

THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE *Journal*

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Sha'ban 1440/May 2019

No.8

**Muslims urged to
address religious
misconceptions**

**MWL launches its global
conference in Moscow**



Letter From the Editor

Beyond the shocking crime in New Zealand

Dozens of innocent people were killed and wounded in a hate-filled terror attack targeting two mosques during Juma'ah prayer in New Zealand. The authorities, there, arrested four people and disassembled explosive bombs in that attack, which seems it has been well-planned.

This terrorist operation, which resulted in many deaths and injuries of innocent worshippers, reflects an image of the most heinous hatred forms. This is as a result of adopting a hatred doctrine of others and the persistence of religious and ethnic contempt.

It was a terrible shock for the whole world, denounced and condemned by all. Although, there must be more to be done; and great efforts should be pleaded to protect security and peace.

The civilized, peace-loving world must stand with all strength and courage to confront such atrocities. The least of what should be done is enacting legislation criminalizing contempt for religious sanctities and organizing freedoms. This legislation should also prevent freedoms from slipping to thoughts resulting such terrible incident. It is a dare and brutal crime challenges and disregards all the meanings, the values and innocent lives.

Those who value and justify such actions should be criminalized. Among those, there are members of parties and bodies; there are also politicians and parliamentarians. This in fact indicates that the problem is inherent and requires considerable attention.

Therefore, the Muslim World League has repeatedly stressed that the escalating rhetoric of racism and hatred leads to such terror-

ist catastrophes. It will also provoke violence and counter-violence, in light of the failure to enact such legislation and allowing generations to cultivate their human and moral values.

The Muslim World League has made it its duty to address the Muslim minorities to avoid the desire for revenge and incitement based on emotional temper. It aims also to prevent any offensive behaviors resulting in a negative impact on peaceful coexistence and positive national integration. This does not mean that legitimate rights are not claimed and reserving the cultural and the religious specificities. As a legitimate right here in in this criminal incident, is to bring the perpetrators to justice, to hold them accountable and to compensate the families of those killed and injured.

Muslims in New Zealand, as other Muslim minorities, have to seek mutual understanding, coexistence and sharing of fundamental values to achieve comprehensive citizenship requirements at all legal, religious and moral levels. Regarding that, New Zealand Prime Minister's statement referred to the protection of cultural and religious specificities of Muslim immigrants..

There is no doubt that the Muslims need for safety and security in those countries that they immigrated to is more than elsewhere. That will make them seek for more mutual understanding, coexistence and sharing of fundamental values. This requires more understanding and cooperation, and overcoming the bitterness, no matter how terrible these adventitious incidents.



The Muslim World League *Journal*

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'10 percent' of similarities enough for world peace, says MWL chief



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MWL launches its global conference in Moscow

Moscow - MWL

The Muslim World League (MWL) launched its international conference, the

first of its kind in Russia, on the concepts of mercy and peace in religious values.

The conference lasted three days and took place the Russian capital Moscow and the



MWL gathered at its conference an elite of religious, intellectual and political leaders representing 43 countries

Chechen capital of Grozny and was sponsored by the Government of the Russian Federation, with high representation from the office of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The highly representations were also on behalf of the Presidency of the Senate, the Duma Presidency, the Chechen Republic Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Affairs and Northern Caucasus Affairs of the Russian

government.

Participants attended the conference from 43 countries, invited by the Muslim World League and in cooperation with the religious administration of the Chechen Republic. These participants were senior thinkers, scholars, opinion leaders, intellectuals, politicians, religious leaders and representatives of various parts of the Russian government.

The conference aims to achieve the mission of the Muslim World League, which

is to promote the values of coexistence and peace, and to emphasize the importance of human and national partnership. Russia has been chosen to hold such a conference, because in recent years it represented a model of harmony and religious and ethnic coexistence.

The conference included six main sessions, the first of which was “The Elements of Coexistence”. Its themes discuss the humanitarian aims of the Prophet’s mission, the Muslims and the community of compassion, human relations in multi-religious societies, religious values and religious and ethnic conflicts.

The title of the second session was “Muslims of Russia and the Society of Peace”, with its themes: the Islamic presence in Russia, history and present, the future of religious coexistence in Russia, and the efforts of the muftis and religious administrations to establish peace and coexistence.

The third session was entitled “Terrorism and Extremism”, and its theme was the relationship between religions and terrorism, terrorism and the message of Islam, the phenomenon of violence in the name of religion. The fourth session included a panel



discussion by the Center for Arab-Russian Studies on the role of social and religious organizations in spreading moderation, Saudi Arabia’s efforts to combat terrorism, and the targeting of youth terrorist organizations through social media.

