people. Sheikh Ramzy said: “We calling on our government to save the Burma’s Rohingya community from further persecution, ethnic cleansing and genocide, and exodus. UN described Rohingya Muslim as the most ‘persecuted minority on earth’, Myanmar’s Rohingya Muslim community have been victims of mass murder - including of women and children - rape and torcher. Burma’s de facto political leader, the Nobel laureate Aung Sun Suu Kyi, who herself was feted in our Parliament for upholding human rights, now dehumanizes the community by denying them their right to be citizens of their own land.

In South Asia, Massive protests are reported in many countries, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India among

others against the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar (September 2017). There were protesters in Kolkata, India, burning an image of Aung San Suu Kyi. This time around violence seems to have been triggered due to the attack by militants (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) on police and military posts. United Nations has said that the extent of violence indicates that it is crime against humanity.

Tens of thousands of people rallied in the capital of Russia’s mainly Muslim republic of Chechnya in support of the Rohingya. The Chechen leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, told the crowd in Grozny that the world was watching in silence while the Rohinghyas were “torn to pieces, burnt on fires and drowned”.

### **UN Aid Agencies**

In spite of all these protests, petitions and reactions to the Myanmar’s brutalities towards Rohingya Muslims, Myanmar government has not stopped its ethnic cleansing. Rather Myanmar has blocked all United Nations aid agencies from delivering vital supplies of food, water and medicine to thousands of desperate civilians at the centre of a bloody military campaign against the country’s Muslim Rohingya minority, the Guardian has learned. The office of the UN resident coordinator in Myanmar said deliveries had been suspended “because the security situation and government field-visit restrictions rendered us unable to distribute assistance”. “The UN is in close contact with authorities to ensure that humanitarian operations can resume as soon as possible,” the office said.

It is also reported, “The UN World Food Programme said it also had to suspend distributions to other parts of the state, leaving 250,000 people without regular access to food. Sixteen major non-governmental organisations including Oxfam and Save the Children have also complained that the government has restricted access to the conflict area. Humanitarian organisations are “deeply concerned about the fate of thousands of people affected by the ongoing violence” in northern Rakhine, said Pierre Peron, a spokesman for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Myanmar.”

### **Humanitarian Aid.**

However, on the other hand, Muslim countries have taken decision to send humanitarian aid to the worst affected Rohingyas in Rakhine state. Saudi Arabia’s

King Salman has ordered the payment of \$15 million aid for the Rohingya refugees fleeing from Myanmar as a result of genocide and torture. The announcement came in a statement to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) following a meeting of the Saudi Cabinet, which was briefed by Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Rabiah, general supervisor of Riyadh-based King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Aid on the situation in Myanmar with the Muslim minority Rohingya refugees that have been forced to flee.

Indonesia has despatched from Jakarta two Hercules aircraft carrying humanitarian aid for the Rohingya community in Myanmar's Rakhine state. "The two planes carry tents, water tanks, blankets, family kits, five tons of instant food and nearly a ton of medicines," said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, a spokesman for the National Disaster Mitigation Agency. The aid will be handed to Myanmar's government in Yangon for distribution. Nugroho said Indonesia previously sent eight sortie missions to help the relief effort in Bangladesh.

Former Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa told Arab News: "The developments in Myanmar, the plight of the Rohingya, have moved the conscience of nations and people throughout the world." The crisis constitutes a litmus test for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to present itself as part of the solution, said Natalegawa, who dealt with the issue during his 2009-2014 tenure, and visited Rakhine in 2013.

Turkey has called upon the Bangladesh government to open its doors to Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence in Myanmar's western Rakhine state. In terms of humanitarian aid in the world, Turkey ranks 2nd after the United States with \$6 billion and \$6.3 billion respectively, Cavusoglu added. Dr. Altay Atli, a research associate specializing on the Asia-Pacific region at Sabanci University's Istanbul Policy Center, said, Turkey's leading role in the Rohingya issue has two components: Humanitarian aid, including an open check offered to Bangladesh to cover the costs of the refugees, and diplomatic initiatives, such as taking the issue to the UN and mobilizing the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). "These two components, implemented together, can be effective," he said.

Britain's International Development Secretary, Priti Patel in a statement released on 8 September said, "The appalling violence in Rakhine must stop

now. Britain urgently calls upon the security forces to de-escalate the situation in Rakhine and the Government of Burma to allow immediate and full humanitarian access and support for the people and communities affected."

Britain is immediately releasing a further £5 million from existing funds to provide additional critical life-saving assistance such as food, shelter, water and sanitation to those who are fleeing the violence. In addition, Britain is ready to support the recommendations of the Kofi Annan led Rakhine Advisory Commission to assist the long-term development of all people in Rakhine state, but right now the immediate action is for the security forces to end the violence and the Government of Burma to allow humanitarian access.

### **Conclusion**

The Rohingyas are a minority of about a million people who, despite living in the country for generations, are treated as illegal immigrants and denied citizenship. They have been persecuted for years by the government and nationalist Buddhists.

### **Fact Finding Mission**

Under the present circumstances, four immediate actions should be taken before the Myanmar government became completely successful in ethnic cleansing of the Rohingyas. Firstly, there is a repeated demand for a UN-mandated fact-finding mission established this year. The Myanmar government is also asked to allow the fact-finding mission to visit affected areas to carry out its assigned role.

### **Impose sanctions**

Secondly, sanctions should be imposed immediately on Myanmar's military. Pressure also grew on Myanmar as rights group urged world leaders to impose sanctions on its military.

### **Humanitarian aid**

Thirdly, Humanitarian aid should be allowed to enter and reach the worst affected Rohingyas immediately.

### **Return of Refugees to Rakhine**

Fourthly, Return of Rohingya refugees plan should be made immediately. Repatriation of the refugees who went to Bangladesh and other neighboring countries





# Refugees Crisis in the World is Catastrophic

## MWL Journal Desk Report

Constant poverty, natural disasters, revolutions and war have turned at least more than nine million people into destitute refugees. Several citizens have been pushed from their home country due to some political, ecological or religious reasons to seek refuge elsewhere. Refugees are given shelter in a camp and often end up living in the camps for much longer than expected because they have no safe home to return to or cannot be resettled in other countries due to restrictive asylum policies of other nations. Asylum policies means that refugee seeker need to undergo legal procedure in which the host country decides if she or he qualifies for refugee status. These refugees are also considered as internally displaced persons.

Millions of people around the world, in big and small, people of all nationalities and ages have been living for years under these unstable circumstances. Countries refugees like Afghanistan, Iraq, Burundi, Sudan and Somalia have been forced to flee their homes due to persecution. These sheltered people are dependent on the handouts foods and have no clean water to drink neither proper access to health care that prevents outbreaks of cholera, dysentery, hepatitis, malaria, cholera or other common diseases.

According to U.S. Committee for refugees and immigrants (USCRI), Middle East has the highest number of refugees, following Africa as the second highest.

The reason for refugees to move is to escape their

current country in search of a better life somewhere else. It has always been known that money as the major reason of suffering but it's not always money to pay for instead it's also the loss of hope in the native country. This consequence becomes emotional to the person as when he is forced to move from their homesteads he has to leave behind most of their belongings. The refugees leave their homes with the hope that they will be resettled to a safe place or even better to return back to the homes they left behind.

Many countries organization have come forward to support famine, natural or manmade disaster affected areas. Among one of them the most well known organization, United Nations (UN) is the major International provider of emergency relief and longer-term assistance, which includes food, shelter, medical supplies and many other supports.

In line with the humanitarian relief fund, International Islamic Relief Organization, Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) has to the extent same objectives as the United Nations. It believes in providing the urgent Relief assistance to the victims affected all over the world irrespective any racism.

IIROSA has been effectively coordinating with the UN organizations and agencies. It has provided humanitarian assistance in all basic sectors of human life like food, medicine, clothes and shelter etc. IIROSA played a major role by providing accommodation facility in the recent revolution that took place in Arab and African country.

Country like Palestine have the longest refugee problems and remains unresolved even after sixty years. To support the Palestine refugees living in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria as well as in the West Bank and the Gaza strip, a human development Agency called United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established by the United Nations General Assembly. And to support these refugees IIROSA extended cooperation and coordination with the assistance of UNRWA.

It is the Moral code of IIROSA to bring implication in the affected areas all over the world. The poor people affected by the flood in Pakistan on receiving the shelter and food from IIROSA expressed their happiness and praised the organization for their support. Likewise, the organization recently provided relief material to the Eritrean refugees living in Yemen.

The camps provided to the victims end up in thousands that stretch for miles. Temporary camps are usu-



ally built of plastic or cloth sheets. Efforts have been made to provide assistance by various humanitarian aid agencies with the basics, among which health care has been given the priority among all other necessities.

The history of refugees tragedy did not change as long as there has been conflicts or wars, there have been refugees. It is not possible at all to solve this problem and eradicate the concept of refugees. Instead support from the government or Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) can be used as a weapon to fight this sufferings.

Charity or Relief fund has been a vital support to the victims. Taken into account of humanitarian assistance, 20th June has been considered as a World Refugee Day to raise awareness of the situation of refugees throughout the world. This day is marked to celebrate the lives saved till now and motivate the government to uphold UN convention and ensure that people who need protection receives it and can rebuild their lives in safety.

The chaos going all over the world like war or manmade disasters is caused by the human and it's the human themselves who suffers the consequences of their actions. People losing morality over the universal suffrage. Moral behavior is seen less in this era which in turn is causing various trouble to the countries. Since the world has suffered the torment of terrorist attacks and other incidents, illegal entry into the country has become more difficult with laws for unlawful refugees.

The refugee problem is a very serious one, they are so many people around the world who needs so much help and support. But there's just not enough resources to help them all. This problem is one that developed countries ought to take a greater part to reduce human suffering worldwide.

# Living in non-Muslim countries: Examples of mutual coexistence

Ibrahim Yahya Al-Mahdi  
(Edited by M. Nasir Jawed)

*Despite the discrimination suffered by Muslims in countries with Muslim minority; the reality is that there is some form of legal protection from exclusion and marginalization, at least in constitutions and laws.*





In Brussels, Muslim World League Secretary-General Muhammad bin AbdulKarim Al-Issa urged the Muslim community to adhere to their legitimate rights within the framework of the constitutions of the land.

The MWL Secretary General reminded the Muslims, living in the non-Muslim countries, to respect in letter and spirit “the legal provisions enshrined in the constitution of the countries they live in”.

He reminded them to protect their own distinct cultural identity and religious appeal within that socio-legal framework, and warned them not to remain indifferent to, or get into conflict with, the legal order of the nation.

Al-Issa’s statement is important, as Muslim communities in the West are grappling with the problem of mutual coexistence mainly on account of misinterpretation of the Islamic teachings.

Nonetheless, we find several examples of positive outcome when Muslim issues were handled with wisdom and in a legal manner. We also see that there is much space for flexibility in the western constitutions and administrations when it comes to approaching certain Muslim issues and rightful demands.

### **Female Muslim Boxer Wins**

A young female boxer, Umayyah Dhafer, has won her right to participate in the boxing events while wearing hijab. Minnesota Amateur Boxing Association acknowledged her right after taking into account her exciting performances and successful tours and a high spirit of competition.

“It is a big step in Umayyah’s professional career,” said Coach Nathaniel Hailey. “I fought for it until I got the right to show her boxing skills, and I’m happy for her.” While the decision marks a milestone in the life of the 16-year-old ambitious young woman, she still has many battles inside the boxing ring, and outside. She is scheduled to participate within the competition for boxing enthusiasts, in Minneapolis.

