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Al-Issa inspects MWL development and humanitarian projects in Comoros





Letter From the Editor

The material and the moral significance of visiting Comoros and Burundi

The official visit paid by the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa to the Comoros and Burundi was welcomed at the official and popular level in a way that reflects the moral importance for this long-awaited visit for years.

This visit made by Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa has achieved many tangible results broadcast by the media regarding raising awareness, development and relief. The Muslim World League also carried out many medical programs by opening health centers, visiting social welfare centers, supporting the project of combating blindness in Africa and distributing food baskets along with inspecting the progress of development and humanitarian projects and handing over new houses to a number of widows and orphans constructed upon orders by the Muslim World League.

The Muslim World League held cultural and scientific forums in Moroni and Bujumbura including the International Forum in the Burundian capital entitled "Religious and Ethnic Pluralism and Positive Coexistence".

The moral significance of the visit includes the permanent impact incarnated in inspecting affairs and conditions of Muslims and providing services and assistance to them. This noble purpose was underscored by a senior Burundian official who said: "This visit and its accompanying activities that pleased us a lot, gave strong indications on the magnitude of the humanitarian work from which Muslims and non-Muslims have benefited. The joy of non-Muslims is exactly equivalent to the joy

of Muslims. It is an exceptional humanitarian work which deserves respect and appreciation from everyone."

This visit gave a morale boost because it came from a heavy weight Islamic leadership in direct contact with people in their places of residence and worship, homes for the elderly, children protection centers and women's associations.

Communication was made with all in order to provide support and aid to serve humanity without religious or ethnic discrimination, which proves the cooperation of Muslims with non-Muslims and provides material and moral support for them.

The material support includes securing houses, clothing, and food side by side with the moral one to mitigate sadness and grief of the sad and downtrodden, share people's problems and sympathize with them. In this regard, Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: "(Muhammad), We have sent you for no other reason but to be a mercy for humankind." (Surat Al-Anbiya'a, Verse 107)

The Muslim World League is an international Islamic popular organization that carries out direct field activities in collaboration with the government agencies. Based on this important role, the Muslim World League seeks to develop the spirit of cooperation, build partnerships and develop joint work experiences. It also pays further attention to raising the common awareness of peoples' issues and aspirations to achieve peace and stability along with exerting efforts to reduce causes of conflict and disputes among peoples.





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A part of the opening of the Scientific Forum in the Comoros

MWL Forum in Comoros counters attempts to undermine power of jurisprudential bodies

Makkah-MWL

The First Generation in the Islamic Conscience Forum, held in Moroni and organized by the Muslim World League in cooperation with the University of the Comoros, under the patronage of President of Comoros Azali Assoumani, has called for intensifying initiatives and programs to promote Islamic awareness in the face of extremism and radicalization. The Forum also called for harmony and cooperation among Islamic scholars and jurists in order to confront the current challenges.





The attendees called upon the scholars of the Islamic nation to hold more conferences and forums focusing on studying the important and controversial issues and searching for solutions to these issues. The forum addressed the attempts aiming to weaken the Islamic authority of the jurisprudential bodies and scholars and adopt the scientific approach when analyzing and studying the important historical events together with disseminating the culture of harmony, coexistence and moderation and rejecting the culture of hatred and extremism.

The forum also called upon institutions, organizations and Islamic centers to hold the intellectual activities inspired by Prophet Muhammad's practices and biography and his companions in a way that reinforces the

unity and harmony of all Muslims. It also underscored the key role played by the MWL worldwide.

PRESIDENT OF THE COMOROS APPRECIATES MWL'S EFFORTS IN AFRICA AND ITS ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP

At the beginning of the Forum, Comoros's Foreign Affairs Minister and International Cooperation Muhammad Al-Amin Saif delivered a speech on behalf of President of Comoros Azali



The main platform

Assoumani. He said: “We wish the Forum every success and compromise with the participation of high level scholars and researchers”, pointing out that the first generation of early Muslims was characterized by distinctive qualities. They enjoyed a high level of brain education, intellectual enlightenment and brotherly ties. They excelled in history, medicine, mathematics, philosophy, engineering, astronomy and others. He continued: “We applaud MWL and its arduous efforts that is considered one of the first Islamic organizations that opened an office in our country after independence. MWL exerts huge and ardu-

ous efforts to disseminate values of moderation and facilitation together with enhancing international peace and security by adopting the just international issues aimed at reforming the nation. The Minister also praised the continued efforts of MWL to consolidate the concepts of rapprochement and harmony to strengthen the Arab and Islamic nation and protect it from sectarian conflicts. The Minister concluded his speech saying: “We applaud this firm desire and the real will to interact with the great historical events to move forward towards our goals for the prosperity of the coming generations.”



Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa also delivered a speech during which he extended

gratitude, thanks to the President of Comoros for sponsoring the forum, affirming that the mission of MWL aims to clarify the essence of Islam, eradicate extremism and terrorism, and provide support for all.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also called for abiding by qualities of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) immigrated to Madinah, he attempted to integrate the homeless Muhajireen (Muslim migrants) in Madinah into the economic and social life of the city, and that by making them “brothers” of the Ansar (the people of Yathrib who supported the Prophet). Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur’an: “And (as for the believers) hath attuned their hearts. If thou hadst spent all that is in the earth thou couldst not have attuned their hearts, but Allah hath attuned them. Lo! He is Mighty, Wise.” (Surat Al-Anfal, Verse 63). He added that MWL enhances its cultural role and sets up more bridges



Side of attendance



Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mr. Muhammad Saif Al-Amin Al-Yamani

of harmony and cooperation with other nations with the aim of disseminating peace and cooperation with all nations.

President of Comoros University Dr. Abdullah Sayed Hassan delivered a speech saying: Comoros University is very proud to cooperate and participate with MWL in organizing this event. The University, founded in

2003, established the Faculty of Imam Al-Shafie for Islamic law, Islamic & Arabic studies, which is the first since founding the University in recognition of its Islamic-Arab depth in education. The teachers and personnel of the Faculty were from among scientific and administrative cadres graduated from institutes and colleges of MWL spread-



The forum witnessed a large presence of the greatest scientists of Africa



HE Dr. Al-Issa gives his speech

ing all over the Islamic world. He added that we are proud of being Muslims and the University contributes to building a promising state, as planned by President Azali Assoumani. That stage starts with an advanced University that qualifies its national scientific cadres and this occasion will inaugurate a new phase in its relations with MWL and contribute to strengthening relations for the benefit of all.

**SHEIKH DR. AL-ISSA:
MWL ENHANCES ITS CULTURAL
ROLE AND BUILDS
BRIDGES OF HARMONY
AND COOPERATION WITH
OTHER NATIONS**

Grand Mufti of Comoros, Sheikh Taher Ahmad Maulana Jamal Al-Lail, delivered a speech saying: “Allah chose a raft of pious men to be the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Those sincere and pious companions helped spread the Islamic religion across the globe. Allah described them saying in the Holy Qur’an: “And the first to lead the way, of the Muhajireen and the Ansar, and those who followed them in goodness - Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him, and He hath made ready for them Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the supreme triumph.” (Surat Al-Tawbah, Verse 100). He indicated that Comoros University is new and emerging. It is a member of the Union of Islamic Universities. Being one of the first teachers at the University, “I invite Sheikh



The Grand Mufti of the Republic of the Comoros delivers his speech

Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa to be the ambassador not only for the university in the world, but also for Comoros in the region as well who will be responsible for disseminating moderate Islam.”

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Union of the African Muslim scholars, Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Louh, delivered a speech saying: “Strenuous efforts of MWL in the African continent is clear-cut for all. MWL has been working and still does to consolidate supreme principles and values worldwide. It seeks to spread the real and true image of Islam that rejects violence and extremism and calls for peace, mercy, prosperity and harmony. Islam also seeks to unify ranks of Muslims and reject violence, extremism and terrorism.” He added that MWL served as an effective barrier against all those calling for the destruction of morals, violence and explosion. MWL also demands all Muslims to intensify sincere efforts for the welfare of hu-

manity and invest potentials in the service of peace and stability away from war and terrorism. He pointed out that the African Continent is full of rich raw and human resources, calling upon investors worldwide to invest in Africa, especially in the field of strategic projects, higher education and medical care in accordance with a perfect plan taking into consideration all priorities.

PRESIDENT OF COMOROS UNIVERSITY: WE SEE A PROMISING NEW PHASE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MWL





President of the Comoros receives Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa and praises MWL efforts

MORONI –

Union of Comoros's President Azali Assoumani received Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and his delegation at the Presidential Palace in the Comorian capital Moroni.

At the beginning of the meeting, Assoumani welcomed the Secretary General of the Muslim World League and his delegation visiting Comoros, applauding the arduous efforts exerted by the MWL in Africa.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa expressed his thanks and appreciation to the President who warmly received the delegation and his sponsorship of the seminar attended by eminent African

scholars and intellectuals, expressing the MWL's readiness to cooperate with the scholars and thinkers of the Union of Comoros and to address all forms of extremism and radicalization.

The MWL Secretary-General pointed out that the Muslim World League is always keen to promote Islamic awareness, especially among Arab and Islamic youth. Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also met with Union of Comoros's Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs Muhammad Hussein, Speaker of Comoros's Parliament Dr. Abdu Hussein and Grand Mufti Sheikh Taher Ahmad Maulana Jamal Al-Lail. Issues and topics of common interests were discussed during the meeting.





Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa speaking to African scholars during his visit to the Comoros.

African scholars: Saudi Arabia remains spiritual leader of all Muslims

MAKKAH - MWL

Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Makkah-based Muslim World League (MWL), has inaugurated a number of MWL-run health centers in the Comoros during a visit to the Islamic republic.

The MWL Secretary General was taken on a tour around the different sections inside the center and was briefed on the various services the center provides.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa paid a visit to the new MWL-run Saad Bin Moad Institute and inspected the final construction works. He met a number of African scholars who will be teaching the moderate Islamic approach at the institute, which is based on the message of Islam to all humans, a message that has promoted everything that is beneficial to the welfare of the entire humankind, Muslims and non-Muslims.

Muslims make up 100 percent of the pop-





Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa overseeing the distribution of food baskets to the needy

ulation in the Comoros, a country that builds bridges of love, cooperation and humanitarian relations with everyone. The scholars commended the Islamic and humanitarian role the Muslim World League plays as well as the efforts it exerts. They also reiterated that the Kingdom would continue to be the spiritual and religious leader of all Muslims, who should follow what it says as long as such action serves the greater interest of Islam, Muslims and the entire humankind.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also visited the construction site of Saad Thabit Yaqoub Mosque in Bahani, in addition to numerous development and humanitarian projects in various parts of the country. He handed over the keys of new houses built by the MWL to a number of widows and orphans. He also supervised the process of distributing food baskets to the needy.

MWL CHIEF INSPECTS HEALTH PROJECTS, HANDS OVER HOUSES TO WIDOWS IN COMOROS



Al-Issa is inspecting some projects





MWL organizes Religious and Ethnic Pluralism and Positive Co-existence Forum in Burundi

Bujumbura, Burundi - MWL

The International Conference organized by the Muslim World League (MWL) in the Burundian capital of Bujumbura entitled “Religious and Ethnic Pluralism and Positive Co-existence” held under the sponsorship of President Pierre Nkurunziza, called for enhancing positive co-existence in societies by consolidating the principles of common and comprehensive citizenship, activating common issues and reinforcing ties.