The fifth session was held in the city of Grozny under the title “Muslims and Civi-



A high-quality attendance at the two stations in Moscow and Grozny



Participants from various countries

lizational Communication”, with its themes: humanitarian common and mutual interests, the foundations of religious and ethnic relations in Russia, relations between Russia and the Islamic world, Islamophobia and

counter-violence. The sixth and final session witnessed a speech by the President of the Chechen Republic, a speech by the Secretary General of the Muslim World League and the Grand Mufti of Chechnya.



The conference was officially sponsored by Russia through high-level government representation

Muslims urged to address religious misconceptions



Chechen President presents Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa to deliver Friday sermon



GROZNY:

The Islamic nation has endured the negative and dangerous impact of classification and exclusion, including takfir, said Seikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (MWL), during the Friday sermon at the Grand Mosque in Grozny, Chechnya.



Friday prayers at the Grand Mosque in Grozny

In a first in the history of Russia, the Muslim World League (MWL) launched an international conference in Moscow on religious peace and coexistence.

The MWL conference promoted values of coexistence and peace, and emphasized the importance of “working in the common humani-

tarian and national circle.”

The sermon delivered by the MWL Secretary General was attended by the President of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, senior muftis and scholars, and a large gathering of worshipers.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa highlighted that “there are young men who, in



The presence of a group of scholars from different Islamic countries

their diversion, got caught up in the illusion of their superficial knowledge, which is neither firm nor based on the teachings of scholars and, thus, had the nerve to declare other believers as non-believers (takfir), fueling great sedition.”

He added: “Every time one sedition dies, another rises, revealing its horns in the name of Islam. It believes no one is right except its prodigal followers. Not only that, but it took upon itself to fight all others after having declared all the people on Earth as non-believers.”

“And similar to those are the people who monopolized righteousness in place of discretion and claimed that people were denied access to the truth except through them.”

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa pointed out that monopolizing righteousness in the place of discretion is a systematic error and an intellectual danger that jeopardizes the harmony and unity of the (Islamic) nation.

“The problem is not limited to the narrative of this tragedy, which has damaged the reputation of the Islamic nation, but extends to every person who was privileged with extensive knowledge in Islamic sciences yet did not fulfill his duty in combating the wrongful ideology, especially in dismantling its structure,” he continued. “This ideology was not based on a military or political entity, as you know, but on misguided concepts that exploited the passion for religion in

**MONOPOLIZING
RIGHTEOUSNESS
AN INTELLEC-
TUAL DANGER,
SAYS SHEIKH
DR. AL-ISSA**

*Dr. Al-Issa ad-
dresses the Grand
Mosque in Grozny*



the youth that lack knowledge and wisdom.”

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said: “We do not exaggerate when we say the amount of carelessness, sedition and misguidance is proportionate to the amount of the scholars’ failure, and part of this failure is a lack of addressing the misconceptions and fabricated concepts about Islam.”

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed in his sermon that good behavior and common decency are instinctively well-received by all people, and that convenience and tolerance with positive open-mindedness are in the core of our Islamic concepts, highlighting that Shariah’s purpose is to establish

mercy and tolerance, not difficulty and hardship.

“Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had delivered the message, fulfilled his mandate, advised the (Islamic) nation, strived for God as he ought to, invited (mankind) to the way of God with wisdom and fair preaching, did not assault anyone, and did not force anyone to follow his religion,” he said and quoted a verse from the Qur’an: “There is no compulsion in religion.”(Surat Al-Baqarah, Verse 256)

Russia was chosen as the site of the summit because it has been a model of religious and ethnic harmony in recent years, according to the MWL.



President of the Russian Duma meets Secretary-General

Chairman of the State Duma meets the Secretary General of Muslim World League

Moscow – MWL

Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Viacheslav Volodin, held a meeting with the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, at the State Duma headquarters in Moscow.

Both sides discussed issues of strengthening interreligious and inter-ethnic dia-

logue, Muslims support and activating civilized communication and cultural exchanges between the Islamic world and the Russian Federation, as well as reviewing the importance of the role of religious leaders in promoting positive integration among the different societies.

Mr. Volodin noted and praised the role of the Muslim World League, stressing that MWL leads wide international efforts to promote global peace and harmony, saying “it is



Signing a cooperation agreement between the MWL and the Russian Cultural Support Fund

in the hands of a well-known religious leadership that has a great global influence”.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also signed a cooperation agreement between the Muslim World League and the Fund of Supporting Culture, Science and Education in the Russian Federation, which based in Moscow, and represented by its Director, Mr. Alexander Vladimirovich Jedanov.