Umayyah was earlier denied to participate in a boxing competition in Florida due to her clothes, which was considered in violation of the rules of the game. It however did not stop Umayyah, who dreamed of participating in the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020.

So the player is expected to go to the International Boxing Association of America, in order to recognize her right to participate in the world championships wearing the hijab.

“We welcome this victory and look forward to the day when athletes from all religions are able to compete at the national and international levels while preserving their religious principles,” said the communications director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

The International Basketball Association (FIBA) has also announced in May that it would allow women to wear heads covers during games after a review in September 2014.

The Association said in a statement: “The Central Office has approved the proposal of the Technical Committee to allow women to wear the head scarf, adding that the new rule was updated to reduce the risk of injury and maintain uniformity of color with the rest of the equipment and clothing.”

### **Eid prayers in Australian mosques**

Mosques in Australia are few and far between and several of them are still under construction. This has not deterred the Muslims there to arrange several places of worship in areas mainly inhabited by Muslims, in accordance with the Australian law and meeting all legal formalities Muslims would earlier rent public halls for Friday prayers.

Transformation of mosque architecture from wood — as is common in Australia — to brick and reinforced concrete, with beautiful Islamic motifs and modern designs has begun.

It was heartening to see that the police were co-operating with Muslims during the Eid prayer. They were seen busy handling the traffic near the mosque and providing temporary parking spots, because the streets were filled with worshippers around the mosque.

The government has also permitted certain functions organized by some of the major mosques, notably the National Mosque Open Day. Duly announced in media, the event attracts the non-Muslims who are toured around in the mosque and its facilities with detailed explanation of the Islamic arts and a simplified explanation of the religion.

At noon, adhan is called in an enchanting voice followed by the noon prayer, which provides an op-

portunity for those present to witness the prayer in congregation. This program gives a positive image of Islam and Muslims.

The annual event, widely covered by media, is attended by a representative each from the government, the parliament, police department, church and some civil society organizations.

### **US municipality slapped \$3m fine for mosque refusal**

New Jersey town has agreed to pay \$3.25 million and provide anti-discrimination training to its officials to settle claims filed by the US government and a Muslim group that dragged the civic body to court for refusing permission to build mosque.

The agreement between the Bernards Township, about 48 km west of New Jersey, and the US Department of Justice, allowed the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge to build a mosque.

The local council voted 4-1 to approve the settlement of separate claims filed last year by the Justice Ministry and the Islamic Society. The terms of the deal were announced on May 30, 2017. Under the agreement, the town did not admit any wrongdoing.

A complaint by the Justice Ministry, filed in November, said planning officials in the town had set up unfeasible requirements that the Islamic Society could not meet, after members of the public objected to religious bias.

The association's lawyers said the town had previously agreed to build churches and temples in similar circumstances without objections. The Islamic Society subsequently spent four years awaiting approval.

Bernards will pay \$3.25 million in compensation and legal fees to the Islamic Society. One of the law firms representing the Islamic Society said the association would donate the money it receives from the settlement to charity.

The agreements showed that town officials would be trained in federal law, which prohibits local governments from imposing unnecessary burdens on places of worship, as well as training on "pluralism and integration" of Muslims and other groups.

The US government has filed further lawsuits against local authorities over the refusal to build mosques, including in Pennsylvania, Illinois and Virginia.

### **'Halal meat' in a French prison**

In early 2014, the Saint-Quentin-Fallavier prison in Grenoble, a city in southeastern France, began offering halal meat to its Muslim inmates.

The decision was taken following a judicial order after Muslim convicts filed a petition in this regard.

Earlier, the administration had refused a Muslim prisoner's request to include halal meat in his meal. The prisoner subsequently filed a complaint with the court, which ruled in his favor in November 2013.

The Ministry of Justice objected to the judicial decision, given the excessive cost of revising the prison feeding system, but the Court of Cassation confirmed the decision, since the principle of secularism in France guaranteed freedom of belief.

The former French prime minister called on Muslims and Jews to leave what he called their "old habits," referring to the method of "halal slaughter", and this was met with great displeasure by many in the French society.

### **Islamic marriage in Denmark**

Muslims in Denmark have been able, after legal claims and through official channels in the country, to recognize the Islamic marriage (or marriage in the Islamic way) and take legal form. Danish law allows recognized Islamic centers to issue Shari'ah contracts in line with Danish law. It also stipulates a marriage certificate duly approved by the municipality to ensure civil rights to the spouses.

Several Muslim associations, including individuals, are engaged in facilitating matrimonial services to the members of the community.

### **5th Halal Meat Festival held in Canada**

The International Center in Toronto, Canada hosted the Fifth Halal Food Festival on July 15-16. About 35,000 people visited the festival, the media reported.

Salima Gefraj, who was the sponsor, launched the Halal Food Festival in Toronto in 2013 after her blog "Halal Foods" became very popular. It is one of the few sites that investigate fraud by restaurants in the name of halal food.

'Halal' refers to many aspects of life. There is a halal lifestyle, halal travel and halal financial services, but in Canada there is a special focus on halal

foods.

The Canadian government encourages and assists in establishing such activities that promote coexistence and greater integration of Muslims and other minorities into the Canadian society.

### **Disabled wins judicial battle in Britain**

An Algerian, who was suspected of involvement in terrorism and his alleged connection with some terrorist organizations, won a 21-year legal battle in Britain.

The Algerian, known only by the first letter of his name “J”, won his legitimate right to remain in Britain, frustrating the government’s bid to deport foreigners suspected terror links.

The man, who is a student at the Open University, was accused of helping send young British Muslims to training camps abroad.

The Supreme Court said the threat of deportation had affected his mental and physical health, according to the British Telegraph newspaper. The decision denied the Home Department’s refusal to grant him indefinite residence rights in the UK, and reverses government restrictions that forced him to stay at home and revisits the police station once a month.

The court has also allowed him to continue with his studies in the university.

The decision has come as another blow to the Home Department, which has lost many such cases earlier.

### **Autopsy exemption for Muslims in Ukraine**

In an unprecedented move, Crimea has passed a law in which it has exempted Muslims of autopsy, thus conceding to the Muslims’ wishes to preserve the dead from getting defiled.

Islam teaches that bodies should be buried as soon as possible after death, and must not be defiled, for which the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Crimea had made a legal request.

According to the text of the law, if the deceased’s will is “not to allow anyone after my death to autopsy my body” and the will is documented at death and submitted before the burial.

Postmortem is however a must in criminal cases, so that suspected overdose of drugs or other causes are investigated.

### **Muslim cemeteries in European cities**

Muslims in many European cities have been able to get permission for having their own cemeteries to bury their dead in an Islamic way.

The community had earlier struggled to bury their dead and would mostly bury them in their own private land instead of any public graveyard on account of their distinct rituals in prayers, washing of the dead, digging graves etc.

The Muslims took the legal course and proper administration requirements to get their rightful demands approved that were in conjunction of the rights enshrined in the constitution. Here are some instances of unprecedented legal victory:

### **France funds for Muslim cemeteries**

In February 2012, Muslims of Strasbourg got their first cemetery with funding from the public authorities. Legally, the state does not finance religious places of worship or cemeteries.

The community had earlier struggled to have their own graveyard in the region.

Strasbourg has a total population of 270,000, of which Muslims are nearly 20,000, of whom those with Turkish origin are 7,000, the highest, followed by the Moroccans, 6,000; Algerians 2,500; and Tunisians nearly 1,000.

In the absence of any funeral facilities, the Muslims would take their dead ones to the countries of their origin or bury them in places reserved for Muslims in public cemeteries, most of them exclusively for Christians.

With these burial spaces having been filled for years, Muslims felt the acute need to have a cemetery of their own. Muslims considered Strasbourg as the best place for a cemetery, as the city enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy and liberty.

After a long wait, the project was made possible through an agreement between the state and the Vatican, making it an exception in France, where the law of secularism separates church and authority.

The efforts bore fruits also due to the efforts of the socialist mayor of Strasbourg — one of the defenders of intercultural and interreligious coexistence — that the city municipality in 2009 approved the allocation of €800,000 for the establishment of the cemetery, in cooperation with the Regional Council of the Islamic Faith.



The cemetery is built according to the teachings of the Islamic religion, as was known to the municipal officials, who stressed the respect for religious rites, as the general design of the cemetery takes into account the direction to Makkah, as it is the direction of Muslim prayer.

Spread on an area of 1.25 hectares, the cemetery has space for about 1,000 graves, which can be enlarged, if required.

### **Spain allocates cemetery for Muslims**

In the Spanish town of Pamplona, the municipality has allocated a cemetery of 144 graves for Muslims.

Muslims have for several years pleaded with the previous governments to allot the burial land.

The order by the present administration has therefore resolved Muslims' long due demand, helping mitigate their grievances as regards burial of their dead in the region in an Islamic manner.

Muslims trusted the law, kept their nerves and persisted with their demand undertaking a legal course that ultimately paid off.

### **Muslims get cemetery in Italy**

The civic authorities in Trentino, an autonomous province in the far northeast of Italy, allotted in 2012 a plot of land for cemetery to the Muslims.

The Muslim population in Bolzano, the capital city of the province, is about 5000; and despite their long presence in the region, they were deprived of a place for prayers and a cemetery for funeral.

The provincial administration offered the land for building a Muslim cemetery, for which the community had sought permission long back.

The local leaders conceded that Muslims had the right to bury their dead as per their religious rites. The cemetery is under the supervision of a committee of Muslims, who largely came from Arab countries and Pakistan.

### **A Muslims Cemetery in Canada**

In June 2012, the Muslim community in Canada announced the establishment of its first Islamic cemetery in Toronto, the largest city in the Canadian Republic.

The Islamic Cemeteries Organization in Canada received a mandate to establish the cemetery.

Permission was given for a cemetery to be built on an area of 14 hectares with a space for about

40,000 graves, increasable if necessary. The area – purchased at \$8.6 million – covers the requirements of the community in Toronto in particular, and the Province of Ontario in general.

### **German university teaches Islamic religion**

In March this year, the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) at the Humboldt University, Berlin, announced a new course of Islamic religion with the aim to train Islamic preachers and teachers.

The university, founded in 1810, indicated that the first batch of trainees will graduate only after 2021.

Historian Michel Boroujaltha, one of founders of the IIS, said a working group with the participation of Islamic scholars will prepare the academic training.

There are five other institutes in Germany that teach Islamic subjects. "The five institutes have brought together positive experiences," said Zabeneh Kunst, president of the university.

Berlin Mayor Michael Müller said the construction of the institute was a high priority for the state government and noted that the government had provided 13 million Euros to secure the construction of the institute until 2020.

### **Conclusion**

These are but a very few examples of the western governments' positive approach, and a favorable legal environment that Muslims find in the West. Even if they fall short of Muslims' expectations and their certain legitimate requirements, yet very few people know that in many cases, governments, courts, and officials – not to speak of several non-Muslim organizations – support and stand for their rights and help redress religious grievances such as the right to have their own space for prayers and burial on the government expenses.

One may ask, do they do this out of love for Muslims? This may be understood in terms of a general atmosphere of liberty and constitutional rights that the governments and the people seek to secure their societies to coexist and solve the problems of all the spectrums, in order to live in peace.

It may be appropriate for those who have legitimate claims and religious peculiarities in minority countries to knock all doors, especially in communities that are prosecuting to the law, as the saying goes.