Dr. Al-Issa addresses the forum

The Conference also called for disseminating the spirit of love, giving and tolerance, spreading the culture of communication and co-existence between followers of religions, facing calls of hatred and exclusion together with coordinating the efforts of public and private bodies relevant to the topic of the Conference. This is aimed at reinforcing the spirit of fruitful communication between followers of religions and cultures and activating the principles of common and comprehensive citizenship in accordance with the certain conditions of every country.

In addition, the Conference that saw the participation of a raft of religious, political

and social leaders from different religions, ethnicities, political and intellectual tendencies along with all African scientific and cultural organizations, called upon the Muslim World League to cooperate with public and private bodies in Africa in a way that boosts the development and prosperity projects and the use of social media and various media platforms to support the positive rapprochement among cultures and civilizations.

The participants underscored the weight of the Muslim World League and the impact of its global actions, which turned it from a mere Islamic gathering into a league of world harmony and peace.

Republic of Burundi's first Vice-President Gaston Sindimwo inaugurated proceedings and activities of the Conference in the presence of Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa.

Mr. Sindimwo stressed the importance of the peaceful co-existence among the members of the one nation, praising the key role played by the MWL in reinforcing stability and prosperity of countries and peoples.

Mr. Sindimwo also said: "Muslims in Burundi live in accordance with Quranic principles and their goal is to work to establish peace and stability throughout history since the last wars in Burundi. We find that such Islamic teachings have contributed to preserving peace and security of Muslims in decades and this Conference will also be an important opportunity to achieve peace and stability together with preventing wars and differences.

During his opening speech, Dr. Al-Issa stressed the keenness of the MWL to build bridges of communication and cooperation with all to achieve our common humanitarian goals.



The main platform of the International Forum in the Burundian capital of Bujumbura

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa cast light on a raft of issues and topics in which he stressed the importance of the humanitarian dialogue in general and the national one in particular.

He said: “These topics and issues are very important to create trust and understanding. No matter how much we disagree, we should enter into dialogue with one another, respect and love one another, live together,

and cooperate. Difference is something divine, usual and familiar in our daily life; therefore, understanding and communication are important to achieve not only the rapprochement among different cultures but to establish the great human and knowledge richness as well.”

MWL Secretary General stressed: “The positive integration of all national diversity



Part of the attendance at the forum



Mr. Eduard Anduimana addresses the opening

is not an option but an urgent necessity for the prosperity and harmony of peoples and the peace of States. The wise people disagree, but they do not separate. They have dialogue, tolerate and love each other. Common matters with their national and humanitarian goals unite them. The language of understanding, tolerance, dialogue and common priorities are pillars of the dialogue of harmony and peace for the benefit of the humanity.”



Sheikh Siddiq Kagendi addresses the forum



Dr. Al-Issa El-Hajj addresses the participants in the forum

Secretary General of the Board of Grievances of the Republic of Burundi, Mr. Eduard Anduimana delivered a speech in which he extended gratitude and thanks to the Secretary General of the MWL who accepted the invitation and organized this forum in the country. This means that he attaches great importance to co-existence and unity among people. This is from among the most important values of Islam.

He said: “The word ‘peace’ was mentioned more than 18 times, a fact which means that Islam is the religion of peace, tolerance and cooperation and Muslims in Burundi are leaders of co-existence, security and peace. I say these words while I am a Catholic Christian.”

Burundi’s Grand Mufti Sheikh Seddeq Kajindi delivered a speech in which he made clear that Islam as the seal of the heavenly religions achieves the beneficial interests of humankind, stressing that Islam pays attention to relations and ties that must link among members of the same community regardless of their affiliations, religions or colors as long as they live in one nation. These kind





ties and relations should extend to include all humanity that belongs to one origin.

Sheikh Seddeq Kajindi pointed out that Islam recognizes pluralism and religious freedom as the basis of creation that must make the interaction among people a nature to be governed by justice, equality and human feeling. This undoubtedly contributes to the elimination of tribal conflicts and extremist ideas that can lead societies to division and disputes; and this is rejected by Allah the Almighty.

He added: "We call for holding such conferences that urge tolerance, compassion and co-existence. In addition, such forums call for altruism, equality, justice and activating the principle of mutual respect

in order to strengthen peace and spread security, love and mutual knowledge. This is the divine purpose. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "O humankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware." (Surat Al-Hujurat, Verse 13).

The Grand Mufti also said: "These great, noble and supreme meanings and teachings need to be conveyed to human beings in a proper and suitable way to penetrate minds and hearts of the people.

In conclusion, Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages in the University of



Zanzibar, Tanzania, Dr. Issa Haj Zaidi delivered a speech in which he said, “Our loyalty to different religions and ethnicities forces us to reflect on commonality that brings our hearts together, including moral and human values and belonging to and construction of the nation in collaboration with all members of the nation whatever their affiliations and religions are.”

The dean of the faculty added: “From here, I send an open invitation for everyone to reinforce positive co-existence in communities by word and action and to be one hand in the construction of homelands along with enhancing the links of humanity and civilization.

He praised the arduous and sincere efforts

of the Muslim World League with the aim of building bridges of cooperation among all and disseminating the culture of peace and harmony among all peoples.





Burundian President Nkurunziza Perry receives Al-Issa

President of Burundi commends MWL role in promoting peace and coexistence

Bujumbura, Burundi - MWL

President of the Republic of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, received the Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL), Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and his accompanying delegation at the presidential palace in the city of Kayanza.

At the beginning of the reception, President Pierre Nkurunziza welcomed Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa, com-

mending the MWL's role in promoting peace, harmony and coexistence among the world's nations through holding the International Forum "Religious and Ethnic Pluralism and Positive Coexistence" in Burundi, which proved to be fruitful for the entire African countries. The forum saw the presence and participation of a number of scientists, thinkers and poli-

ticians from across the African continent.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa expressed his thanks and appreciation to President Pierre Nkurunziza for the warm reception of MWL delegation and his patronage of the international forum, which chose Burundi as the perfect place to hold it due to Burundi's ideal national integration of its religious and



ethnic diversity. He asserted that the clash of civilization is an inevitable result of the absence of consciousness.

The MWL Secretary General explained that MWL is keen on consolidating the concept of positive coexistence among different religions and ethnicities via its international initiatives and activities.

The Muslim World League works to deepen awareness of the Creator's way of diversity, pluralism and advocacy for constructive communication among everyone, as realities are evident in the fraternal dialogue which is full of mutual

trust and love.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also met with First Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, Mr. Gaston Sindimwo, Ombudsman, Mr. Edouard Nduwimana, Presi-

dent of National Assembly of Burundi, Mr. Pascal Nyabenda, and Minister of Hydraulics, Energy and Mining Koom Mandakiza, and discussed with them topics of common concern.





Al-Issa supervises MWL blindness elimination and food relief programs in Burundi

Bujumbura, Burundi - MWL

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL), Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, has launched during his official visit to the Republic of Burundi the “Johnson Hospital” project in the capital of Burundi, Bujumbura, to fight blindness in Africa.

The hospital is one of the charitable projects carried out by the International Organization for Relief, Welfare and Development, an affiliate of the Muslim World League.

The official opening of this project, which

was implemented in cooperation with the Burundi’s Ministry of Health, was attended by the Burundian Minister of Health Dr. Nkomana and the Minister of Ombudsman Edward Andomana and a raft of eye surgeons at “Johnson hospital”.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also attended the first cataract removal surgery and visited a nursing home, Children Protection Center and World Women’s Union Association. During his visit, he stressed that the Muslim World League communicates with everyone



the relief program to distribute 3000 food baskets for the needy, which is one of the charitable projects carried out by the Muslim World League in a raft of villages and provinces in Burundi in the presence of the Minister of Ombudsman Edward Andomana.

Minister Andomana praised the great and important role of the Muslim World League in helping the poor and the needy around the world in collaboration with competent authorities in every state. He added that the Secretary General's visit pleased them in Burundi very much, reflected the magnitude of MWL's exceptional humanitarian work that deserves appreciation and thanks from all as these charitable works benefit both Muslims and non-Muslims.

to provide financial support, aid and service to humanity without any religious or ethnic discrimination because these are the most important Islamic principles Islam fosters.

The MWL Secretary General supervised



Remove white water



Dr. Al-Issa in one of the operating rooms



Linking Capital and Labor in Islam: How Rules on Interest and Zakat Guide Islamic Economics

By Ahmed Kamal El-Din Izzeddin

The concept of economics prevails in a setup which may be called a political society, composed of households, firms and a government, each contributing its actions within the society for the good of its part and that of the whole society.



What is *Zakatable*?

Growth Items
are Zakatable



Consumption almost dominates households, with a quest for the maximization of utility. Firms, bent on production, mainly endeavor towards the maximization of profit. Governments supposedly work for the achievement of stability that is conducive to the primary goal of pursuing the enhancement of social welfare. Each segment of the socioeconomic regime makes its own decisions which, taken together, should synergize the overall development process in the given society.

Islam applies a holistic view of the social efforts, and provides them with vision and direction. This is not untrue about other socioeconomic systems, but the Islamic approach seems to be more visible, with tangible linkages and fundamental referencing, which provide sustainable policy stability. The examples to be provided in this article, especially in connection to the main factors of economic production (capital and labor) will attempt to elucidate this. In fact, this article intends to introduce the interplay of

certain Islamic rules pertaining to economics and finance which result in serving the overall objective of the Islamic tenets relating to socioeconomic welfare. Let us then examine these selected rules and discern their combined effect on society.

First Rule: Prohibition of Interest on Capital:

The central concept in traditional banking and finance of lending against the payment of interest over time as a cost of finance is prohibited in Islam. The prohibition of interest, called *riba* (or usury), is backed by verses in the Qur'an, the prime source of Islamic rulings[1]. "O ye who believe! Devour not usury, doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah. That ye may (really) prosper.[2]" The aftermath of breaching this commandment is severe: "If ye do it not, Take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger. But if ye turn back, ye shall have your capital sums: Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly"[3]. The rule is indeed



ZAKAT IS THE PAYMENT OF 2.5% OF CAPITAL OWNED BY THE MUSLIM SUBJECT WHICH HAS AMOUNTED TO A CERTAIN SUM AND REMAINED AS SUCH FOR A WHOLE LUNAR YEAR OF THE ISLAMIC HIJRI CALENDAR.

fundamental.

In the traditional, non-Islamic system, interest rate is considered as a significant cost of capital, fixed by a country's central bank and financial markets, and used in the formation of monetary policy designed to achieve certain macroeconomic objectives including curbing inflation and stabilization of prices. Under an Islamic system, however, it is not possible to "price" capital the way we do commodities, according to the express prohibition outlined above.

What effect would this have on the behavior of the entrepreneur who has investible funds and intends to increase his wealth? Let us assume first that such entrepreneur observes the Islamic rule prohibiting interest. Lending out the funds at a cost (i.e. interest) will not be an option in this case. Other (interest-free) options include (a) hoarding, in anticipation of better future investment opportunities, (b) marrying the available capital with another factor of production, such as labor, or land.

Again, stemming from the Islamic tenets in favor of positive action and the exertion of constructive efforts, the hoarding option is substantially discouraged in Islam by explicit instructions. "O ye who believe!

.... And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, announce unto them a most grievous penalty"[4]. It is further indirectly discouraged by the effect of another Islamic rule, namely, the duty to pay alms, or zakat, as detailed in the next paragraph.