# How can We Overcome Terrorism?

**Ghulam Nabi Falahi**

***Rising Kashmir :***

**Ghulam Nabi Falahi** traces the causes of terrorism, turns the pages of the Qur'an and Hadīth to find the stand of Islam on terrorism, invites all citizens of the world belonging to different races, religions and civilizations to learn from one another our glorious past as well as our pain and urges all religious leaders and policy makers to carry on responsibility for the creation of a peaceful world.





The Muslim world is passing through a difficult period of its history, when acts of terror threaten their security both at home and abroad. Many negative conditions, apart from economic backwardness, cultural degeneration in general and western foreign policy and war on terror in particular have prepared the ground for the formation of terrorist organisations in the Muslim world, and especially in the countries of the Middle East. It is alleged that some terrorist organisations are supported by various state departments in the countries where they operate; this is done so that such groups can be used against other terrorist groups. And, over time, these organisations, made stronger with state support, have grown out of control.

On the other hand, some of them are supported for the political and economic interests of foreign powers, which direct them to particular goals. In this regard, the existence and formation of such organisations are offshoots of various “conspiracy theories” yet, there is still much that is unclear concerning this issue. In the Muslim world, some look around them and see a world dominated by corrupt authoritarian regimes and a wealthy elite minority concerned solely with its own

economic prosperity and awash in Western culture and values. Western governments are perceived as propping up oppressive regimes and exploiting the region’s human and natural resources, robbing Muslims of their culture and their option to be governed according to their own choice and to live in a more just society.

Whatever circumstances may be, it is unfortunate that religion and its terminologies have been always abused by people for their own political or murderous ambitions. The root of terrorism within the Muslim community refers to the misconception and its interpretation of the jihad as the Qur’an’s command. Jihad (to strive or struggle) is sometimes referred to as the Sixth Pillar of Islam. But the term ‘Jihad’ has been misunderstood and misrepresented. This Jihad does not mean ‘holy war’. ‘Holy War’ does not exist as a term in Arabic, and its translation into Arabic sounds quite alien. The term which is specially used in the Qur’an for fighting is ‘Qital’. The Qur’anic teaching of jihad has been of essential significance of Muslims’ self-understanding, piety, mobilisation, expansion, and defence. Jihad as struggle pertains to the difficulty and complexity of living

a good life; struggling against the evil in oneself – to be virtuous and moral, making a serious effort to do good and to help to reform society.

The two broad meanings of jihad, non-violent and violent, are contrasted in a well-known Prophetic tradition. On returning from a military campaign, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) said to his followers: “We return from the minor jihad (warfare) to a major jihad – the struggle of the individual with his own self.” The greater jihad is the more difficult and more important struggle against one’s ego, selfishness, greed and evil.

Previously it has been said that Jihad is a concept with multiple meanings, used and abused throughout Islamic history. Although jihad has always been an important part of the Islamic tradition, in recent years some have maintained that it is a universal religious obligation for all true Muslims to join the jihad to promote Islamic reform or revolution.

However, sadly and tragically, the world sees atrocities carried out where innocent people are killed. People going about their business or holidays, or men, women and children, occupied in daily routines, at homes, offices, weddings and shrines, are suddenly brutally killed, and those who escape return home as orphans or injured to what they are considered to be a safe place. Innocent people are being killed and murdered without any reason. As observed in some case the killers have dared to use the word Islam and Allah’s name in connection with their utterly un-Islamic actions. They have sullied our wonderful religion of Islam and its beautiful concept of Jihad. Can one call jihad the killing of civilians,



women, children, and the elderly, shooting into school buses with Kalashnikovs, burning houses, shops, and cars, kidnapping, and even killing people who have no relation to specific incidents? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) predicted such people and described them as: “They are the most evil of people (creation) and creatures.” (Sahih Muslim)

The Qur’an states that Islam is the universal religion and is mercy to all creatures. As the universal faith, it offers a living demonstration of qualities to which all human beings can relate compassion, mercy and love. Islam rejects extremism, discrimination and racism. The Qur’an states: “*Do not exceed the bounds in your religion.*” (5:77) The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him), warned his companions to avoid extremes – which he explained was the cause of the destruction of earlier communities. He said, “Beware of extremism in the religion.” Terrorists, it appears, feel that this injunction does not apply to them.

Islam, like all world religions, neither supports nor requires illegitimate violence. The Qur’an does not advocate or condone terrorism. And, Qur’anic verses also highlight that peace and warfare are the norms. Permission to fight the enemy is balanced by a strong mandate for making peace.

“*If your enemy inclines toward peace, then you too should seek peace and put your trust in God*” (8: 61) and “*Had Allah wished, He would have made them dominate you, and so if they leave you alone and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way against them.*” (4: 90)

The Islamic tradition places limits on the use of violence and rejects



terrorism and extremism. As with other faiths, mainstream and normative doctrines and laws are ignored, distorted, or hijacked by a radical fringe. Islamic law, drawing on the Qur’an, sets out clear guidelines for the conduct of war and rejects acts of terrorism. Allah forbids the murder of innocent people, killing a person for no reason is one of the greatest sins related in the Qur’an.

“...if someone kills another person – unless it is in retaliation for someone else or for causing corruption in the earth – it is as if he had murdered all mankind. And if anyone gives life to another person, it is as if he had given life to all mankind. Our Messengers came to them with Clear Signs, but even after that many of them committed outrages in the earth.” (Qur’an, 5:32)

As the verse suggests, a person who kills innocent people for no reason is threatened with a great torment. Allah informs us that killing even a single person is as evil as murdering all mankind on earth. A person who observes Allah’s limits can do no harm to a single human, let alone massacre thousands of innocent people. Those who assume that they can avoid justice and thus punishment in this world will never succeed, for they will have to give

an account of their deeds in the presence of God. That is why believers, who know that they will give an account of their deeds after death, are very meticulous to observe God’s limits.

Allah commands the faithful to be compassionate and merciful. Islamic morality is described in one verse as: “*Then to be one of those who have faith and urge each other to steadfastness and urge each other to compassion. Those are the Companions of the Right.*” (90:17-18)

As we have seen in this verse, one of the most important features of the morality that will lead believers to salvation on the Day of Judgment and to enter into Paradise is “being one of those who urges each other to compassion.”

The true source of compassion is love of God. A person’s love of God gives rise to his feeling of love for the things He has created. Someone who loves God feels a direct link and closeness to the things He has created. This strong love and closeness he feels for the Lord, who created him and all mankind, leads him to display a pleasing morality, as commanded in the Qur’an. True compassion emerges as he lives by this morality. This model of morality, full of love, compassion and sac-

rifice, is described in these verses:

*“Those of you possessing affluence and ample wealth should not make oaths that they will not give to their relatives and the very poor and those who have made emigration in the way of Allah. They should rather pardon and overlook. Would you not love Allah to forgive you? Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”* (24:22)

*“Those who have given refuge and help, they are the true believers. They will have forgiveness and generous provision.”* (8:74)

*“Be good to your parents and relatives and to orphans and the very poor, and to neighbors who are related to you and neighbors who are not related to you, and to companions and travellers and your slaves. God does not love anyone vain or boastful.”* (4:36)

Believers never try to make people feel indebted because of the compassion they demonstrate and the help they offer people, and do not even expect to be thanked. Their true aim is to try to gain Allah's pleasure by means of the morality they exhibit, because they know that they will be called to account for that morality on the Day of Judgement. In the Qur'an, God has expressly revealed that hell will be the outcome for those who knowingly refuse to live by the morality of the Qur'an:

*“What has brought you into hell-fire?” They will say, “We were not among those who prayed and we did not feed the poor.”* (74:42-44) *“Seize him and bind him, and then expose him to hell-fire, then fasten him with a chain seventy cubits long! For he did not believe in God Almighty, nor did he urge the feeding of the poor.”* (69:30-34)

As we have seen in these verses, the Muslim described in the

Qur'an possesses a most loving and compassionate nature. Nobody who possesses this morality can of course consent to terrorism or acts of violence directed at innocent people. Terrorists' characters are the exact opposite of Qur'anic morality. A terrorist is a ruthless person who looks with hatred on the world, and wants to kill, destroy and shed blood.

A Muslim raised in the morality as revealed by the Qur'an, however, approaches everyone with the love expected by Islam, respects ideas of all kinds, always tries to bring harmony where there is disharmony, lower tensions, embrace all sides and behave with moderation. Societies consisting of people like this will be ruled by a more developed civilization, and enjoy greater social morality, harmony, justice and plenty than can be seen in even the most modern nations today.

In the case of a conflict, before engaging in a war, believers must wait until fighting becomes compulsory. Believers are allowed to fight only when the other party attacks and no other alternative except war remains: But if they cease (fighting), God is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (2:192)

A closer examination of the Prophet's life reveals that war was a method resorted to for defensive purposes only in unavoidable situations. The revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) continued for a period of 23 years. During the first 13 years of this period, Muslims lived as a minority under a pagan order in Makkah and faced much oppression. Many Muslims were harassed, abused, tortured, and even murdered, their houses and possessions plundered. Despite this, however, Muslims led their lives with-

out resorting to violence and always called the pagans to peace.

When the oppression of the pagans escalated unbearably, the Muslims emigrated to the town of Yathrib, which was later to be renamed Madinah, where they could establish their own order in a freer and friendlier environment. Even establishing their own system did not prompt them to take up weapons against the aggressive pagans of Makkah. Only after the following revelation, the Prophet commanded his people to prepare for war: *“Permission to fight is given to those who are fought against because they have been wronged – truly God has the power to come to their support – those who were expelled from their homes without any right, merely for saying, ‘Our Lord is Allah’.”* (22:39-40)

In brief, Muslims were allowed to wage war only because they were oppressed and subjected to violence. To put it in another way, God granted permission for war only for defensive purposes. In other verses, Muslims are warned against the use of unnecessary provocation or violence: *“Fight in the Way of Allah against those who fight you, but do not go beyond the limits. God does not love those who go beyond the limits.”* (2:190)

After the revelation of these verses, several wars occurred between the Muslims and the pagan Arabs. In none of these wars, however, were the Muslims the inciting party. Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) established a secure and peaceful social environment for Muslims and pagans alike by signing the peace agreement of Hudaibiyah which conceded to the pagans most of their requests. The party who violated the terms of the

agreement and started hostilities once again were the pagans. When Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him) conquered Makkah without bloodshed and in a spirit of tolerance; if he had wished, he could have taken revenge on pagan leaders in the city. Yet, he did not do harm to any one of them, forgave them and treated them with utmost tolerance.

Pagans, who would later revert to Islam of their own free will, could not help admiring such nobility of character in the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him). Not only during Makkah's Conquest, but also in the course of all the battles and conquests made in the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him), the rights of innocent and defenceless people were meticulously protected. The Prophet reminded believers numerous times about this subject and by his own practice became a role model for others to follow. Indeed, he addressed believers who were about to go to war in the following terms: "Go to war in adherence to the religion of God. Never touch the elderly, women or children. Always improve their situation and be kind to them. God loves those who are sincere."

The Messenger of God also clarified the attitude Muslims must adopt even when they are in the middle of a raging battle: "Do not kill children. Avoid touching people who devote themselves to worship in churches! Never murder women and the elderly. Do not set trees on fire or cut them down. Never destroy houses, nor destroy crops or animals!"

The Islamic principles God proclaims in the Qur'an account for this peaceful and temperate policy of the Prophet (peace and blessings

of Allah be to him). In the Qur'an, God commands believers to treat the non-Muslims kindly and justly: God does not forbid you from being good to those who have not fought you over religion or driven you from your homes, or from being just towards them. God loves those who are just. God merely forbids you from taking as friends those who have fought you over religion.

In one of the verses that determine what the relationship with People of the Book should be, the Qur'an states: "*Argue not with the People of the Book except in the fairest manner, unless it be those of them that are utterly unjust. Say to them: 'We believe in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to you. One is our God and your God; and we are those who submit ourselves to Him'.*" (29:46)

While explaining these verses, one of the great scholars of the 20th century writes that 'the discussion should be conducted rationally, in a civilized and decent language, so that the ideas of the other person may be reformed. The preacher's chief aim should be to appeal to the addressee's heart, convey the truth to him and bring him to the right path. He should not fight like a wrestler whose only object is to defeat his opponent. He should rather conduct himself like a physician who is ever cautious not to cause the patient's ailment to worsen by any of his own mistakes, and tries to cure him with the least possible trouble. This instruction has been given here especially in connection with the conduct of a discussion with the People of the Book, but is a general instruction pertaining to the preaching of the religion and it has been given at several places in the Qur'an.

The Prophet (peace and bless-

ings of Allah be to him) placed great importance on persuading people to see the beauty of Islam and in representing Islam in his own person. He used the mosque as a window, a gallery to serve that end. For instance, he would welcome foreign groups to the mosque. These people would eat, drink and sleep there and see the Muslims line up for prayers and listen to the recitations of the Qur'an late at night.

The right to life, freedom of practising one's religion, language, Law, culture, dress, and tolerance that was shown toward Muslim administration to treat non-Muslims well, the following is declared by Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be to him): "I am the enemy of any who injures non-Muslims. And whomever I am an enemy to, I will reckon with him on Judgment Day."

At the end, could we have the globalized world with no discrimination and aggression? Such a view of globalization requires all citizens of the world to have mutual understanding of their similarity with other humans and their need for safety. As humans of different races, religions and civilizations, it is important that we continue to learn from one another our glorious past as well as our pain. In the process of this mutual dialogue, all religious leaders and policy makers should attempt to carry on responsibility for the creation of a peaceful world.

Muslims certainly carry the heaviest load since Islam has been consistently described as the core of radicalism, terrorism and evil religion. Such a hijacked portrayal of Islam does not accord with Islamic teachings that propagate tolerance and understanding of other religious beliefs, languages and civilizations.



# Significance of Admonition (Tadhkur) From Qur'ānic Perspective

Gowhar Quadir Wani



The word tadhkūr translating to admonishing/reminding is the verbal noun carrying the Arabic radicals dh, k, r. Of this root, 19 different forms occur 292 times in the Qur'ān: dhakara 73 times, dhukira 11 times, dhakkara 8 times, dhukira 10 times, dhikrun 76 times, etc. The occurrence of these radicals constituting tadhkūr in such a multitude of both number and form but testifies the significance of admonition and reminding from the Qur'ānic perspective. Moreover, the different names of the Qur'ān mentioned in the same also include dhikr, tadhkirah, dhikrā, etc. all derived from the same root. These names make it all the more clear that the Qur'ān does not merely contain some admonitions, rather it is entirely a book of admonitions. All the teachings of the Holy Qur'ān are meant to admonish people in one way or the other.

**Qur'ān is an Admonition/Reminder: Translation of Some Selected Verses**

Some of the verses in which the Qur'ān has been labelled as an admonition are given below:

Nay this surely is an admoni-

tion (74:54).

*This is naught but an Admonition Unto the worlds (81:27).*

*This which We recite unto thee is of the signs and of the wise admonition (03:58)*

This in exposition unto mankind and a guidance and an admonition unto the God-fearing

Sad. By the Qur'an full of admonition (38:01).

*It is naught but an admonition Unto the worlds (38:87).*

*We have put forth for men, in this Qur'an every kind of Parable, in order that they may receive admonition (39:27).*

*But We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition? (54: 17, 22, 32,40)*

Ta. Ha. We have not Sent down on thee the Qur'an that thou shouldst be distressed. But only as an admonition unto him who feareth (20:1-3).

*And verily it is an Admonition Unto the God-fearing (69:48).*

*And this is an admonition blest, which We have sent down! will ye then be the rejecters thereof? (21:50)*

The above verses mentioned to highlight the significance of admonition from the Qur'anic perspective are those verses that contain any of the words derived from the root dh, k, r. A number of other verses which do not have any such word also emphasize on the need of admonition. For example, the Prophetic mission of the Last Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been pronounced at four places in the Qur'an as TilāwatiĀyāt, Ta'lūmiKitāb, Ta'lūmHikmah, and-Tazkiyah all of which ultimately serve to admonish the people regarding the truth of their lives so that they pay heed to the Divine message and reform their conduct. Moreover, the method of delivering the Divine message should be such that it serves the cause of admonition. Prophet Muhammad is advised by Allah to call people unto His way with wisdom, goodly exhortation/admonition, and best

argument (16: 125). The Prophet is also asked to convey the message in such a way that it touches the hearts of the addressees (04:63).

The above verses make it all the more clear that the Qur'an is an embodiment of admonitions meant to remind people about the purpose of their life. It has been revealed to make human beings aware of the 'creation plan of God' and instruct them to live their life in accordance with the approval of their Creator. The Prophets are sent to convey the Divine message and give glad tidings to those who submit to the Divine revelation and warn the rejecters of eternal punishment. In the Qur'anic phraseology, the former is called as tabshīr while the latter indhār. Besides, the believers are required to strive their utmost in conveying the Divine message to the whole humankind so much so that no one is left with any excuse against Allah. The conveying of divine message is represented by the term Da'wah and the utmost struggle for the same is termed as jihād. All these collectively constitute the apparatus for the realization of the Qur'anic mission of admonishing people so that they hopefully turn to their Lord in repentance. That is why Muslims have produced an amazing corpus of literature inspired from the Qur'anic directive of tadhkīr solely dedicated for this purpose. This literature that can genuinely be termed as tadhkīr literature or mawā'iz literature plays an important role in the purification of self and the consequent reformation of conduct.

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# Global Cultural Coexistence: What Islam has to Offer

By Ahmed Izzeddin

*Man has no choice, at least so far, within current scientific aptitudes, but to share the planet earth for living and coexisting, with all that such predestined fate may imply. Foremost among any implications is the mammoth challenge of how to muster cultural coexistence, since humans are only more different when their beliefs, habits, traits, and other attributes are considered. When seen naked of any affiliation, humans are essentially identical, a fact often blurred by clouds of belatedly acquired attributes.*



In the age of information and communication revolution material barriers tend to fall apart and people communicate and access one another faster and more easily. However, ‘material’ barriers are not the only obstacle before human communication and interconnection. Among the most significant non-material obstacles in this connection is culture, with all its components and bifurcations. There are several definitions of “culture”. However, for the purposes of this article this writer adopts the following definition which is derived from Merriam-Webster dictionary: “The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group”.

Individuals and societies not only identify to their cultures, but can be said to have been ‘made up’ of the ingredients of such cultures, inasmuch as their traits, emotions, perceptions and way of thinking and behavior – all forming parts of culture – play a significant role in influencing their verbal and physical interactions with other individuals and groupings. While the modern time information and communication revolution succeeded in removing material barriers between human beings in their individual and societal settings, it could not neutralize the conceptual barriers, such as culture, that keep people apart, regardless of geographical or physical proximity.

One wonders if the unpremeditated removal of material barriers, at certain times and places, only brought together – rather hastily - people of different and incompatible cultures, thereby fueling more conflict than reconciliation, due to abrupt contact and lack of the circumstances necessary to make acclimatization more conceivably attainable. It follows that the information and communication revolution, while it immensely facilitated motion and access at the material level, it brought more challenges of even more intricacy and sophistication at the cultural level.

“Difference” or “otherness” is a key word, connoting a central concept to deal with when talking of culture, cultural communication and cultural co-existence. Dealing with the “other” or “different” person, entity, society, country or any grouping, represents a delicate and lifelong challenge which can

easily be said to have been a major cause of most conflicts and wars through history. So long as there is independent existence of individuals and entities of all “different” affiliations, there will always be an “other” to deal with. Several branches of knowledge and disciplines approach the challenges of communication and mutual existence among different societies and groups with discourse and analysis. However, the application of any of the numerous solutions emanating from such theoretical discourse is more than often encountered with prodigious practical complications, which are however beyond the scope of this account.

A major objective of this article is to look, albeit briefly, into possible solutions to the cultural challenge from within culture itself. If culture is so entrenched and deep-seated in the psyche of the human being as to cause such immense influence on human behaviour, why not engage culture itself as a cure?

In the case of Islam, as a pivotal source of the cultural scheme for Muslims, the Muslim Holy Book or the Qur’an represents the textual custodian of divine values and sacred instructions. How does the Qur’an deal with the concept of “difference” and “otherness” in such manner as to defuse conflict? The Qur’an deals with the issue of difference, as applied to human individuals and groupings in many of its verses. Principal among these is verse 13 in Chapter 49 of the Qur’an, called Al-Hujurat or ‘the Chambers’, ordaining as follows:

“O mankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is [he who is] the most righteous of you ...”.

It is clear from the opening of the verse that it addresses all human beings, with all their different sexes, races, tribes and nations. The encompassed meaning may be extended to cover all types of human grouping in the world. In other words, the verse comprises all the “different” human “others” that exist. It follows that the Islamic tenets ordained in this verse are meant to provide for the conceptual and practical management of the human “other” in all its hues, colors, forms and shapes, regardless of

origin, race, sex, religion or any other affiliation. Although the Qur'an, as a Holy Book is binding upon Muslims alone, but as a philosophical treatise it provides visions open for use by any willing human. The same may be said of the Bible, the Old Testament, etc. There is nothing that prevents any human being from benefiting of the wisdom comprised in these or any other book, sacred or secular, divine or mundane. The aforesaid verse, it is submitted, provides the way Islam perceives and manages the concept of "difference" or the "other" in certain specific ways, of which three points may be distinguished.

The first point in the conceptual management of the different "other" in this given verse is to remind mankind of their unity of origin, by pointing to the single pair or couple of parents from whom all human beings have descended, as children of Adam and Eve. This is supposed to diminish much of the perceived "difference" that may be the cause of potential disagreement, disenchantment or conflict between human beings.

In a second point the verse, having recognized the different manifestations of human existence, in tribes, races, and nations, each recognizable by distinct characteristics, it proceeds to lay down the master criterion of preference or honor among these different forms of existence. This criterion is righteousness. The most important aspect of such criterion is its neutrality in relation to the different entities. If the criterion was based on sex, race, tribe, color or nationality, it would never have been fair or egalitarian. Righteousness is defined by the code ordained by God throughout the text of the Qur'an. For a generalized application in a secular setting, the criterion should be that it is he or she who is more law abiding that attains honor. No preference can be attained by virtue of any other criterion.

The third point in the verse is a positive command directed to mankind, which serves to highlight and accentuate the joint effect of the two previous points towards the management of human differences and otherness. This is a call on all humans of all sexes, tribes, nations and other affiliations to get to know each other. By getting acquainted to each other human beings minimize the existence of incongruity and oddness that open the door to divergence and

conflict. As the Arab proverb goes, 'man is enemy of what he ignores'.