Second Rule: Ordaining the Payment of Alms on Capital

One of the five basic pillars of Islam, besides (1) the pronouncement of bearing witness on the oneness of God and that Prophet Muhammad is His Messenger, (2) offering of the mandatory five daily prayers, (3) fasting during the lunar month of Ramadan, and (4) performing pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah, is the annual payment of zakat, or alms.

Zakat is the payment of 2.5% of capital owned by the Muslim subject which has amounted to a certain sum and remained as such for a whole lunar year of the Islamic Hijri calendar. Different apportionments apply to different types of wealth, such as harvest, cattle, merchandise, etc. However, this article will be confined to capital in the form of monetary funds, the zakat of which is levied as explained at the top of this paragraph.





Reverting back to the option of hoarding available to the Muslim entrepreneur who observes Islamic ruling on the prohibition of interest, the annual payment of zakat will – in mundane terms - negatively affect her or his capital, by reducing it at 2.5% every year. This is expressed by Muslim jurists as capital being “eaten up by zakat”.

The Combined Effect of the Two Rulings:

Now that the entrepreneur is bracketed by the above two rules, she or he will not be able to lend out the available funds against a fixed rate of interest, or even just hoard such funds for a better future investment occasion. These two options are ruled out.

In any economy, four factors for the supply of goods and services are available. These are: (1) the enterprise, where entre-

preneurs take the necessary risk to manage the organization of factors of production, (2) land, which encompasses all available natural resources, (3) labor, or human effort (physical or intellectual) contributing to the production of goods and services, and (4) capital, which include goods used to produce other products.

The joint effect of the two rules, namely the prohibition of interest and the ordaining of zakat taxation on capital, will direct the Muslim entrepreneur to look for another factor of production to marry his capital with, in a quest for profitable investment. Besides her or his enterprise and the capital available, there remain two factors of production to be married with the available capital and entrepreneurship: land and labor. In both cases ‘labor’ will be involved, either di-





rectly when taken per se or indirectly when land is taken as an option. Accordingly, the human effort is ultimately put in demand, as a necessary factor of production, without which capital may almost stay idle.

In that way Islam differs from other economic systems, the most common of which are capitalism and socialism. Under the capitalist economics, regulation is marginalized and the market ranks supreme, especially in determining the prices of goods and services, with no fundamentally fixed rules affecting production policies. As a result, certain ailments may take place, such as monopolies (enabling the seller, not the market, to determine prices), unemployment (since it is the market, not the government, which determines employment), in addition to inequalities between classes (capitalist class, working class and middle class), environmental damage (resulting from unregulated quest for profit by firms), etc. Some of these ailments would be minimized under Islamic economics, as a result of the marriage between capital and labor, which brings the owner of capital in partnership with the worker, where profit and loss is shared, and competition in-ter se is eliminated or reduced in a win-win

enterprise.

Under the socialist economics government regulation heavily influences the market, possibly resulting in much inefficiency and cloaked unemployment. This is minimized under Islamic economics by limiting intervention to the fundamental rules on interest and zakat, which guide the direction of capital in general. Price should not be determined by government, and should be left for the circumstances of the market.

The demand for labor in an Islamic economic system is therefore a fundamental circumstance, in the sense that it is supported by rulings derived from the most authoritative Islamic sources, the Qur'an and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad. It is submitted that this fundamental demand for labor in Islam should, if observed, have its positive effect on employment levels in the relevant socioeconomic system. The human factor will be in more demand under an Islamic economic system than otherwise.

Whether this has consonance with the meaning of verses in the Qur'an pointing to the honoring of the human being is quite interesting to explore: "We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of our creation"[5].



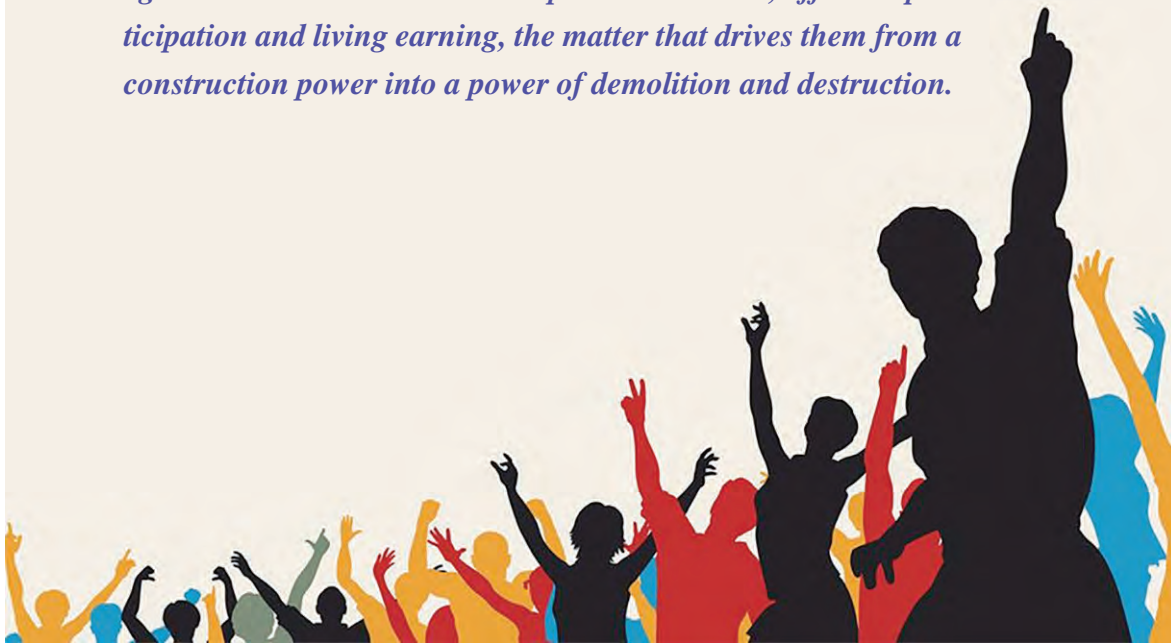


Youth as a constructive power, not a demolishing one

By Mr. Ibrahim Al-Mahdy

Translated by Dr. Mohamed Salim

It is warned by a report issued by United Nation Development Program that the Arab youth's power may turn from a formidable constructive power into a smashing demolishing one. The report describes today's youth as being more educated, more active and more related to their peers worldwide, as such is reflected on the level of the reality of their awareness and their expectations for the best future. However, such awareness of their abilities and rights clashes with a status that marginalizes and blocks against them the channels to express their views, effective participation and living earning, the matter that drives them from a construction power into a power of demolition and destruction.





The report entitled “Youth and the Human Development in a Changing Reality” presented a new model of development that empowers youth through enhancing their abilities and availing them opportunities for self-achievement, especially in economic and social fields on top of working to achieve peace and security.

The report noted that the Arab Spring events of 2011 and its consequences proved that the ability of youth to be initiative, capable and change stimulant as well as it confirmed that the response to change demands by security handling rather than standing up to treat its causes, and it realizes a temporary stability to defer the protest waves; however, it doesn't lessen the opportunities for other youth's initiatives.

Following were the answers of scientists and experts on the report of UN:

Mr. Al Zubair Mihdad of the Moroccan

Kingdom says that the report presents two investment arguments for the youth: The first one is that third of the region population are youth whose ages are ranging from 15-29 years, and there is another third of youth whose ages are below 15 years, the matter that guarantees the continuity of this population momentum up to the next two decades and provides an opportunity that must be availed. The second argument is that the protest wave that swept a number of Arab countries in 2011 of which the forefront were youth has resulted in big transformation for the whole region. There are two vital issues to lay new bases more sustainable for stability. “Such population mass of youth who are of ages capable for work and achievement is a power able to drive the wheel of economic and social progress if the youth are given chance. The youth in the Arab region are an important source for solving the devel-



opment problems.” The report adds, “...the danger faced by those youth that they suffer frustration, feeling of disability, alienation and subordination instead of discovering the available opportunities and looking up to the horizons of the future.”

“How to empower the youth to perform their required role in society?” Mr. Mihdad asked.

**TAKING CARE OF THE
YOUTH LEADS TO THE
RADICAL SOLUTION OF
MANY PROBLEMS FACED
BY SOCIETY;**

From the point of his view, taking care of the youth leads to the radical solution of many problems faced by society; and empowering the youth contributes to offering living earning methods for the whole society because it guarantees society stability which is a necessary provision for development.

Mr. Al-Zubair Mihdad added, “Empowering is one aspect of development as it increases an individual opportunity to obtain the best share from the outcomes of sustainable development process. The empowering passes through the channel of formation that makes youth understand their position, having control on it, and holding their position in society. This requires granting the youth further attention and care through relevant programs and integral projects of rehabilitation, educational and medical care plus

laying out a policy to provide scholarships, facilitated loans, and encouraging small projects for self-dependency.

The success of such programs is subject to their being comprehensive with integral educational, political and economical dimensions. Education upgrades youth’s abilities, politics integrates them into society, and economy gives them a chance to produce wealth. Every partial approach and attitude to youth will lead to social complicated blights such as ignorance, exclusion and poverty.

Formation means the steps that enable youth to realize the maximum potentialities, the most important of which are:

- The academic formation that suits the economic needs and youth’s tendencies together with caring of humanitarian and emotional aspects plus vocational training.

- To enhance youth’s political abilities through establishing citizenship values earlier at primary school studying, legal formation, learning human rights at high school, organizing youth and student camps which are considered an important field to educate youth on responsibility and discipline.

- To strengthen the leading and negotiating skills by training on communicative and creative skills, sharing in debates that contribute to enhancing youth’s abilities in dialogue and accepting counter-arguments. Following having the youth suitably formed, the doors of political and economical empowerment will be opened before them. The keys to this political empowerment are enhancing the democratic practicing within political parties, strengthening political awareness among the youth through an educational program. To train the youth on political work laws and its legal and ethical rules, to prepare them to assume positions in

the councils of municipalities or parliaments or others. The third key is to increase their representation in parliamentary councils by not less than 10% or 20%.



However, the economic empowerment is represented in encouraging economic initiative, easing the administrative procedures, supporting their small and medium projects, granting them loans of affordable conditions to support their projects. The experiences of some countries that realized positive results in such a field, like China, Japan, Singapore and South Korea can be benefited from. In South Korea, for example, small and medium projects constitute a strong support for its economy, where they represent 99.8% of the total number of the invested projects, attracting more than ten million workers.

Mr. Ziryab Al-Siddiq, the cooperative writer with MWL Journal, who is an activist in social work, agrees to what has been recommended by the report. He says, "The youth of today are not just a vigorous pow-

er, rather, they are more looking up to the world and the future through their available knowledge, technologies of communication and social media that make them closer to each other."

Recently, the youth of the developing world have been tightened to move forward as the world tends to the extreme country state that opposes the principle of human sharing of resources and cultural achievements. The West to which they resort as immigrants for the best living earning, stopped receiving them with reluctance to stabilize their countries.

Mr. Ziryab added, "The structure of the country's state that governs the world today is incapable of accommodating the accelerated new changes in societies represented in immigrations that moved the dormant national identities, population growth that magnified the scarcity of resources, advanced technology that lessened the need for manpower and bureaucratic government mechanisms that do not accommodate the powers of youth and their enthusiasm."