We have seen how Islam, as expressed in the aforesaid verse contained in the Qur'an, dealt with the concept of "difference" or "otherness" in human beings, with a view to diminish and soften the conceptual forces that influence human beings towards incongruence. Islam, in other words, proffers some conceptual tools that are supposed to intellectually motivate the human being towards bridging the intangible barriers of culture that separate human individuals and societies.

In conclusion, it is submitted that the most effective means for the removal of intangible obstacles to human coexistence, possibly even paving the way for mutual cooperation, is by extracting an antidote from the very cause of the ailment. Although religion is a significant attribute in the creation of "difference" between individuals and nations, thereby satisfying the condition for disparities, disagreement and conflict, which can at times be violent, it may effectively be used to provide the most influential solution for healthy coexistence.

Since almost all religions call for peace and virtue, regardless of certain interpretational oddities that tend to reverse the main course of their messages, the very method adopted by Islam to encourage peaceful coexistence is expected to exist in the teachings of most religions. It is up to intellectual adherents of different religions to do the necessary research to serve such a noble cause. If successful, such efforts can contribute solutions to many a threatening menace at the global level, such as violence and terrorism. Admittedly, much work still awaits scholars and enlightened clerics before this mission can be streamlined. Misinformation, stigmatism and phobias associated to religions and everything religious stand at the forefront of enormous obstacles to be first removed. But with coordinated, cross-cultural and inter-religious determination, accompanied with carefully researched campaigns of information and awareness, it should be possible to lay a solid basis for a sustainable and well-oriented atmosphere for culturally enriched solutions to global coexistence and cooperation.

## Dispelling ignorance, the enemy of peace

### *The Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration calls for religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence*

By Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa

*The Washington Times*

In the Kingdom of Bahrain, for centuries we have grown up with neighbors of all faiths, all cultures and all ethnicities, so we are happy and comfortable living in a multicultural, multifaith society, and we recognize this diversity as a natural and normal way of life for us in Bahrain.

Our noble ancestors began this Bahraini tradition of churches, synagogues and temples being built next to our

mosques, so there is no ignorance about others' religious rites or practices. We all live together in peaceful coexistence in the spirit of mutual respect and love, and we believe it is our duty to share this with the world. We believe "ignorance is the enemy of peace," and that true faith illuminates our path to peace. For this reason, we decided to compose the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration, calling for religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence







throughout the entire world.

Some may find this surprising, but not the hundreds of millions of peace-loving Muslims around the world. We composed the declaration in consultation with Sunni and Shiite scholars, along with Christian clergy and Jewish rabbis, including our friend, Rabbi Marvin Hier of Los Angeles' Simon Wiesenthal Center.

As Bahrainis, we drew from our national heritage as a beacon of religious tolerance in the Arab world during a time when religion has been too frequently used throughout the world as a divine sanction to spread hate and dissension.

Yet in Bahrain, religious diversity is a blessing to our people. We welcome our Catholic, Orthodox and evangelical church communities. We are proud that our Hindu nationals can worship in a 200-year-old temple complete with their images, just around the corner from the Sikh temple and the mosques.

We celebrate our small — but precious — Jewish community, who feel free to wear their yarmulke and worship in their own synagogue, which, we are informed, is the only one in the Arabian Peninsula. In fact, our Jewish community plays a very active role at the highest levels of society, including an

ambassador from Bahrain to Washington in 2008, the first Jewish diplomat to the United States from an Arab country. We wanted to protect our religious pluralism for future generations, so we have enshrined this in law, which guarantees everyone the right to worship unhindered in safety and to build their houses of worship.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is stronger because of our diversity, and I believe our world will be more secure and more prosperous when we learn to recognize the beauty of these differences and how they can teach us many lessons, including the lesson of religious tolerance. Religious freedom should not be viewed as a problem but rather a very real solution to many of our world's biggest challenges and especially terrorism, which knows no religion and threatens all peace-loving people.

We firmly believe this evil can only be eradicated by the power of true faith and love, and this is what compelled us to write the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration as a serious document calling for pluralism, which “unequivocally rejects” compelled religious observance, and condemns acts of violence, abuse and incitement in the name of religion. For national leaders like myself, the declaration makes it clear that “it is the responsibility of governments to respect and protect equally both religious minorities and majorities,” and that there is no room for religious discrimination of any kind.

The Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration is a call for leaders and for the masses, and it calls upon clerics and clergy, rulers and presidents, and regular citizens to “do all within our power to ensure that religious faith is a blessing to all mankind and the foundation for peace in the world.”

In the Arab world, we need not fear religious pluralism, and the non-Arab world need not fear us. In fact, we need one another, and we must meet one another along a path of mutual respect and love. Perhaps, only then will we find the elusive path of peace we seek.

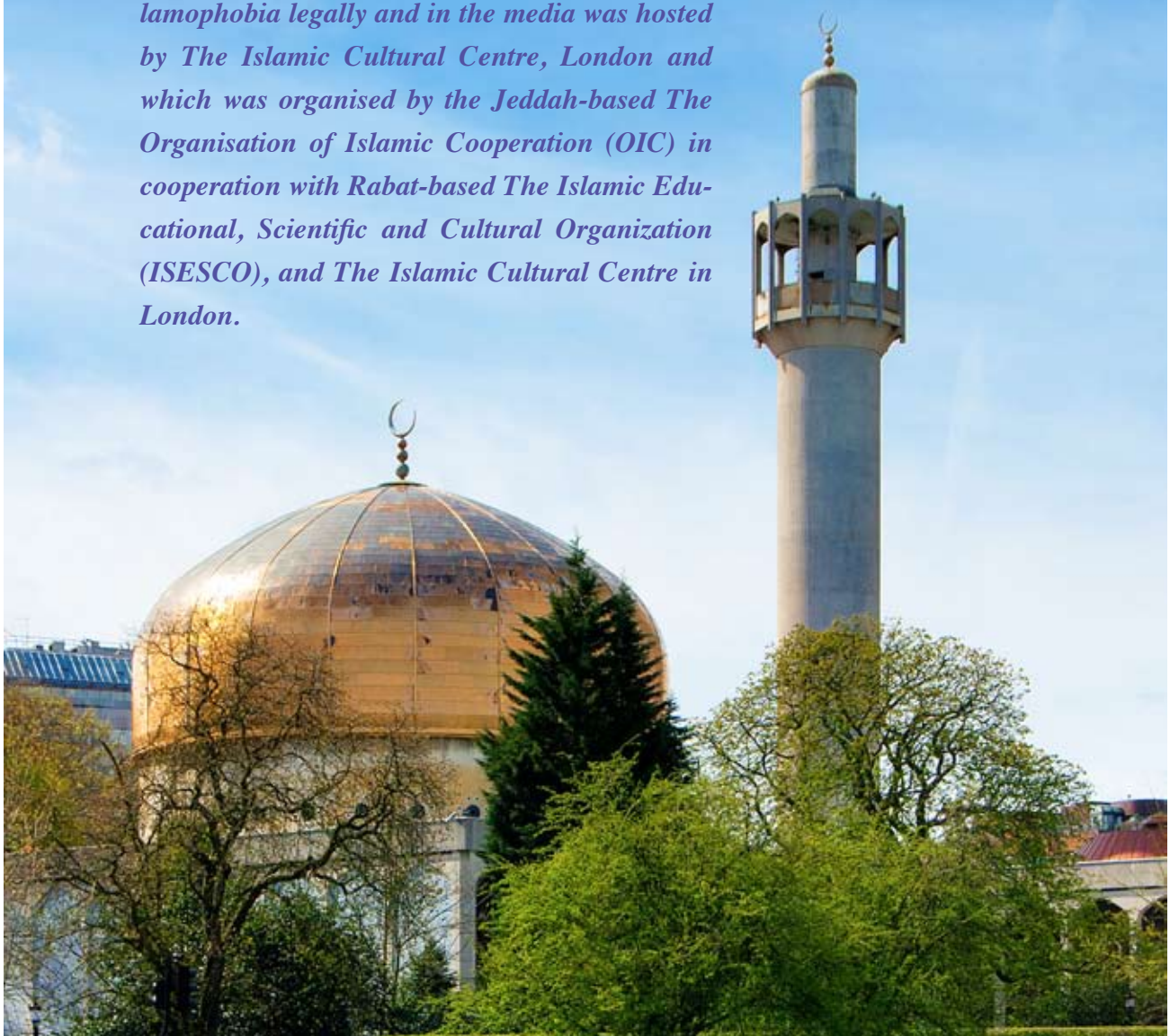
It is our dearest wish that the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration will inspire others to believe in their hearts that there is a better way, and to do everything in their power to find it. As the Holy Koran says, “*It is not the eyes that turn blind, but it is the hearts that turn blind.*” (Al-Hajj 22:46).

May our faith in God and in our fellow man call us to persevere until together, we create a more peaceful world for our children and their children.

# Two-Day International Symposium on Islamophobia at the Islamic Cultural Centre

**Dr. Mozammel Haque**

*Two-Day International Symposium to explore mechanisms to counter the phenomenon of Islamophobia legally and in the media was hosted by The Islamic Cultural Centre, London and which was organised by the Jeddah-based The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in cooperation with Rabat-based The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), and The Islamic Cultural Centre in London.*



The International Symposium was held at the Conference Library Hall of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London, on Saturday and Sunday, the 15th and 16th of July, 2017 respectively, which was attended by Lawyers, Media Experts, Academics from European Universities and Diplomats from various Embassies. The title of the Symposium was: Mechanisms to challenge Islamophobia legally and through the media.

The Symposium was started with the recitation from of the Verses of the Holy Qur'an and Dr. Ahmed al-Dubayan, the Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London, welcomed the august gathering to the conference.

#### Proceedings of the Symposium

There were three sessions besides the Opening Ceremony and Closing Ceremony. In the Opening Ceremony, there was welcome address by the Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London; Address by the representative of The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IS-ESCO); Address by the representative of the General Secretariat of The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the address by Lord Sheikh, Peer of the House of Lords of the British Parliament.

The First session on Islamophobia and defamation of religions from the perspective of international law was chaired by Dr. El-Mahjoub Bensaid. The Second session on Moral responsibility of the media in the proliferation of stereotypes about the other and mechanisms for the professional treatment of Islamophobia by the media was chaired by Dr. Maha Akeel of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The Third session on the Role of civil society institutions in countering Islamophobia from the legal and human rights perspectives was chaired by Dr. Ahmad al-Dubayan, Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre, London.

In the Closing session the Symposium was declared closed with the closing addresses, passing of recommendations and presentation of certificates of participation.

#### Background of the Symposium

According to the papers and folder distributed, the background of the Symposium is as follows:

"With the turn of the third millennium, the denigration of Islam and Muslims has taken new forms that

are in blatant violation of all international law rules governing human rights and the media. In this process, the forms and mechanisms of abuse have evolved, shifting from the slurs buried in books, encyclopedias and Orientalist studies, to films, radio and TV programmes and the Internet. With these tools, violation of law have escalated in the Western media, and the images of Islam and Muslims are being tarnished within the circles of the European Elites, as well as at the global level, including academic and cultural spheres. These abuses constitute a deliberate violation of international law, and a heavy blow to the essence and contents of all documents consecrating the international legitimacy of human rights and which affirm the freedom of the media and the freedom of expression, but which become restrictive when it comes to the denigration of religions; the aim being to ban instigation to hatred, racism and religious discrimination, and advocating tolerance.