In challenge to this unacceptable situation, the Arab youth drove the vehicle of change for having been fed up of waiting the train of reformation. That were the events of 2011 and what came after. If the demands of the first uprising were fair and social, there would be big agenda demanding comprehensive change in the second revolt on the social, economical, political and cultural levels.

To rectify the next youth rising, Mr. Ziryab proposes some necessary steps as follows:

To reconsider the structure of the country's state, its doctrine and its functions in a way that enhances people communication and sharing of experiences, the welfare and



the crises and to limit the tasks of the bodies of the state in planning, directing and security matters, and what is below that should be left to the civil society organizations and to the youth. All sectors should make room to accommodate youth, even if it was to take over the positions of the elderly experts.

To recruit the modern skills enjoyed by the youth, big projects must be established to employ the youth who enjoy these skills and occupations such as industrial cities, creation platforms, electronic government projects, smart governments and others; besides, supporting the small projects and initiatives as it was recently proposed in “Governments Summit” in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

As for the Islamic World, it is not suffice to empower youth socially, economically and politically as the incoming multi-cultures and the scientific development set up in their minds a critical dialogue to the Islam which they inherited, so it necessitates to re-present Islam to them in their scientific and logical language, lest they may not follow - partially or wholly- an Islam which is invaded by human doctrines which lead the scientific advancement today. This is in order to make the Islamic identity a framework not to get out of it when promoted to the action position by the studied empowerment or when imposing the alternative by force.

Dr. Muhammad Al-Sadiqi Al-Ammari, the academician and researcher at the Moroccan universities, says: “The youth in any society is considered a base for development and construction, that is why they are concerned about. Non-exclusion of them is one of the first priorities in the societies of advanced and developed countries on all levels. We must not say that the youth of such countries are our exemplary or model to take after; however, the status of youth in these

countries is far better than ours as we are described as backward compared with them. In this report, it is pointed to the risks that face the youth as represented in “the violence of the political body and its fragility”, because it is responsible for the status of youth in our Arab and Islamic countries. If there is a real political will, we will outdo many crises related to youth and that is by establishing the state of legal institutions, the state that judges with constitutions, laws and approved legislations away from playing with the nation powers, its human and natural resources or exploiting them in favour of an individual or a category of citizens at the expense of others.

TO RECRUIT THE MODERN SKILLS ENJOYED BY THE YOUTH, BIG PROJECTS MUST BE ESTABLISHED TO EMPLOY THE YOUTH WHO ENJOY THESE SKILLS AND OCCUPATIONS SUCH AS INDUSTRIAL CITIES,

The youth migrate to other countries because of the narrowing of the economic horizon and rights where the other benefits from such migration of minds as the busi-





ness market is exclusive to the owners of big capitals. Arab youth who are brought up in these poor regions are vulnerable to further social exclusion, violence and poverty the matter that stirs up tension..."Political efficient people migrate to other countries to benefit from them and that is, unfortunately, because the legal and political horizon does not accept the different political points of view."

Dr. Al Sadiqi calls for occupying the vital sectors of the state, which are held by elderly, with youth, including the party and syndical institutions, as it is supposed that the youth and the promising efficient ones should not be excluded, as it is reported: "they headed the Arab revolts because they feel discontented and they are more worried about the economic issues than the elderly."

If we didn't make right the status and fulfil what we promise the youth who burst out on the streets in the last Arab rise momen-

tum in rejection of exclusion, would inherit inactive or violent societies, such expressions describe our Arab reality.

THE YOUTH MIGRATE TO OTHER COUNTRIES BECAUSE OF THE NARROWING OF THE ECONOMIC HORIZON AND RIGHTS WHERE THE OTHER BENEFITS FROM SUCH MIGRATION OF MINDS AS THE BUSINESS MARKET IS EXCLUSIVE TO THE OWNERS OF BIG CAPITALS.





In conclusion, Dr. Al Saddiqi notes that the required correction and change to the Arab reality should be based on two major landmarks:

- Political reformation and establishing the institutions state to pass over the case of “youth’s exclusion” and to outdo the mentality and plan of “suppression of dispute and expressing points of view independently” as it is mentioned in the report.

- Reforming education because it is the first entry to any reform as the report describes the situation of education in our countries as being “bad”.

Government initiatives for the youth:

No doubt that the issue of Arab youth preoccupies governments as it is focused on by “The Dubai International Summit of Governments,1438”where it resulted in a strategy concerning Arab youth on the conclusion of its works. The strategy includes initiatives of which is establishing a center for Arab youth, an annual forum for the youth, and providing solutions to their challenges. The third initiative represents constituting opportunity platform for the youth by gathering all available opportunities to be benefited from and exploited. However, the fourth initiative is to issue an annual report on the Arab youth to answer all yearly queries about the youth. The fifth initiative is to provide educational scholarships for Arab youth and to honor the distinguished students by granting them scholarships to join universities worldwide. The sixth initiative is to organize seminars and dialogue courses to interact with the youth and to avail them the chance to express their views. However, the seventh initiative is a platform for group participation and to exploit the youth powers in different developmental projects in the Arab countries.

Sheikh Mansour bin Za’id, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Presidency Affairs said: “The Arab youth are the best one that can realize their vision and strategy. The youth are the biggest category in the Arab societies; the power of the youth makes our belief in future more confirmed as we trust their talents, and efficiencies.”

Five priorities are determined in this strategy represented in that Arab youth may enjoy a healthy and safe life, to be competitive in their education, to spread knowledge, to commit to the leadership of business, to perfect their work, to adopt the method of achievement and voluntary work, and to be pride of their Arab identity and culture. Also, a work model is declared consisting of six components which are: interaction, inspiration, empowerment, sharing, achievement and celebrating the Arab youth.

THE ARAB YOUTH ARE THE BEST ONE THAT CAN REALIZE THEIR VISION AND STRATEGY. THE YOUTH ARE THE BIGGEST CATEGORY IN THE ARAB SOCIETIES; THE POWER OF THE YOUTH MAKES OUR BELIEF IN FUTURE MORE CONFIRMED AS WE TRUST THEIR TALENTS, AND EFFICIENCIES.





ECONOMIC UNITY BETWEEN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

Dr. Abdel Gadir Warsama Ghalib

Economic cooperation, integration, and unity is very essential and highly needed due to the economic difficulties we are facing during this volatile era. The same need applies to Islamic countries, which are scattered in different parts of the world. In this connection, if we are to refer to Islamic countries as one body/unit, we could say, they are represented by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).





OIC has been established with the goal of uniting Islamic countries. This is the prime mission, as unity and cooperation are considered part of the glorious message of Islam. In the Holy Qur'an, we find in Surat Al-Maeda (Verse 2), "Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor". Also, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "No one of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself". This is a

genuine call for unity and good cooperation between Muslims.

Going back to the charter of the OIC, we find that it has been established "to preserve Islamic social and economic values, promote solidarity among member states, increase cooperation in social, economic, cultural, scientific, and political areas, uphold international peace and security and advance education, particularly in the fields of science and technology". The call is also there.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) consists of many states, with different levels of economic development, varieties of natural resources and different plans or strategies. Such a unique position would necessarily open the door for immediate economic unity and cooperation among such states. However, strangely enough, Islamic countries or the OIC has no clear homogenous economic identity. If we look to such a situation from the economic perspective, we can notice the presence of low-income, middle-income, and some rich oil-exporting countries. All this, ironically, should constitute a suitable atmosphere for economic unified cooperation. However, there has not been enough cooperation, nor determined will, to achieve this strategy.

We could generally say, there is the relative intention for solidarity and unity, which is evident in certain instances of cooperation and joint collaboration. This stand, among such countries, comes from establishing some subsidiary organizations and affiliated institutions. This is noticed, in the establishment of the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade in Casablanca, Morocco; the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in Karachi, Pakistan; the General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions (CIBAFI) in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain;





the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and the Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Such organizations and affiliates could be taken as the start point for unified cooperation in economic fields and related services. However, this is not enough for Islamic countries that are supposed be one unified Ummah under the flag of Islam. In addition to the significant dominance of Islamic faith, ideas and philosophical trends, we find that Islamic countries are rich in natural resources, oil, energy, agriculture and stock, water, fertile land, forests, mining in addition to huge young human resources, all

laboring under the same faith, ideology, passion, culture, history, etc. All this constitutes a promising solid base for economic integration and unity for the betterment of Islamic countries and the people therein.

We believe that one of the reasons for the lack of visible cooperation could be the absence of a definite framework and infrastructure that could point out the potential economic gains from such economic cooperation. This should be planned and processed through many strategies including the formation of a “Unified Economic Agreement” among OIC/ Islamic countries. Such agreement shall provide for unified economic cooperation among



such countries. This agreement/convention or multiple agreements /conventions shall cover, among other things, free trade, passage of goods and movement of people, limitation and unification of customs, tariffs and duties, application of unified currency “The Islamic Dinar”, establishment of the Central Bank for Islamic Countries, establishment of one Islamic Bourse, unified rules for registration of business names, trademarks and patents, rules for incorporation of joint companies and corporations, rules for e-commerce activities and, establishment of other institutions required for the adoption and implementation of clear unified economic policies. All this is urgently needed for the betterment and good future of Islamic countries.

The whole world has been working hard to achieve unity and cooperation in all fields with a particular focus on economic development. This is the global trend, after facing many economic crises and setbacks. Islamic countries are to follow suit and to benefit from the global experience in this respect. The world moved towards unification, as from the inception of “The Bretton Woods system” of monetary management, which established the rules for commercial and financial relations among the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and Japan after the Bretton Woods Agreement of 1944. Thereafter, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were established primarily to help each other and give help all over the world particularly to needy countries.

We, also, find many other good economic cooperation examples. To cite as reference, we mention the EU, NAFTA, ASEAN, South American Countries Collaboration, the new economic group of BRICKS, the Arab Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC), Arab League

Economic Cooperation Treaty, etc. The above-mentioned groups covering all parts of the world give us a practical example for the uncountable benefits of unity and cooperation.

Islamic countries shall benefit from such model standard experiences and take the lead in this legitimate movement. We strongly believe this is possible and could be achieved overwhelmingly, as there are many things in common that unite Islamic countries and above all is the holy bond of Islam and the golden principles embodied therein calling for unification and good work all through our existence. No doubt, embarking on such glorious principles puts “Maqasid Al-Shari’ah” or the objectives of the Shari’ah, in the wheels and the pedaling should continue to the final end destination of cooperation, unification, and oneness.

The economic cooperation, integration, and unification in Islamic countries will yield many benefits to all concerned parties in each country. This is because the economy will flourish, vastly grow and this, in turn, will boost trade, investment, commercial activities, related services and so on. A clear big positive change will happen and all sectors will take part in the cake. Moreover, this economic growth will directly affect and improve the social, political, cultural sectors. In other words, the positive movement will extend to cover all aspects of life in Islamic countries. The benefits will cover each part in such countries and from there the fever will spread all over the globe.

This ultimately will pave the way for “utopian” future and more. In Surat Al-Zalzala, Allah the Almighty says, “He who works a good atom will see it...”. Islamic countries should work together, as one team, to achieve this goal and see what Allah promises them.



Baroness Finn asks Question on Islamophobia at House of Lords' Chamber

Dr. Mozammel Haque

I am fortunate enough on Monday, the 14th of January 2019 that I attended the Lords' Chamber as guest of Lord Nazir Ahmed of Rotherham and listened to the two issues, one question was asked by Baroness Finn on Islamophobia. The following are the questions and replies on Islamophobia at the House of Lords chamber on 14 January, 2019.