"Certain Western media have been at work kindling the flames of Islamophobia in its association with the denigration of Islam, its symbols and its sanctities through the stereotypical portraying of Muslims and Arabs, the religion of Islam, labelled as the religion of terrorism. Voices rose from within the United Nations, including the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, demanding the promulgation of an internationally binding law to deter and stem the spread of the phenomenon. This law would be consistent with the concept of respect for religions.

"In this connection, The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) regularly expressed its deep concern over the dangerous rise of Islamophobia in the United States and a number of other Western countries. At the level of the respective meetings of the Islamic Summit, the Foreign Ministers Council, and the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, the OIC has, since 2005, adopted numerous important resolutions calling for the adoption of clear and concrete measures and mechanisms on all levels, including national and foreign media, in a bid to earnestly address this phenomenon and defend Islam and Muslims.

"In this context, the Information Department at the OIC General Secretariat has prepared a Media Strategy to Counter Islamophobia, which was adopted by the 11th Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 21 December 2017. This is a civilizational project, which proposes effective initiatives to address Islamophobia in the West through a set of integrated measures and



mechanisms aimed at achieving short and long-term objectives. These include, inter alia, highlighting, identifying and refuting the misconceptions about Islam and Muslims by providing comprehensive on-line materials which shall be supported by social networks, and building alliances with academic, press and media groups and with civil society.

“Being concerned with correcting misconception on Islam and the Islamic civilisation in the international media, while being aware of the pressing challenges and demands in this connection, ISESCO, has since 2007, devoted a great attention to addressing Islamophobia and the stereotypes on Islam and Muslims in the Western media from a professional, media and legal perspective. In this context, ISESCO has endeavoured to develop the professional and technical expertise and skills of journalists working in media organisations, inside and outside the Islamic world. The ultimate aim is to enhance their legal culture and enable them to defend their interests, their cultural specificities and their mission within the framework of international laws, customs and conventions on freedom of opinion and expression, the ethics of journalism, and rejection of the denigration of religions.”

ISESCO and the OIC General Secretariat, being aware of the challenges posed by the spread of Islamophobia, and in a bid to coordinate their efforts in this connection to address the demonization of Islam, based on a professional and human rights perspective, agreed to hold this meeting in coordination with the Islamic Cultural Centre in London on 15-16 July 2017.

#### Objectives of the Meeting

The objectives of the meeting, according to the organisers of the international Symposium, were as follows:

1. To Address Islamophobia in the Western Media, Cultural and Academic circles.
2. To enable media professionals in and outside the Islamic world to master the techniques of addressing stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in the media, produce an alternative images favouring intercultural dialogue and fostering values of tolerance, co-existence and respect for otherness.
3. To highlight the illegal aspects of Islamophobia and propose legal measures to limit them.
4. To invigorate partnership with Western civil society organizations concerned with combating racial

discrimination, hatred denigration of religions.

#### Themes of the Meeting

1. Islamophobia from the perspective of international law.
2. Ways to address Islamophobia through the media.
3. Legal ways to address Islamophobia.
4. Ways to promote cooperation, understanding and mutual understanding with civil society organisations to redress misconceptions about Islam and Muslims.

#### Opening Ceremony

Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan, The Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre welcomed the august gathering and thanked the organisers for partnering with the Centre to address such a prominent and pressing topic. Dr. Al-Dubayan stressed that given recent tragedies in the UK Islamophobia remains a pressing issue concerning people in the UK and globally. Dr. Al-Dubayan highlighted that Islamophobia can take place in many forms and that mechanisms of abuse have evolved, shifting from the slurs buried in books, encyclopaedias and studies, to films, radio and TV programmes and the Internet.

Dr. Al-Dubayan hoped that throughout the two days the experts could draft proposals and resolutions which will be forwarded to the partnering organisations in which the issue of Islamophobia can be approached. Dr. Al-Dubayan also mentioned the need for Muslims to interact more with the community and that through interactions fear and hatred would be reduced; it would also help inform people of the true image of Islam.

As a representative of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), Dr. Mahjoub Bensaid, Head of Public Relations at ISESCO, conveyed their Director General's best wishes for the success of the Symposium. Dr. Bensaid said that institutions like the Islamic Cultural Centre where in the forefront in showing the real and true image of Islam as a religion of peace which advocates tolerance. Dr. Bensaid also thanked the OIC for supporting and working in collaboration in this timely symposium.

As a representative of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Dr. Maha Akeel, Head of Public Relations at the OIC - Organisation for Islamic Cooperation highlighted the Organisation's role and mission in addressing concerns facing Muslims across the Globe. The OIC serves as an international umbrella organisation aimed at articulating the col-

lective voice of Muslims across the globe. The topic which was being discussed this weekend is one of which the OIC has written many publications and organised many activities to address these issues.

Lord Sheikh, Peer of the House of Lords, British Parliament, highlighted in his opening speech the many issues facing the Muslim Community in the UK. Lord Sheikh mentioned how Muslims are over represented in Prisons representing over 15% in Her Majesty's Prisons. Lord Sheikh also mentioned that the Muslim population are mostly comprised of young undedicated youth which reflects poorly on society. The issue of social challenges facing many Muslim Households was also addressed.

Nonetheless, a pressing phenomenon facing the UK community his Lordship touched upon was the issue of Islamophobia. Recent attacks across the UK have demonstrated that Islamophobia is a prominent issue, which was on the rise and that needs to be approached and His Lordship praised the Islamic Cultural Centre and the supporting partners for putting together this symposium. Lord Sheikh talked about the need for Mosques to diversify in their activities and paid reference to the ICC which holds programmes ranging from youth clubs to Arabic Calligraphy courses. It is through these programmes that the Muslim community can more proactive citizens engaging with society and promulgate Islam and its true understandings.

Dr Maha Akeel

Dr. Maha Akeel, Head of Public Relations at the OIC - Organisation for Islamic Cooperation – in an interview with Jeddah-based Arab News before coming to the Symposium, said, “The OIC media strategy in countering Islamophobia consists of short, medium and long-term objectives that include focusing on interaction with media outlets, academics and experts on various related topics; producing content, publications and media literacy programs; engaging with Western governments in creating awareness; and supporting efforts by Muslim civil societies in the West and involving them in the elaboration of plans and programs to counter Islamophobia.”

Dr. Maha Akeel also said in that interview, ““No doubt there is a rise in Islamophobia in the West, which is indicated in the latest OIC Islamophobia Observatory Report, and there is usually a spike in hate crimes against Muslims following terrorist acts perpetrated by a Muslim.”

“The forum will look at the role of the media and

civil society in countering Islamophobia from a legal and human rights perspective because we cannot talk about the role of the media without discussing freedom of the press and freedom of expression as fundamental human rights,” she said.

She also added, “When talking about the role of the media, it is within the framework of its responsibility in the proliferation of stereotypes and its ethical and professional standards in covering and handling Islamophobic acts.” (Arab News, Friday, 14 July, 2017)

During the session

Executive Director of the Interfaith Network Dr. Harriet Crabtree talked about the role of interfaith activities in working together to tackle not just Islamophobia but also anti-Semitism. Dr. Harriet mentioned that providing a platform for dialogue and inter-religious discussions will help promote harmony and understanding between worshippers of all faiths.

As mentioned earlier, the Symposium was broken down into three sessions:

1. Islamophobia and defamation of religions from the perspective of international law which was delivered by panellists comprising of Lawyers and Academic from around the world the world.
2. Moral responsibility of the media in the proliferation of stereotypes about the other and mechanisms for the professional treatment of Islamophobia by the media which was delivered by experts from organisations such as “Tell MAMA”, “Faith Matters” who are at the heart of providing support for victims of Islamophobia and Hate Crime. There were also journalists who provided expert advice on the topic.
3. Role of civil society institutions in countering Islamophobia from the legal and human rights perspectives which was delivered by Islamic Organisations and Interfaith officers which focused on the role of institutions and bodies in nurturing and protecting the rights of victims of hate-crime and ways in which reducing such crimes can be suggested.

The Symposium ended with the Collection of Recommendations and Proposals which were submitted to the OIC, ISESCO and appropriate stakeholders. Dr. Al-Dubayan also paid tribute to the co-organisers The Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and ISESCO for their invaluable efforts not just in support of the symposium but their diligence in supporting Islam and Muslims across the globe.

## Dr. Al-Ghamdi: Vision 2030 will take KSA to new heights



### Syed Mussarat Khalil

Vision 2030 will take the Kingdom to new heights Insha'a Allah (God willing) said renowned intellectual, writer and ex-diplomat Dr. Ali Al-Ghamdi in his presidential address at function recently organized by Pakistan Repatriation Council (PRC) on the occasion of 87th anniversary of National day of Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Ali Ghamdi thanked PRC for organizing the celebration on the National Day occasion and said, "It is a day not only for Saudis but this is day that all expatriates also celebrates." He said King Faisal made this day to celebrate as National Day. He remembered attending the first Saudi National Day function held in 1965 in Beach Luxury hotel in Karachi, Pakistan.

He said Pakistanis were the first comers in early 1960 to Saudi Arabia and they contributed a lot to the development of basic infrastructure of Saudi Arabia.

He said Kingdom's shape came in three stages, which was completed by King Abdul Aziz, who united all the states of Najd, Asir, Hijaz and other states and declared it the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

His enforcement of Islamic law made this country of peace, harmony and humanity, which also gained credibility in the world.

He praised Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman and Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman for their astute leadership and also praised Vision 2030, which will take the Kingdom to new heights Insha'a Allah.

He said his speech will not be complete until he speaks about the plight of patriotic Pakistanis languishing in Bangladeshi camps since 1971. He hoped that Pakistani rulers will take measures to solve the issue on priority. He said that Islam teaches rulers to give special care to poor and downtrodden people of society and stranded Pakistanis fall in that category, who have been ignored for 45 years.

Chief guest Dr. Abdul Aleem Khan, President Engineers Welfare Forum (EWF), paid rich tribute to King Abdul Aziz and considered him the greatest Muslim thinker and leader of last century.



He said PEC and EWF closely working with Saudi Council of Engineers and Islamic Council of Engineers. He also demanded an early repatriation of stranded Pakistanis.

Guest of honor Raja Muhammad Zareen Khan, member of Kashmir committee Jeddah, said that Saudi Arabia has played very important role in supporting the Kashmiri cause and therefore people of Kashmir are always thankful to the Kingdom.

Well-known scholar and writer Tariq Mahmoud said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia cooperate in all the fields and work on similar policy due to fraternal relationship.

Choudhury Riaz Ghuman, leader of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q) and General Secretary of Pak Media Group, praised Kingdom for helping and supporting Pakistan always.

Muhammad Amil Usmani, Muhammad Amanatullah, Shamsuddin Altaf and Sheikh Muhammad Luqman praised King Abdul Aziz for implementing Islamic rule under the guidance of renowned religious scholar Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahab.

Convener Syed Ehsan Al-Haque thanked all guests and lauded role of King Abdul Aziz and all rulers for leading and serving the Muslim Ummah.

He praised speech of Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi for his speech in UN in which he strongly advocated rights of Kashmiris and handling of Afghanistan. He presented following resolutions, which were approved by the audience:

We urge prime President Mamnoon Hussain to create Pak Saudi Strategic Commission to enhance the bilateral relationship to jointly fight terrorism, improve the quality and magnitude of Manpower, Trade KSA's Food need, Education, Training, Investment in Construction and industrial ventures, Power & Water Projects, Tourism, Media, Cultural, and Religious sectors.

We urge President Mamnoon Hussain to arrange repatriation and rehabilitation of Pakistanis stranded in Bangladesh. To overcome the paucity of fund to implement PRC proposal of settlement of stranded Pakistanis on self-finance basis. Bangladesh should be included in the committee to play its role in solving the issue.

Until repatriation is done Pakistani High Commission at Dhaka should ensure safety and security, provision of food, educational, medical and basic need for Pakistanis stranded in camps. We praise Nawai waqt; OBAT; MWDO; FOH for extending welfare support to them and urge other charitable organizations e.g.



Eidhi, Ansar Burney Trusts and those welfare organizations belonging to Jamaat Islami; PML; MQM; Tehrike Insaf; and others to extend financial and basic needs to alleviate their miseries.

We urge President Mamnoon Hussain to remind UN as per its resolution to organize plebiscite in Kashmir according to the will of its people. Kashmiris must be included in all the negotiations between Pakistan and India. Indian army must be removed from Kashmir until plebiscite is done.

We urge OIC to take urgent measures to press Myanmar rulers to stop of genocide of Rohingya as Muslims and to give them basic right of citizenship. All those migrated to Bangladesh must be settled back in their province of Rakhine and all protection should be provided by UN as was done for the Bosnian Muslims against Serbs. OIC should also extend financial help to Bangladesh to take care of refugees food; shelter and health.

Earlier, the event started by recitation of verses from Holy Qur'an by Qari Abdul Majeed. Naat (glorifying Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) by Ahmad Raza Hashmi. Zamurad Khan Saifi presented poem.

Hamid Al-Islam Khan, deputy convener, welcomed all guest and revived PRC's mission on stranded Pakistanis, stating, "Pakistan will not be complete without the joining of Kashmiris and repatriation of stranded Pakistanis from Bangladesh.

Other guests were Sheikh Salah Al-Rashidy, Muhammad Al-Ghamdi, Ilyas Meher, Engineers Masroor Elahi, Syed Naseeruddin, Khaled Jawed, Mushir Siddiqui, Wasi Imam, Saleem Abdi of Burmese Muslim Community.

The program was conducted by journalist Syed Mussarat Khalil.



# Need of Arbitration for Islamic Banking & Finance

**Dr. Abdul Gadir Warsama Ghalib**

Islamic finance, particularly in the areas of Islamic banking and Takaful/Tawinii insurance, is growing very fast all over the globe. Islamic banking is heading and growing very fast and based on this, it is evident to notice the persistent and overwhelming steady move of Islamic banking products, which are needed and welcomed to complement the national economy of many countries. In Japan, for example, where I was involved in giving some studies regarding Islamic banking application, the Governor of the Central Bank of Japan stated that they are eagerly interested to learn from Islamic finance theories so as not to miss the credentials embodied therein. This is how they look to Islamic finance as a useful new opportunity.

The spread of Islamic banking is reaching very high

percentage at very high rates that exceed 20 to 25%, as revealed in many statistics and studies undertaken by many concerned recognized institutes. This steady march is due, among other things, to the philosophical stand and special nature of Islamic banking products that are far away from greediness, speculation, uncertainty, ambiguity and above all “riba”/usury free... It is not just dealing with money, it is more than that, and Islamic banking, as a matter of fact, has been classified earlier by one of the Governors of Bank of England as not banking per se because there is no interest application i.e. interest free, while taking interest as he believes is the cornerstone for any banking activity. Now, Islamic banking is in the heart of the business corner in London. It is, also, fully available in Moscow, Tokyo,

New York, Paris, Sydney ....., and many other eastern or western countries.

To support this march, there is a genuine need for many new products to satisfy the growing needs of consumers at different places and with different needs and requirements. To achieve this strategy, a positive stand is required from Shari'ah Scholars, Shari'ah Jurists and Shari'ah Councils & entities to look into such needs and requirements for their accommodation within the system and, moreover, appropriate application for their benefit and the benefit of the community at large...

We all, need to work very hard and to streamline our efforts to support the on-going spread. However, from legal perspective, we believe that a proper fast and equitable channel is required to settle all different disputes that could arise at any time between concerned parties. In this connection and due to the special nature of Islamic finance & Islamic banking, it would be most prudent, most accurate and appropriate to seek arbitration as the most suitable appropriate vehicle for settlement of all disputes in lieu or as alternative for Judicial Courts.

Arbitration as an alternative dispute resolution (ADR), no doubt, proves itself as the best alternative mechanism for settlement of disputes. Moreover, arbitration has been ruled and instructed by ALLAH in Sur-ratt Al-Nisaa (The Women) wherein it has been stated. QUOTE (35) (If ye fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation: For Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things) UNQUOTE. What more is needed than such rule to seek arbitration in case of disputes...., and this as a rule applies to all kinds of disputes that could happen in our daily life including investment business, trade & banking disputes... etc.

The importance of seeking arbitration, with reference to Islamic banking disputes in particular, stems from the fact that Islamic banking products are of special technical nature that requires special technical understanding. This kind of technical understanding mostly is not available in Judicial Courts. However, alternatively, this technical understanding will be available when taking the dispute to an arbitration tribunal composed of Shari'ah Scholars, Jurists and elites. Here, in the arbitration tribunal, the advantage of Shari'ah knowledge is mostly available to a very high degree of certainty. They are better off, in understanding all issues related to musharakha, murabaha, salaam, tawaruq, takaful...etc. So, let's give them their dues.

By choosing arbitration tribunal composed of Islamic Jurists & Scholars, as the suitable mechanism and appropriate means for settlement of disputes that could arise in relation to Islamic banking disputes, we will not face a situation that is similar to what had happened, as an example from many cases, in the High Court & Court of Appeal in London in the famous precedent case of:

Shamil Bank of Bahrain vs. Beximo Pharmaceuticals Ltd & Others ...

In this case, the English Courts explained that the "Glorious Shari'ah Rules" are not framed or drafted in a certain specific law. They represent general principles with different schools of thought expressing many ideas. Whereas, on the other hand, reference to the English Law or other codified laws like the French Law or German Law...etc. is clear and acceptable.

To escape such instances and to minimize appearance before Judicial Courts, or other similar authorities, to a very lesser degree we strongly believe that seeking arbitration is a matter of necessity, if not a must, for the steady promotion and continuous progress of Islamic finance and Islamic banking. To go for arbitration, all Islamic banking & Islamic Finance entities must provide for arbitration for the settlement of all disputes that may arise.

Clear provisions are needed in the legal documentation to opt for arbitration. Herein, the contracts shall insert provisions, including, appointment of arbitrators from Islamic Jurists, applicable law to the contract, place of arbitration, language of arbitration...etc. Fortunately, there some arbitration centers specifically to settle disputes related to Islamic Finance, as the arbitration center for Islamic disputes in Dubai (which has been established by Islamic Development Bank & CIBAFI) and, also, the center in Kuala Lumpur.. All, above points, are to be inserted by Islamic Finance entities in the contracts..

We urge all to go for arbitration to settle disputes related to Islamic finance and Islamic banking issues, if any, and rest assured that you will not regret choosing such alternative.. This is of course is due to, among other things, the fact that the dispute \ case will be adjudicated by arbitration tribunals who are well versed, acquainted and know all the technical details related to Shari'ah issues and jurisprudence. Such great advantage, may not be available in judicial Courts and the law opens the room for alternative dispute resolutions (ADRs), of which arbitration is the most best choice to achieve fast justice for all.



# Why Arab Tribes in Ignorance Age were Selected for Islam

Ahamad Wahaj Al-Siddiqui

*The world before Islam ran on the motto 'The weaker are driven to the walls the stronger survive'. The rulers words were laws. They fully enjoyed the legal, the executive and judicial powers. Romans used to punish criminals by throwing before lions, or dragging them behind horses till death or making them blind with burning iron bars, or fetters in their legs to beg for life.,*



But Arab tribes were free from all these atrocities. Every tribe had chief and some advisers. These tribes used to have three main factions:

- (a) Class purely related by blood in a family tree. They kept attached soundly with their tribes. They were not allowed to bypass its traditions or usage. If anyone involved in causing bad name to the tribe he was expelled from the tribe.
- (b) Supporters class, it consisted of the people who were expelled by their tribes for the crimes they had committed. Though condemned by their tribes but getting allied to other tribes, they were known as supporters. This class also included liberated slaves. The system of alliance or confederation was well known among tribes.
- (c) The slave class in the tribal society consisted of men who were imprisoned in the war and later sold as slaves. They were denied any right and were burdened with duties by their owners.
- (d) A faction of people was known for its riches and another for poverty. Riches were very few but most of the populace had stricken with poverty. The supporter class rang among them but their source of income had been through wars or plundering or adventures. They got themselves known for their bravery.

The people in Arabian peninsula got indulged in few bad habits. The most abhorrent custom in few tribes was female infanticide. The details about it has already published. The Holy Quran stated: *Kill not your children for fear of poverty. We provide sustenance for them and for you. Verily killing of them is a great sin* (Quran-17/31). This evil practice continues even in modern age under the name of birth control. This birth control is mostly by abortion of fetus (or foetus). It is a great sin.

Pre Islam the women had no right of inheritance in the property of her deceased father. The inheritance fell to sons and if the deceased had no sons, his brothers or uncle used to inherit. But the women had right of maintenance. The man could take any number of wives or divorce them as he pleased. The divorced could marry others.

Another bad habit was that in case of the death of the father who was married to other wives the elder son could marry any of those wives not being his mother. Those other wives were considered the part of inheritance for elder son if he desired any one of them to marry. The widow could marry any one she

desired. Other evils among them were the use of intoxicant gambling sacrifices to idols and divination by arrows. Allah called them abomination of Satan's handiwork. (See Quran-5/90)

Islam prohibited all drugs causing intoxication in 7th century. The modern medicine confirmed its harms. Islam prohibited gambling it is an established evil. The gambler loses his income in the hope of earning and brings distress on himself and on his family.

Polytheism is idol worship, Arabs were involved in idol worship that included human sacrifices on their altars. These idols are stones, it is Satan who appears in the shape of idols and misguides them in various ways. God said: Did I not enjoin on you O ye sons of Adam that ye worship not Satan. Verily he is your open enemy. (Quran-36/60)

Arab worshipped an idol named Hubul. Right below it were placed three arrows. On one was written 'do it', on the other was written 'Don't do it' and the third arrow was blank. A man was there to make divination and he charged 100 dirhams. He used to play tricks to assure them that the order was from their god Hubul. They used to take orders for doing some act or sacrifice or for other important affairs.

### **Why Allah selected Arab Tribes for Islam?**

- (a) They were true to their promise or pledge. They did never back out from their promise or pledge. They fulfilled their pledge even if it cost to their lives.
- (b) Prostitution in Arab society particularly in ignorance can't be denied. But it was limited among the prostitutes. Adultery, incest and fornication was unknown among Arab. The sexual intercourse i.e. adultery among the free born, unmarried women was unknown. Arab fought for the honor of their ladies. Some of them killed their daughters for fear of disgrace as in the tribal wars the ladies were taken as captives and made slave girls.
- (c) Arab had a system of family life through marriage which were of few types. Marriage by paying dowry as agreed to with the father of woman. This type of marriage was most common between Arab. Marriage for an appointed time. The man will pay the woman an agreed sum to take her as his wife. The marriage will dissolve if the con-

tracted time is over. But the children will have the right of inheritance and affiliation to their father. The woman in captivity could be liberated. To them the marriage was a contract and if the differences cropped up between the pair, the man will divorce his wife three times. After divorce or death of husband, the widow had to wait for a period of one year to determine the ancestry. Before she remarried Islam reduced this period to three months and four months and ten days in case death of husband.