Potential consequences of adopting an official definition of Islamophobia Baroness Finn (Con) asked Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential consequences of adopting an official definition of Islamophobia.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office (Conservative Party) replied, "My Lords, we remain deeply concerned at hatred directed against British Muslims and others because of their faith or heritage. This is utterly unacceptable and does not reflect the values of our country. We know that some have suggested that establishing a definition of Islamophobia

could strengthen efforts to confront bigotry and division. Any such approach would need to be considered carefully to ensure that this would have the positive effect intended."

Formal definition of Islamophobia drawn to avoid

creating a wider threat to free speech?

Baroness Finn (Con) said, "The formal definition of anti-Semitism is carefully but narrowly drawn and has helped to focus minds and resources on this pernicious hatred. How will my noble friend ensure that a formal definition of Islamophobia, if introduced, has a similar impact but is narrowly and carefully drawn so as to avoid creating a wider threat to free speech?"





Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth replied: “My Lords, it would be useful for my noble friend to look at the debate we had before Christmas, on 20 December, on this issue. I will certainly provide her with the link. It illustrated some of the difficulties that exist. It took some time to establish the definition for anti-Semitism. As I said, we would need to proceed with great care. In the interim, there is clearly an issue of hatred and bigotry directed against Muslims that we must confront.”

Twice Members of the House of Lords tried to join in the discussion.

Ensure all faiths and beliefs are equally protected

Then Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Cross Benches) joined in this debate and said: “My

Lords, there is no common statistical basis whatsoever suggesting that members of any one faith suffer more discrimination than others. Emotive words like Islamophobia are simply unhelpful pleas for special consideration. Does the Minister agree that the Government have a basic responsibility to ignore all special pleading and ensure that all faiths and beliefs are equally protected?”

**Hate crimes against Muslims
Have risen dramatically**

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth replied to the above question: “My Lords, I would first say to the noble Lord—who contributed to the debate on this issue on 20 December—that of course all faiths, heritages and races should be protected, and indeed are protected. I would also gently say to him that the





statistics show numerically that there are far more attacks and bigotry in relation to the Muslim community than any other.”

Consider the definition from and the work

Done by APPG on British Muslims

Baroness Hussein-Ece (Liberal Democrats) joined in this debate and said, “My Lords, the Minister has acknowledged that hate crimes against Muslims have risen dramatically. The Government’s own figures show a rise of 40%, almost equal to that of anti-Semitism. Will the Government accept that it is becoming increasingly normalised? We have commentators and columnists who think it is perfectly proper to argue that racism and hate speech against Muslims is acceptable and, in fact, should be normalised. Will the Government carefully consider the definition from and work done by the APPG on British Muslims, after consulting 800 community organisations, 80 academics and more than 60 parliamentarians, on offering that protection, and send out a strong signal that they intend to offer some protection? It is not special pleading; it is about reducing hate crime in the same way done for British Jews as well.”

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth replied: “My Lords, I share the ambition to ensure that the incidence of hate crime comes down. There is evidence of better reporting; that is one reason, although not the only reason, why the statistics show an increase. It is worth mentioning that. It is important to confront this wherever we look. The noble Baroness will be aware that we recently renewed the hate crime action plan, which is now going forward to 2020. I very much value the work done by the APPG and by others on this issue. Of course, the Government

will look at this in the round, as we will the other evidence and the very valuable debate we had just before Christmas.”

Will he commit to working inside the government?

To get a definition adopted without delay

Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Lab Co-op) joined in the debate and said, “My Lords, will the noble Lord go further and join me in congratulating the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims on producing this report and its definition of Islamophobia? It makes clear that Islamophobia is rooted in racism—racism that targets Muslimness or perceived Muslimness. Its report and definition have been endorsed by British Muslims for Secular Democracy, the Muslim Women’s Network UK, the Muslim Council of Great Britain and, as the noble Baroness, Lady Hussein-Ece, said, by more than 800 other organisations. Will he commit to working inside government to get a definition adopted without delay?”

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth replied: “My Lords, I say to the noble Lord, who I do not think was present at the debate in question, that there are split views on this issue. It is not quite as straightforward as he suggests. Of course, we want to work with the APPG and others, and we are certainly committed to any way of confronting and bringing down bigotry and hatred. But I want to make sure that we get this right, and that means not rushing it. I appreciate that the noble Lord will be part of that endeavour and look forward to his support in that.”

Shared endeavour to bring down anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia and confront them both Baroness Uddin (Non-Aff) joined in this debate and said, “My Lords, I say to the Minister, with due respect, that there was not such division as he sug-





gests. However, as he may be aware, those of us who have spoken in the debate since the Islamophobia debate on 20 December have received some unsavoury intimidation. Does he agree that any definition that seeks to protect a community must be rooted

THE CONCEPT THAT WE APPLY TO THIS CASE OF INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IS THIS. THAT IS MUCH EASIER THAN A DEFINITION BECAUSE A DEFINITION CAN RESTRICT WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY.

in that community? Does he therefore agree that any attempts to undermine the community's agency is in itself a part of that problem? To the House, I say that those of us who have worked tremendously hard over years and decades will not tolerate any division between us while we fight Islamophobia, other prejudices and anti-Semitism."

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth replied: "My Lords, first, if the noble Baroness goes back to that debate, she will find that there were certainly Muslim contributors who had different views. I am not saying that they did not want to confront Muslim hatred and Islamophobia—they did—but there are certainly different approaches that we would

have to look at. I share her view about making sure that, in a shared endeavour, we bring down anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia and confront them both."

Is it not better to learn from what the Stephen Lawrence inquiry did?

The Archbishop of York joined in the debate and said; "My Lords, on the overall question of definitions, sometimes it is much easier to do things when we handle them as concepts. In the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, we struggled with the question of racism, particularly when it is found in institutions, so we ended up saying: "The concept that we apply to this case of institutional racism is this". That is much easier than a definition because a definition can restrict what you want to say. Is it not better to learn from what the Stephen Lawrence inquiry did? We in that inquiry also struggled with the question of homophobic incidents in many other places. In the end, we adopted the word "concept" as opposed to a definition, because a definition is always contingent on who speaks and who does what. May I advise that it might be worth while visiting the way in which the Stephen Lawrence inquiry handled the question of institutional racism?"

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth replied: "My Lords, the most reverend Primate is right and I take his advice on this very seriously. There is obviously major work to be done here and I will certainly revisit issues relating to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry and how we learned from what came forward there. It is vital that we get this right; I am sure we all share in that ambition. It is about making sure that we do it, not about rushing to judgment and coming to a set conclusion without looking at the evidence. I am keen to see the evidence and to act on it."





Oman spreading message of Islam with wisdom

Aftab Hossain Kola

● Jumad Al-Thani 1440/March 2019 ●

45





Oman is an Islamic Sultanate and an important component of Gulf Cooperation Council countries. With a population of about 5 million, Oman is also home to a big chunk of expatriates. The expat population stood at nearly 1.9 million as of now, mostly hailing from countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Uganda, Sudan, and Egypt. They are comprised substantially of non-Muslims. The role the government has played to spread the message of Islam and the moderate approach is winning many hearts and converts. A media report said that nearly 3,000 expats embraced Islam in the first five months of 2018, according to the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. This speaks volumes of the commendable efforts by the government entities to spread Islam in a way as

not to coerce the non-Muslims but to win them through love and wisdom. The Noble Qur'an says in this connection: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best." (Surat Al-Nahl, verse: 125). Those engaged in the Dawah task believe that in inviting non-Muslims to the truth one should bear in mind two things – wisdom and good counsel. And in Oman such methods are yielding good results with non-Muslims converting to Islam or showing interest to learn Islam. Also, Oman presents itself as having the right ambience for non-Muslims through its citizens who are warm, friendly, kind and helpful. I have lived in Oman for 12 years and can vouch for it.

Support to new Muslims

Oman is also providing all possible support





to the new Muslims through the Department of Cultural Exchange and Acquaintance with Islam at the Iftaa Office of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. Oman has recently enrolled many new converts under the Hidaya Program for teaching new Muslims at the College of Shari'ah Sciences in Al Khuwair. Shaikh Abdulrahman bin Ahmed Al Khalili, director of the department, said the year-long program is aimed at teaching new Muslims about the rudiments of Islam. He further asserted that the program will acquaint the new Muslims with adequate information about Islam. It will train the candidates with the short surahs of the Holy Qur'an, jurisprudence, Islamic creed, Islamic history and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the fundamentals of Arabic language.

The Islamic Information Center - Leading the way

The Islamic Information Center at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, Bowsher, Muscat under the support and guidance of the Sultan Qaboos Higher Center for Culture and Science (Diwan of Royal Court), is engaged in providing information on the teachings of Islam and its practices to non-Muslims and provide essential support to new Muslims who are residing in the Sultanate of Oman.

Its mission is to provide information on the teachings of Islam and its practices and to debunk the misconceptions on Islam. Accordingly, the Islamic Information Center offers the following services to non-Muslims: provide free Islamic literature in different languages; organize lectures on Islam in various languages; conduct (by arrangement) guided tours of the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque and help tourist guides in explaining Islam to the visitors; promote one to one dialogue on Islam with the visitors who come to its offices.

The Islamic Information Center gives the following services to new Muslims: provide a standard package of books which new Muslims need. These include the Holy Qur'an with translation, books on the five pillars of Islam, book on tahara, etc. Offer training on Salah, reading of the Holy Qur'an and teaching of basic tenets of Islam. Organize classes on aqidah, fiqh and basic Arabic reading and writing. Also, it provides mentorship and follows up new Muslims' progress and needs; organizes social gatherings where new Muslims can interact and know each other; provides certificates and other legal documents which new Muslims need in legal matters and documents.

Islamic Information Center's website's mission in presenting Islam worldwide is also commendable. More specifically, the purpose of this website is: (a) to explain Islamic beliefs and practices; (b) to remove the misconceptions about Islam; (c) to explain the position of Islam in relation to other heavenly religions; (d) to provide an interactive platform for dialogue in matters of religious beliefs and practices; and (e) to offer authentic links to other sources of Islamic information. The sources of the contents of this site are from the noble Qur'an, the Sunnah, known local and international Islamic scholars and thinkers, and approved publications. The offices of the Islamic Information Center are opened from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM daily (except Fridays) and from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM throughout the week.

Annual Islamic lecture series

The Centre invites every year prominent speakers to Oman for a series of lectures on different Islamic topics. Those who have been invited in the past include American Muslim preacher Yusuf Estes, Dr. Zakir Naik, British





preacher Abdur Raheem Green, Professor Salim T.S. Al-Hassani, Shaikh Khalid Yaseen, Mirza Yawar Baig (specialist in leadership development), Sheikh Hussein Yee from Malaysia, Sheikh Omar Salcedo Penalber, the president of Islamic Studies Call and Guidance Organization, among others. By their enriching lectures and interaction with non-Muslims they were able to offer a first-hand experience of being a Muslim. Several hundreds of non-Muslims have become Muslims.

In December 2018, Sheikh Ismail Menk, Mufti of the Republic of Zimbabwe and world renowned speaker, delivered three lectures at the Culture Centre of the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque as part of the cultural programs of Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science (SQHCCS) for 2018.

These informative and rewarding lectures,

on different topics including, “True Message of the Prophets, Islam in the Modern World: Opportunities and Challenges”, and the “Role of Woman in Islamic Civilization”, were resounding success as more than 4,000 people from different faiths attended the lectures.

Sheikh Ismail Menk had stated in one of his lectures: “People in Oman live in the true sense of brotherhood notwithstanding various differences and serve as an epitome of coexistence especially in the present times.” He also spoke about its efforts in spreading cultural awareness among members of the society, supporting various cultural, knowledge, scientific and artistic fields and spreading a culture of dialogue and coexistence among human beings, as well as promoting trust, mutual respect and common understanding.

According to an official at the IIC-Oman,





“IIC is currently quite busy as it is now the tourist season. On a daily basis we get at least 300 visitors at the center.”

Some years ago, the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, Oman, had organized an essay contest on the topic, ‘Muhammad (peace be upon him) – Messenger of Peace’. The winning essays were rewarded with handsome cash and other prizes. It was an opportune occasion for non-Muslims to go through the biography and write about Prophet (peace be upon him).

How Islam came to Oman

Mazin bin Ghadoubah AlSaadi, a resident of Samayil, takes the credit of becoming the first Omani to convert to Islam, who was given the shahadah by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself in Madinah.

However, it was Amr bin Al Aas, a merchant of Makkah and one of the early Muslims, who really won Oman over to Islam. When Amr arrived in Oman with a letter from the Prophet to Julandabin Mustansir, he found the head of Azd tribe was on the verge of death. His mission was however successful: The Julanda’s two sons, Abd and Jaffar who ruled Oman jointly, accepted Islam and sent a letter to the pagan Sasanid Governor of Rustaq, inviting him to do the same. In a matter of time the entire country accepted Islam.

History records that on his return from Madinah, Mazin bin Ghadoubah Al-Saadi, who was inspired by the beauty of the Prophet’s masjid in Madinah, built a mosque in his hometown Samayil which took the name ‘Masjid Al-Mudhmar’ (meaning a domain). This happens to be the first mosque of Oman. Masjid Al-Mudhmar was reopened after renovations carried out on July 11, 1979. Further restoration work was carried out in 1990 and also few years ago. From the first mosque till

now, the rulers of Oman have always demonstrated magnanimity towards constructing mosque after mosque to serve the inhabitants of the country. While on one hand Oman’s rich Islamic heritage is manifest in its old mosques, on the other hand the modern, elegant mosques reflect the rulers’ vision of keeping the country abreast with the time.

Mosques in Oman are not of recent origin as scores of mosques were built as the country progressed. Oman’s mosques had arrested the attention of many early visiting historians and travelogue writers. Moroccan Traveler Ibn Batuta was so impressed with the splendor of Qalhat, a historical town, that he wrote: “Were the world a ring, (New) Hormuz would be jewel in it ...” Ibn Batuta, who visited Qalhat in the 14th century, when Omani seafarers were known throughout the littoral states of the Indian Ocean for their skills, described the town as “having fine bazaars and an exceedingly beautiful mosque, the walls of which are decorated with elaborate enameled tilework and which occupies a lofty situation overlooking the town and harbor ... (Ibn Batuta says the tomb of Bibi Mariam in Qalhat was actually a mosque built by her). Ibn Batuta also admired the “splendid clean mosques “of Nizwa. The Great Mosque of Bahla, another historic town known for the UNESCO-listed fort, stands on an irregular terrace.

The Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque is the result of His Majesty’s vision which aims at making Oman a symbol of Islamic culture. Non-Muslims are permitted inside in the morning hours from 8am to 11am from Saturday to Thursday. Those interested to know about Islam are taken a round of Islamic Centre which is inside the mosque complex. They are offered dates and qahwa (Arabian coffee). Pamphlets about Islam and Islamic literature are also distributed.





SAYEDA KHADIJAH – AN EPITOME OF VIRTUE (May Allah be pleased with her)

By Dr Fatima Taneem Ruknuddin

In today's fast-paced world with its unprecedented challenges, it is imperative to have positive role models who will influence, guide, motivate and inspire us to overcome our struggles and weaknesses in order to be able to lead successful and contented lives. According to Islam, the Prophets (peace be upon them all) are considered to be the best role models chosen divinely to guide people. The Noble Qur'an in Surat Al-Qalam, verse No. 4 states, "And verily, for you [Muhammad] are on exalted (standard of) character".





The next best humans after them (peace be upon them all) are the Prophets' followers, companions and disciples. The Prophet Muhammed's companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) are bestowed a high status in Islam and each of them possessed exemplary personalities with their love, zeal and commitment towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the cause of Islam being shining examples for all the future generations to emulate.

First Mother of Believers

Among these illustrious companions of the Prophet (May Allah be pleased with them all), the pivotal role of the first wife of our Beloved Prophet (peace be upon him), the first Mother of Believers (Umm Al Mumineen), Sayeda Khadijah bint Khuwailid (May Allah be pleased with her) in nurturing the foundation of Islam and her total commitment and devotion towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) is unparalleled.

Although her life is accounted for very briefly, as she died in the early stages of Islam, it speaks volumes of her unwavering faith, unconditional love and support to her husband (peace be upon him). She is revered and loved by all Muslims of the present as well as the past and honoured with the titles of 'First Believer' and 'First Mother of Believers'. She is truly the epitome of a successful and complete Muslim; being rich and contented in this life as well as being honoured to receive the glad tidings of Paradise during her lifetime.

Khadijah bint Khuwailid Centre --- A Tribute to Khadija

To commemorate and be an inspiration, many institutions, religious centres and awards in different parts of the world are named after

our Mother, Sayeda Khadijah bint Khuwailid (May Allah be pleased with her). For instance, Khadijah bint Khuwailid Centre at the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) which was first established in 1998 to train, qualify and empower Saudi women in the footsteps of Sayeda Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). It was renamed later as Al-Sayeda Khadijah bint Khuwailid Businesswomen Centre and continues to pave way for Saudi businesswomen to empower them economically and socially so that they become a vital part of national development. Likewise, the Sayeda Khadijah Centre in Mississauga Ontario, Canada was established in 2009 to promote the positive values of Islam and serve the Muslim communities in Canada.

Thus, Sayeda Khadijah's life history provides invaluable lessons and has been recounted innumerable times with almost every Muslim having heard about her. Yet, time and again the story of our Mother, the great noble lady of Islam has to be retold in order for Muslims to continue to be inspired by her commendable attributes and strive to follow her in order to achieve success in this world and salvation in the Hereafter.

BACKGROUND AND EARLY YEARS

Sayeda Khadijah bint Khuwailid bin Asad bin Abdul Uzza bin Qusay bin Kilab was reportedly born 15 years prior to the Year of Elephant in Makkah. She belonged to the Banu Asad clan of the Quraysh tribe. Her father was Khuwailid bin Asad and Mother was Fatima bint Zaida.

The Banu Asad was an elite clan of the Quraysh who were noted for not strictly adhering to the idolatrous customs of the Quraysh and several of its members did not practice idolatry. Two of Sayeda Khadijah's





cousins had rejected the pagan beliefs of the Makkans and converted to Christianity during the Pre-Islamic times; they were Waraqah bin Nawfal bin Asad and Uthman bin Al-Huwairith bin Asad.

Khuwailid bin Asad was the chief of Banu Asad clan and a well-established trader. Sayeda Khadijah grew up in the lap of luxury under her father's loving care and blossomed into an intelligent, beautiful woman with a soft and generous heart. She was kind and helpful towards the orphans, widows, poor and the needy. She never worshipped the idols and was known for being pious. Due to her excellent character and high moral values, she was also called 'At-Taahirah' (The Pure One).

PRIOR MARRIAGES AND LIFE AS A BUSINESSWOMAN

Sayeda Khadijah was married twice and widowed. Her first husband was Abu Halah bin Zararah Al-Tamimi with whom she bore two sons, Hala and Hind, earning her alias 'Umm Hind'. Her second husband was Ateeq bin Abid bin Abdullah Al-Makhzumi. After the death of her second husband, her father also passed away. Thus, Sayeda Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) inherited a great deal of wealth from her father and husbands and she decided to invest it in trade.

Sayeda Khadijah decided not to remarry and lead an independent life with her children running her business single-handedly. She hired people to trade on her behalf on commission basis and her caravans were sent along with the other Quraysh caravans to Syria during the summers and Yemen during the winters. Being an honest and hard-working woman, as well as inheriting her father's acumen and business skills, she soon developed her business on a large scale.

Her caravans almost equaled caravans of all the Quraysh put together. Her reputation as a wise and graceful businesswoman grew and so did her wealth. She was known as 'Ameerah al Quraysh' (Princess of Quraysh) and was highly sought after by the elite men of Quraysh. However, she refused them all and continued living as a single mother with always an eager helping hand towards the less fortunate ones of her family as well as her society.

SAYEDA KHADIJAH WAS A TACTFUL BUSINESSWOMAN AND WAS KEEN TO HIRE HONEST AND COMPETENT MEN TO TRADE HER CARAVANS. HEARING THE REPUTATION OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S HONESTY AND SHY DE-MEANOUR, SHE HIRED HIM

FIRST INTERACTION WITH MUHAMMAD

Sayeda Khadijah was a tactful businesswoman and was keen to hire honest and competent men to trade her caravans. Hearing the reputation of Prophet Muhammad's honesty and shy demeanour, she hired him to trade her caravans going to Syria and sent her man-servant Maysarah along with him. Upon their return with better-than-expected profits and Maysarah's recount of his extraordi-





nary experiences with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and extolling the Prophet's virtues of honesty, integrity and kindness, Sayeda Khadijah was highly impressed. She decided to marry him and sent an indirect proposal of marriage through her friend Nafisa. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sought his uncle Abu Talib's advice and agreed to accept the proposal.

**THEIR MARRIAGE WAS
BLISSFULLY HAPPY AND
WAS BASED ON MUTUAL
LOVE, RESPECT AND UN-
DERSTANDING.**

MARRIED LIFE WITH PROPHET PRIOR PROPHETHOOD

Sayeda Khadijah bint Khuwailid was married to Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Abdul Mutalib bin Haashim bin Abd-Manaf bin Qusay bin Kilab 15 years prior to his Prophethood. Historians record that Sayeda Khadijah was 40 years old while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was 25 years of age. Their marriage was solemnised by Abu Talib in the presence of Sayeda Khadijah's uncle and brothers. After their marriage, the Prophet (peace be upon him) moved into Sayeda Khadijah's house and continued to live there until his migration to Madinah decades later.

Their marriage was blissfully happy and was based on mutual love, respect and understanding. Sayeda Khadijah continued to run her business and simultaneously took care of her family. Her business thrived and flourished; their house was known for kind-

ness, compassion and generosity. Both ensured that widows and orphans were fed and clothed and that the poor and needy would never go empty-handed at their doorsteps.

She and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had six children - two boys and four girls. Unfortunately, both the boys died in their early years. Al-Qasim was the eldest child and died at two years of age. For a brief period, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was called 'Abu Al-Qasim' (Father of Al-Qasim). Their youngest child was named 'Abdullah' but was also called 'Al-Taahir' and 'At-Tayeb' and he died in infancy. The death of their sons dealt a severe blow to both the parents who comforted and shared each other's grief. Between the boys were born the girls- Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umme Kulthum and Fatimah (May Allah be pleased with them all). All of them were raised in a warm and loving atmosphere built upon piety and high moral value and grew up to be compassionate, pious and intelligent just like their parents.