- (d) Arabs were very particular about their genealogy even in ignorance age. They were also blessed with good habits. Generosity was a common trait among them, they helped the poor and widows.
- (e) They treated their guests with high esteem. They did everything to honor them. They spent lavishly in entertaining their guests in food and other things.
- (f) They were heedless of death and were known for bravery and chivalry and fought for the honor of their tribe and to defending the grace and honor of their ladies.
- (g) Arab were also known for their virtuousness and modesty. They cast down their glances and avoided to look upon the faces of the ladies. This purity and nobility was the chief trait of the tribal chiefs.
- (h) Arab were famous to keep the pact and fulfill the alliance and hated to break it and called traitors.

It is crystal clear from the aforesaid facts that Arab presented the best society in the ignorance age in comparison to the hateful environments all the world over. Their tribal life had good traditions to govern and the women had respect and right to dowry, sustenance and divorce which was unknown to the then world. They strictly preserved the ancestry and fought for the honor of their tribe and ladies.

That is why Allah (God the Unique) accepted the prayer of Abraham who said: Our Lord make us twain (Abraham and Ishmael) submissive unto Thee and of our progeny a nation Muslim adherent to Thee .....

Our Lord raise up from them who will recite unto them the revelations and teach them the Book and wisdom and make them grow in purification for Thou art Exalted in Might, the Wise (Qur'an-2/128, 129). Allah did accept their

invocation by raising a Muslim nation from their progeny the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who holds ancestral descent from Ishmael son of Abraham (peace be upon them) to reform the perversity, immorality and tyranny and corruption all over the world and to give a glow to the gloom wherein the humanity continued to bleed.. when the barbarism was sky high and life of the people had fallen into the hands ferocious wolves. The men were beheaded to snatch their wealth and their property. The women were disgraced to a degree that they could not dream of an honorable life. When the earth was straitened for the persons searching for peace.

The laborer was devoid of his wages and cover his body and that of his family. The creditor by extending interest bearing loans caused tyranny to extract his loans with high interest.

The big trader dominated the market and sold the necessities of life on prices which made the poor poorer. The teachings of the earlier prophets were effaced. The dacoits lived luxuriously with their loots. The enslaved the free men and women and sold them as slaves.

The Creator of the universe looked upon his creatures with mercy and sent Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from the progeny of Ishmael son of Abraham. He preached the world with Justice and Peace.

He gave the perfect order i.e. Islam and a constitution i.e. Quran when the world was devoid of any constitution. His labor to guide the people to attain justice and peace did bring fruit and gradually the gloom of loot and tyranny came to an end. He covered with his teachings all the fields of life bringing justice and peace. Soon the people learned the value of justice and peace vanishing the gloom which had reigned the world for hundreds of years.

Most of the good habits of Arab tribes as explained above were part of teachings of Prophet Ishmael, that is the reason Allah selected Arab tribes to preach the world under the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad all the world over and spread justice and peace. Within 23 years of the Prophet's teachings gloom which had prevailed due to tyranny and atrocities of the rulers for hundred of years did vanish from the world and people learned to learn in peace.



# The Reverters to Islam

## Dr. Wilfred Hoffman ( Murad )

**Dr. Munqidh Ben Mahmoud Assaqar**  
**Translated by Sadok Salehi**

*The veteran German ambassador in Algeria then Morocco Wilfred Hoffman, is a multi-talented man, He is an expert in nuclear defense, and information director at NATO. He holds a doctorate in law from the University of Munich. On top of that, he is a gifted thinker and prolific writer and a brilliant lecturer. Dr. Wilfred Hoffman has been born in Germany in 1931. He grew up in a Christian environment, and belonged in the Catholic Mariana group. He was attending its weekly meetings, and a firm believer in its Christian beliefs. However, he quickly left the group after uncovering its corrupted beliefs, and its contradictions with reason, logic and common sense.*



His religious experience with Christianity helped him. It has deepened his belief in God and the inevitability of Revelation as well as the necessity of religion to man. However, it has not succeeded in solving an important problematic issue with Hoffman. It is to determine, which true religion followed by most humans among the world's beliefs.

In his youth, Hoffman suffered a traffic accident that nearly ended his life. The doctor said to him: "Wilfred, no one can survive such an accident. God has spared you my dear for something very special."

Hoffman's journey to know Islam began in 1961 during his work in the German consulate in Algeria. It was during the era of French colonialism there. He witnessed some of the massacres in the country of one and half-million martyrs. "These sad facts have formed the backdrop of my first close contact with the real Islam. I've also noticed how the Algerians endured pain, and saw their strong commitment during Ramadan. These people were certain of their victory against the French. Nevertheless, the human behavior they display amid suffering and pain is incredible. Then, I have come to realize that the role of religion has something to do in all this."

Hoffman was eager to explore the role of Islam, so he bought a copy of the Qur'an. To this he said: "In order to know these astonishing people think and act. I started to read their book, the Qur'an; I haven't stopped reading it ever since." I have discovered that the secret of the Algerians' patience and steadfastness lay in the Book of Allah. In verse 45 of Surah Al-Baqara Allah says: "And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]".

Through reading the Surahs of the Qur'an, Hoffman stopped long pondering the verse 38 in Surah Al-Najm stating: "That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" He saw this verse in utter contradiction to all Christian creeds he believed in. This denies the principle of guilt-ridden society starting with our father Adam and ending with his descendants. Thus it refutes the belief of atonement's tenet- that falsely claims -that God enabled the Jews to crucify Christ to expiate the sins of Adam and his sons. This verse also has falsified all the beliefs that have been formulated around the idea of salvation through atonement. It has deified Christ and claims that he is one of the most sacred trinity. Dr. Hoffman disdainfully asked: "God suffers for humanity?! It is

a terrible and horrible, blasphemous [What a heresy] and very insulting matter."

During his touring Algeria Dr. Hoffman's attention has been drawn to the great number of Berber boys who memorize by heart the Qur'an or part of it. It is noteworthy though, that the Qur'an isn't in the Tamazight language.

There is a more impressive matter Dr. Hoffman hasn't seen. That is the memorization of the holy Qur'an by Muslims, who don't understand the Arabic language. Whoever wishes to appreciate the proof to the great significance of God to save His book let him memorize a text in a language unknown to him. Dear reader, can you commit to memory one single page in Japanese, Russian, or other languages you don't master?

The second aspect that has attracted Dr. Hoffman to Islam was his penchant for art, and beauty happened when he visited Spain. There, he saw the beautiful work of art left by Muslims. Their graceful lines and ornamental decoration in mosques and palaces are vivid witnesses to their masters. [These works of art have] "Their architecture - such as in Al-hamra and Granada, and the Great mosque in Cordoba- have inspired me that they exuded highly sophisticated civilization."

Dr. Hoffman presented his son Alexander with a strange gift for his birthday. He gave him a brief research containing a summary of his convictions in religion and philosophy. His mind, conscience and his nature have brought him to this conclusion. He sent the transcript of this research to the publishing house for printing. The press manager, who happens to be a Muslim, told him that he considered the writer a Muslim if he believes in what he has written. Generally, this author was consistent with the beliefs of Islam; the book was later reprinted with the title "Philosophical Pathway to Islam."

Dr. Hoffman says: "For years if not for decades I have been attracted to Islam like a magnet. I have become familiarized with it as if I lived before." He further says: "I have found that Islam has the purest and most basic progressive perception of God. The Qur'an's fundamental words its principles and moral call seemed to me very logical. Therefore, I no longer have the slightest doubt about the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him)"

Dr. Hoffman summarizes his philosophical research thus: "through this effort, I have come to realize that the typical intellectual position of those who

adhere to agnosticism and atheistic dogmas lacks intelligence. And that man simply cannot escape the decision of believing. The created objects that exist around us are a clear matter. Furthermore, the greatest harmony possible between Islam and the whole truth is not to be denied. Then, I realized- and this truth has shaken me to the core- that I have become a Muslim one step at a time despite myself, and unaware of what is happening. The metamorphosis has included my feelings and intellect. However, there is one final step remains to be made, and that is to announce officially my becoming a Muslim. At the Islamic Center in Cologne, I have uttered the testimony of faith. "aI bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His messenger." Among the Islamic names I chose for myself was the name Murad Fareed...starting today I have become a Muslim. Thus I have fulfilled my desire." This event happened during the summer of 1980.

Dr. Murad Hofmann cautions his readers that Islam is not a new religion to humanity. It is a legacy of the prophets who have come one after the other. It is the sincere extension to what Jesus (peace be upon him) called for. This has happened before Paul has introduced deviations and radical changes. These have turned Christians into "Paulists"; not Christians per se. Dr. Murad believed that Islam is taking Christianity back to its authentic and original beginning. It is putting Christianity upright after it was standing on its head.

Hoffman has chosen Islam, because it is the "alternative life with an eternal project that doesn't wear and tear or expires. If people consider it old, it is also a modern and futuristic. It is timeless and unrestricted by place. Islam is neither a whimsical notion of an intellectual nor a fashion; it will and can continue unabated."

Murad Hofmann enriched the Muslim Library with distinct works, initiated by scattered memories about Islam; he titled it (Diary of a Muslim German). Later, he detailed his experience in his transition to Islam in his book (the Road to Makkah). He also completed his book about the future of Islam entitled (Islam, 2000).

However, his book (Islam as an Alternative) has caused a great uproar in the media and German partisan circles. He saw Islam as the long-awaited hope and lifeline that would save humanity from its pain and sorrow. It is an alternative that will save

the world in general and Europe, in particular, from both bankrupt systems communism and capitalism. Hesperian societies had become confident and convinced that Western civilization has failed to satisfy their spiritual needs. In contrary, it had involved them in brutal wars that have reaped too many humans and destroyed materials. All of this comes as a prelude to the possibility that Christians will become Muslims; and that the churches will be turned into mosques. However, the Muslims must succeed in providing the proper image of their Islam. Hence, light comes always from the East.

In his interesting books, Hoffman spares no effort to introduce Islam and defend it. He further refutes constantly the false claims of its hostile foes in his writings. Among the most prevailing of these charges, is their accusation that Islam's has been spread by the sword. This libel has been originally diffused among Westerners to keep them away from Islam and justify the phenomenal rapid spread of Islam in the world. Dr. Hoffman starts his reply to these insidious accusations by quoting the words of the Almighty Allah. In Surah Al-Baqara, verse 256 Allah mentions the following: ("There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion.") As we all know, coercion calls for hypocrisy, and God abhors hypocrisy. So if the actions are based on intentions, and rely on the heart regarding goodness and faith, no one can be compelled to do that. The acts performed by someone against his will which he dismisses them inside won't be rewarded for them. They are useless; God has no need for them. Religion is sincerity as taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Now, here comes the accusation leveled at Islam for being intolerant. Dr. Hoffman rejects such a claim and gives a clear comparison between the history and reality of the Muslim communities with those that follow other faiths. Muslims have never demolished churches across the country, which came under their power eons long. The examples in Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and other countries are vivid testimony to that. Tolerance is a trait of Muslims; established by the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of His prophet (peace be upon him).

In an interview, Dr. Hoffman wondered at the mystery behind the disappearance of mosques in Al-Andalus, Greece and the Serbia after the Muslims have left.

We supplicate God to grant us and Dr. Hoffman to remain steadfast on his religion.