Sayeda Khadijah's household had other members besides her children. Among them was Prophet's cousin brother Ali bin Abi Talib and the freed slaves Zayd bin Harithah and Umme Ayman who were raised in an amicable manner and were also treated like family.

Both Sayeda Khadijah and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shunned evil practices of the Makkans and when the distraught Prophet started retreating to the Cave of Hira, she understood and supported his need for seclusion wholeheartedly; at times accompanying him herself and staying silently beside him throughout his stay. During the final years just before Prophethood, when her husband used to stay for a month during Ramadan, she waited patiently for his return, never complaining about his long absences.





MARRIED LIFE AFTER PROPHETHOOD

Sayeda Khadijah had been married to Beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) for 15 blissful years when Prophethood dawned upon him. She was the first one to whom the Prophet rushed terrified and trembling after his first divine experience of revelation. She comforted her husband and reassured him with soothing and sincere words stressing that Allah (The Most Glorified, The Most High) would never humiliate him for his commendable attributes. She put all his fears and doubts to rest by offering to seek counsel from her learned cousin Waraqah bin Nawfil who confirmed the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Sayeda Khadijah sincerely believed in the Prophethood of her husband (peace be upon him) and the message of Islam and was honoured to be the First Muslim Believer of his Ummah. Likewise, their children and other household members and closest friends accepted Islam immediately. Throughout the difficult early years of Prophethood, she was totally devoted to her husband and supported him financially, physically and emotionally. She was his pillar of strength and encouragement when he was dismayed and hurt by the Makkans' hostile responses to the call of Islam. She diligently took care of her family affairs and the business enabling her husband to fully concentrate his efforts on spreading the message of Islam. She continued to spend her wealth for the cause of Islam, helping to free slaves who had embraced Islam and also feeding and sheltering the gradually growing community of Muslims.

During the seventh year of Prophethood, at 62 years of age, Sayeda Khadijah also joined her husband and other clan members of Banu

Haashim in exile for three difficult years in the Valley of Abu Talib during their social and economic boycott imposed by the hostile Makkans. Though accustomed to all the comforts of life, she faced the hardships and sufferings of the exile period with patience and courage. However, the boycott took a heavy toll on the fragile and aged Sayeda Khadijah and as a result, soon after it was lifted, her health deteriorated and she passed away at her home at the age of 65 years.

HER STORY DEPICTING HER MULTIFACETED ROLES OF AN ALTRUISTIC SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSWOMAN, A DEVOTED WIFE, A LOVING MOTHER AND ABOVE ALL A PIOUS, NOBLE LADY WHO SACRIFICED HER LIFE AND RESOURCES FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

It is reported that as her wealth had exhausted during the three long years of boycott; there was not enough money to buy a shroud for her funeral. Her death left the Prophet (peace be upon him) devastated and heart-broken and without any support as his uncle Abu Talib also died shortly before. Historians recorded the year that both of them died as the 'Year of Grief' (Aam al Huzn) which occurred three years prior to Prophet's





migration to Madinah.

Sayeda Khadijah's death was so traumatic to our Beloved Prophet that his companions were worried about his grief-stricken state. She was his only wife for 25 years and was his beloved, best friend, mentor and support.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) cherished her memories throughout his life and even though he married several women in his later years, Sayeda Khadijah continued to hold a special place in his heart. He always impressed upon his later wives and his companions the virtues and devotion of his beloved wife, Sayeda Khadijah.

HADITHS MENTIONING SAYEDA KHADIJAH

- Narrated Mother of Believers, Sayeda Aisha bint Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with her) "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Never did Allah (The Most Glorified, The Most High) give me a better wife than Khadijah. She hailed my mission when everybody shouted against it. She lent me support of her conviction when there was hardly a believer. She enlivened my heart when I felt lonely and deserted. Khadijah's love was given to me by Allah (The Most Glorified, The Most High). How could I forget her?"

- Narrated Mother of Believers, Sayeda Aisha bint Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with her) that, "I did not feel jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as much as I did of Khadijah, though I did not see her. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to mention her very often, and whenever he slaughtered a sheep, he would cut its part and send it to the friends of Khadijah. When I sometimes said, "You treat Khadijah in such a way as if there is no woman on earth except her; he would say, "Khadijah was such and such and with her I had children." [Sahih Al-

Bukhari]

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Many are the men who perfected their Faith (Imaan), but only four women have perfected their Faith: Khadijah bint Khuwailid, Fatimah bint Muhammad, Maryam bint Imran and Asiya bint Mazzahim (wife of Pharaoh)." [Sahih Al-Tirmidhi]

- Narrated by Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him, Angel Jibreel (peace be upon him) came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, Khadijah is coming with a bowl of soup for you. When she reaches you, greet her on behalf of her Lord (i.e. Allah) and on my behalf and give her the good news of a palace of jewels (Qasab) in the Paradise wherein there will be neither any noise nor any fatigue." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Hence, in conclusion, Sayeda Khadijah bint Khuwailid (May Allah be pleased with her) was undoubtedly the Mother of the Believers; more so of the Early Believers as she took care of them, fed them, bought their freedom and nurtured them all with tender love and care.

Her house was truly a Cradle of Islam from where she gently reared the early formative years of Islam. Her story depicting her multifaceted roles of an altruistic successful businesswoman, a devoted wife, a loving mother and above all a pious, noble lady who sacrificed her life and resources for the sake of Allah (The Most Glorified, The Most High) and His Prophet (Peace be upon him) should be a continuous source of inspiration and a beacon of guidance for all Muslims to emulate. Her timeless moral legacies should always be treasured and acted upon just as our Beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) paid tribute to her throughout his lifetime.





African societies and the need to promote their own languages

Professor Mahmoud Dhaouadi – University of Tunis

Black Africa's Linguistic Underdevelopment:

As a result of Western imperialism in Africa since the 15th century, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish have become the official languages of most countries of today's Black Africa. There are nearly as many independent African states which use English as there are states that use French

as their official languages. The total number of those countries amounts to 38 which constitute the majority of the African states of the Black continent (Frags 1984: 164-183). It is because of this linguistic fact that Africa is so often divided today into two Africas : 1) English speaking Africa and 2) French speaking Africa. To name just a few of these countries we can mention Uganda,





Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone which belong to English speaking Africa while Senegal, Tchad, Guinea, Congo and Zaire are representative of French speaking Africa. Portugal's earlier colonization in the continent has led to the spread use of Portuguese in such countries like Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau where Portuguese is the official language of these independent states. Compared to the wide use of English and French, in Black Africa, the Portuguese use is considerably limited. It is adopted only in five countries as an official language. Finally Spanish, as an official language, is found only in Equatorial Guinea. As such, the overspread use of these languages particularly in various modern sectors of these societies constitutes in our new perspective a linguistic underdevelopment. In other words, native languages are not given the opportunity to be fully used in all walks of life. Their growth and their maturity are bound to be hampered and underdeveloped. The general acute linguistic underdevelopment in Black Africa should not, however, be explained only by Western imperialism but also by in-built internal difficult linguistic situations which characterize most of these countries. There is hardly any single common language/dialect in each of those societies which is understood and acceptable to all clans, tribes and groups. The language(s)/dialect(s) is often limited to the oral form. Consequently, its full use falls short of meeting the modern aspirations of the African states like self-management of modern

structures and institutions in their own societies. This delicate linguistic state in today's Black Africa should be meaningful in any rigorous attempt to understand the special nature of the complex problems of underdevelopment facing those nations. That is to say, the challenges they face in the battle against underdevelopment are not limited only to the socio-economic dimensions. Their underdevelopment is global in nature (Dhaouadi 2002).

North Africa's Linguistic Underdevelopment :

Furthermore, the North African societies (Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco and Mauritania) can hardly be exempted as well from the phenomenon of linguistic underdevelopment. The post-independence constitution of each of these countries explicitly affirms that Arabic is the national official language. Yet, the wide use of French (spoken and written) after independence is still a prevailing common phenomenon in these societies particularly in the various modern sectors. One manifestation of linguistic underdevelopment is the large spread of the Franco-Arabe (spoken Arabic mixed with spoken French) nearly among all groups of today's Maghrebian societies (Dhaouadi 1996 : 107-125). National government policies of Arabisation have not yet been entirely able to promote the status of Arabic to a fully used language (spoken and written) in all sectors of these nations. As such, the societies of North Africa suffer, though to a considerable lesser degree, like the majority of Black African societies from linguistic underdevelopment. However, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania have, on the whole, a much better chance than the rest of the African states in ending linguistic





underdevelopment because of the following reasons:

First, Arabic is spoken and understood by the vast majority of the entire population of these four countries. Second, Arabic is the sacred language of the Holy Book (The Qur'an) of the Islamic faith to which adhere the Arabs and the Berbers of the Maghreb. Third, as a language, Arabic is a fully articulated and sophisticated language to be able to adapt itself to modern changes. It had already proved its great vitality during the Golden Age of Arab-Muslim civilization. The enormous movement of translation undertaken by this civilization, especially under the Khalifa El Maamun's rule, illustrates very well the capacity of Arabic in integrating Greek philosophy, Persian and Indian sciences and wisdom into the Arabic-Islamic-cultural scientific heritage which Europe had greatly benefited from. Based on this, the relative linguistic underdevelopment of Arabic in Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Morocco has mainly resulted from the French linguistic and cultural colonization and not from inherent linguistic handicaps which afflict Black Africa as referred to.

Thus, successful Arabisation becomes here the key for dealing with linguistic underdevelopment. However, social policies, enthusiasm and determination of the post-independence regimes in those countries have not unanimously been in favour Arabisation (1). The general weak and ambivalent attitude of political authorities toward Arabisation particularly in Tunisia, Mauritania and Morocco has contributed since independence to the delay of the linguistic underdevelopment eradication in these independent countries despite of the Arabic language's great potentialities for promo-

tion and advancement.

Western Cultural Disorganizing Effect in Africa

Africa's contact with the dominant modern West in contemporary times has led to some erosion, disorganisation in its own cultural values system. Modern Western cultural values have their greatest impact on those Africans of western education background and residents of urban centres. But even among the most Westernized Africans; complete Western acculturation has hardly occurred. In many cases Western cultural values never took root in the infrastructure of the cultural values system of the African countries. They have remained superficial because of their self-imposed nature on those societies. An African scholar like Ali Mazuri saw that one of the greatest dilemma of today's Africa is "a dialect consequence of the fact that its institutions and ideologies are alien lacking any African roots whatsoever" (Mazuri 1980). Political instability and widespread authoritarianism in the Black continent are considered by Mazuri as a result of cultural disorganization which has been brought about mainly by Western colonialism in modern times.

What is at stake here is the clash between tradition (African cultures) and modernity (the new cultural values and visions of Western civilization since the 19th century). This is a theme which is often covered with ethnocentrism by contemporary Western sociologists. Most of their studies don't hesitate to side ideologically with modernity (West-





ernization) against tradition (non-Western cultures) (Lerner 1964). Post-colonial Tunisia can be cited as an example to make the point stressed here.

Tradition/Modernization's Impact on Tunisian Society

Tunisia's attempts to modernize (to westernize) since independence (1956)- under Bourguiba's pro-Western attitude - have probably led this country to undergo the most acute linguistic-cultural values conflict compared to its western neighbour: Algeria. Modern Western outlook on alcoholic drinking, sexuality and women's equality/freedom is bound to clash more and less with the Tunisian Islamic-Arabic Mediterranean cultural value system. This dualistic linguistic and cultural heritage can often lead to what modern social scientists have called anomie, cultural disorganization/confusion and tension (2).

This situation can hardly help Tunisians, before and after the Revolution 2011, consolidate their cultural identity or promote their own cultural values system. Such a critical cultural confusion is a principal source for the hardening of the linguistic and cultural underdevelopment as defined in this article. Furthermore, Westernization has practically taken over especially among the younger Tunisian generations in the area of dress. Wearing Western dress for young Tunisians rarely constitutes any conscious feeling of internal conflict. In other words, wearing traditional clothing is no longer a real alternative to the self-imposed Western one. Western dress for them is, therefore, a fait

accompli. This does not mean, however, that modern and modernizing Tunisians don't wear any more their traditional dress. They do but in a ritual manner. A great number of men dress up in Jubba (a long outer garment). At wedding of circumcision celebrations Tunisian modern women may be seen in traditional or semi-traditional clothes. Thus, as a cultural heritage, the traditional Tunisian dress has been seriously marginalized. As such, it is another feature of cultural underdevelopment in this North African country. In brief, the categories of cultural underdevelopment in today African societies at large represent an impoverishment/a disruption/disorganization of their main cultural symbols/cultures (language, science/knowledge, religions, thought, myths and cultural values and norms).

Footnotes

(1) President Bourguiba was strongly in favour of the use of the French in Tunisia after independence.

(2) Bourguiba dismissed his prime minister M. M'Zali who was pro-Arabization.

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Darb Zubayda -- ancient Hajj route

By Aftab Husain Kola

In ancient times, the annual Hajj caravan from Iraq to Makkah had to spend months slowly crossing great tracts of land and braving harsh weather conditions with little facilities en route. The establishment of Darb Zubayda came as boon to the pilgrims, avers AFT-AB HUSAIN KOLA

When the first edition of the Darb

Zubayda (or Zubayda Trail) festival was launched in Hail in the northern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia last December, not many knew about Darb Zubayda. While some are familiar with Zubayda, the renowned wife of the fifth Abbasid Caliph Haroon Al-Rashid but few are aware of her outstanding achievements vis a vis ancient Hajj route.





Amatul Aziz Bint Ja'far Bin Abi Ja'far Al-Mansour, fondly called Zubayda due to a fresh glow on her white skin, is credited for building a string of wells, reservoirs, rest stations, milestones, and artificial pools that supplied water for pilgrims all along the 1400km route from Kufa in Iraq to Makkah and developing water facilities in and around Makkah. Kufa to Makkah route has been referred as Darb Zubayda ('Zubayda's Way') since then; it was also called Al-Kufi pilgrimage route. Thus the Zubayda Festival is aimed at reviving the historic Darb Zubayda as a trail for pilgrims and commercial caravans departing from Kufa in Iraq to Makkah.

The historic Darb Zubayda

The main stretch of the route extended from Al-Kufa to Makkah, about 1,277 kilometers, 228 of which falls in the Iraqi territory, while the remaining stretch in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia beginning from Al Aqaba in the north and ending in Makkah, extending about 1,049 kilometers in the deep Saudi territory.

This historic trail has been listed among the projects of the Two Holy Mosques program to care for the Kingdom's cultural heritage, executed by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) among its initiatives in the National Transformation Program.

Hajj, one of the five foundational institutions of Islam, began during Prophet's time. The performance of Hajj is an enjoined duty and its superiority is in the statement of Allah: "Hajj to the House (Kaaba) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the journey." Undertaking journey to Makkah during the bygone era was laborious and time-consuming yet thousands from many corners across the globe performed

the Pilgrimage. People used to traverse long distances either by foot or on animals until modern travel services became the norm. To go for Pilgrimage it was an extraordinarily long and difficult trek across harsh terrain. It is reported that despite the pains, people's craving for a journey to Makkah did not discourage them. The travel spanned long duration or even years if the traveler had to stop en route to work and save before setting out for the onward journey again.

Abbasid rule pioneers in making efforts

It was during the reign of the Abbasid rule (750 A.D. to 809 A.D.) and particularly the period of Harun Al-Rashid, commendable efforts were made to ease the pilgrims' journey. The Kufa to Makkah stretch was already serving as a trade route in the pre-Islamic era and was thriving during the time of early Caliphate. Pilgrims from Iraq adopted this route, as it was a familiar terrain, to go for pilgrimage but had to face difficulties en route with little or no facilities to take care of their needs and for resting; though few commercial caravanserais were located at few points.

First, road and pavements were installed. Zubayda was a lady endowed with a vision and was always available for support for her husband's works. She accompanied her husband in many of his trips abroad. Historians recall that Harun Al-Rashid used to go to Makkah for Pilgrimage almost every year walking all the distance from Baghdad.

In 751, Abu Al-Abbas Abdu'llah bin Muhammad Al-Saffah, the first Abbasid caliph, installed fire signals and milestones from Kufa to Makkah. This helped the pilgrims in locating the direction toward Makkah. His successor, Jafar Abdullah Al-Mansur, one of the celebrated master city planners of medieval Baghdad, got additional forts built. The





foundation of Al-Mansur's 'Round City' of Baghdad in 762 was a defining milestone in the history of urban design.

Subsequently, the third Caliph Abu Abdallah Muhammad bin Abdallah Al-Mansur, had undertaken the daunting task of clearing and levelling major part of the way. But these amenities were not enough.

It was Harun Al-Rashid and his wife Zubayda who created the major amenities along the way. Harun Al-Rashid, who ruled from 786 to 809, was considered as the most generous patrons, along with his equally famous wife Zubayda came forward to provide these facilities for the pilgrims on the said route. We learn from the pages of history that while Harun Al-Rashid made the pilgrimage six or nine times, his wife Zubayda undertook the pilgrimage at least five times. It was in 1790 that Zubayda went on a pilgrimage with her husband. It is said that during one of the initial journey she felt that the route needs many repairs and introduction of facilities so that pilgrims do not suffer. To begin with, she erected at least 10 new rest stops and three new way stations along the route, as well as a number of water tanks, weirs, palaces, houses, and pavement that made it more easily accessible. Twenty seven major stations and 27 substations were identified, the most prominent among them were: Al-Sheihyat, Al-Jumaima, Faïd, Rabadha, That-Erq and Khuraba.

It is recorded that concerned with the plight of the pilgrims dying of thirst and losing the way because of desert and sandstorms, she had her engineers construct a well-demarcated route with buildup walls and shelters to protect the travelers from sandstorms and harsh weather conditions. The road was divided into more than 40 stations for shelter of huge caravans of pilgrims

with their animals. Deep wells, water pools, guesthouses, mosques and police posts were erected to provide comfort and security to the pilgrims. High minarets were raised to locate the place and in the night towers were lit with fire to guide the caravans to the right direction. These facilities were so durable that they braved the vagaries of nature and withstood for more than 1000 years.

During its peak where the route saw increase in pilgrims' travel to Makkah, a number of milestones, many major way stations with cisterns, reservoirs or wells, fire signal towers, hostels and fortresses— courtesy Abbasid treasury -- dotted the route.

Kufa was the main point for starting of the journey for the Iraqi pilgrims' caravan. The next point was Najd Region to Madinah, threading through Fayd just south of Hail. The caravan would rest near Al-Rabadha, some 200 km to the north-east of Madinah where the extant archeological features show vestiges of town houses, fortified walls, watchtowers, mosques, pottery kilns, stone-working factories, jewelry shops and two large reservoirs.

All these structures were so strong that they remained intact for centuries. The result was that Darb Zubaida served for more than 1,000 years for millions of pilgrims from Iraq, Fares, Khorasan and Kurdistan. Though some 1,300 years have lapsed, some of the wells and pools of this route can still be identified.

Plight of thirsty touched Zubayda

Not only facilities for the route were taken up but Zubayda also made sure that in Makkah and its environs and Hajj sights had enough water. She was disturbed to witness, in one of Pilgrimages she made, the suffering of the Pilgrims who were struggling to get pure drinking water, as one bot-





tle was sold for one Dinar, a hefty amount in those days. She firmly believed that water is considered a blessing from God that gives and sustains life.

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Ayn Zubayda project - an engineering wonder

Muslim Historian Ibn Al Jawzi has written that the Caliph's wife made engineers conduct an urgent study to bring water to Makkah. Not convinced with engineers' negative response that it will be an extremely difficult task which entails digging tunnels on massive rocks spanning ten miles, Zubayda was in no mood to relent. Notwithstanding engineers' report, she asked them to go ahead. History reveals that the queen's direct instructions were: "Construct a qanat at any cost, even if I have to give a dinar in exchange for every single stroke of spade."

And the result, the engineers went up to the water springs in the mountains and toiled day in and day out putting their lives at risk and great amount of money at stake until

they dug the tunnel that channeled pure water to the edge of Makkah. Specialized diggers, in Arabic called muqannis (channelers) were engaged. Aziziyah District in Makkah was the finishing point of the qanat and a large birkah (community water-tank) was built there which was known as Hod Zubaydah and from this birkah, water was carried into Makkah. That tunnel is still known by the name, "Ayn Zubaida".

It is reported that until 1950 Ayn Zubaydah flowed. Since tube-wells and pumps had been installed in various parts of the qanat and at the Kharazahs to meet the water demand for a growing population Ayn Zubayda's importance faded. Eventually, the population outgrew the water availability, resulting in a considerable drop in the groundwater level at Wadi Numan and finally leading up to the water drying up in Ayn Zubaydah.

Interest in sciences

Zubaida had also evinced keen interest in literature and science, and accordingly allocated lots of funds to make top literary figures as well as poets and scientists Baghdad their home. Little wonder then, pre-eminent the Dar al-Islam, became a seat for pioneering scientists, engineers, calligraphists, astronomers, poets, mathematicians, musicians, historians, legalists and philosophers.

Full of praise

Few historians have showered encomiums on Zubayda for what she achieved during those years. To mention one of them, the 11th-century scholar Al Khatib Al Baghdadi – whose book 'History of Baghdad' is a treasure trove of information on the construction of the city - writes that the Baghdad-Makkah road, which was deserted, became full of life because of the facilities she built.





OIC countries will account for 15% of global aging population by 2030

Jeddah (UNA-OIC) –

Percentage of population aged 60 years or over in the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has grown from 5.7 percent in 1990 to 6.7 percent in 2015, according to reports published by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), based on UN reports.

During the same period, the share of the population aged 60 years or above rose from 8 percent to 11.7 percent in non-OIC developing countries, and from 17.4 percent to 24 percent in developed countries. This suggests that the pace of aging in the OIC member states between 1990 and 2015 has been slow compared with other countries, but it is expected to reach 9.3 percent.

By 2030, OIC countries will account for 15 percent of the aging population in the world, estimates have indicat-

ed. According to reports, the share of older persons in the total population of the OIC member states is not homogeneous. In 2015, OIC countries with the lowest share of the population aged 60 or above included countries from Asia as well as the Arab and African regions. By 2030, OIC countries with the lowest share of the population aged 60 or above will be the sub-Saharan African member states, ranked as follows: Uganda, Mali, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Mozambique.



The central mosque in Moroni