This agreement emphasizes the mutual desire in embedding high morals, humanity and moderation in the citizens of their countries. It also stresses avoiding extremism in religion, spreading tolerance, patriotism, respect for law, peaceful dialogue and good neighborliness with other religions and cultures. It approved the facilitation of interaction between Muslims and Islamic orga-

nizations in Russia and the countries of the Muslim world in the noble cause of supporting Islamic culture, science and education, as well as charity and other social affairs.

The agreement stressed the importance of cooperation in rejecting the emergence of ideas of extremism, intolerance hostility between religions, races and ideologies that leads to terrorism. It recognized the high importance of cooperation between organizations of a humanitarian nature, with the aim of ensuring communication between different people and cultures, and stressed the need to implement its provisions in order to promote peace and security for our people.

The two sides agreed to exchange information on the activities of scientific centers, cultural forums, websites, the media and var-



Talks between the two sides

ious means of communication, exchange of scientific, intellectual and cultural publications, magazines, pamphlets, video clips and other media publications.

The agreement authorizes the Muslim World League to provide information and recommendations on institutions that wish to cooperate with Muslims and Islamic institutions in Russia, after sending an official letter to the Fund. In addition to that, the fund will also provide information to the management of the Muslim World League on individuals, organizations and institutions working in Islamic affairs in the Russian Federation, which are of interest to MWL.

The two sides agreed to submit invitations to visit each other for the purpose of scientific, cultural and educational exchange.

The Fund, according to the agreement, will finance any activities or projects between the Muslim World League and its affiliated organizations or recommended by it with the Islamic institutions of Russia, in addition to the role of the Fund as a non-profit intermediary in the implementation of charitable activities carried out by the Muslim World League with Islamic organizations and institutions in Russia. This agreement came in recognition of the weight of the Muslim World League from its main headquarters in Makkah, the spiritual reference of the Muslim world.

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League arrived in the Russian capital Moscow, which was the first stop in his North Asia tour, where he met with an elite of government, political and religious leaders.



A part of Dr. Al-Issa's meeting with Mrs. Matvienko in the Russian Senate

Chairwoman of the Russian Council meets Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa

Moscow - MWL

The Chairwoman of the Russian Federation Council in the Russian Parliament, Valentina Matviyenko, received the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, at the headquarters of the Council in the Russian capital Moscow.

The meeting discussed the role of the Islamic presence in Russian society and the successful models of the Russian Muslims in

co-existence and harmony with different religions and nationalities as one nation in one national unity.

The meeting also reviewed the positive reinforcement of national integration in societies, in general, and the characteristic of the Russian Federation, in particular, in such a critical issue, in addition to the importance of preserving the diversity of societies and employment as a growth force and a renaissance of the national state.

The meeting stressed the need to confront



President of the Russian Senate received Dr. Al-Issa at the headquarters of the Council in Moscow

and criminalize all hostile practices and to incite hatred and extremism, which are often conducive to violence and terrorism.

Matviyenko praised the conference organized by the Muslim World League in the Russian Federation, which was entitled “Islam is the Message of Mercy and Peace”, stressing that it is a historic conference and the first of its kind among the international conferences hosted by Russia.

She said, speaking to Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa, “I am certain that you play an important humanitarian role and a global spiritual reference worthy of appreciation from its Islamic position”. Confirming that the Islamic religion is a prominent element in the formation of Russian culture, where Muslims have historically contributed to the growth and rise of the Russian interior.

Matviyenko added that the Russian Federation is witnessing a remarkable revival

among its diverse religious spectrum, pointing out that this diversity of religion and ethnicity is a requirement that “we must maintain and make it a force for growth.”

She said, “We offer you all the capabilities, services and assistance to promote the concepts of national integration, we will make the utmost efforts to cooperate in order to eliminate the ideas of extremism and hatred that breed violence and terrorism. Our Russian law criminalizes and punishes these practices, and we always seek to confront them”.

The Chairwoman of the Russian Federation Council noted that participants in the conference will see realistically in the regions of the Russian Federation concepts of positive national integration between the components of Russian society despite the diversity of their religions and nationalities.



Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa lectures at Saint Petersburg State University

Saint Petersburg - MWL

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, gave a lecture at Saint Petersburg State University in the presence of the Rector of the University Professor Nikola Kropachev, members of the faculty, Head of Oriental Studies Department, a number of academics, researchers and students.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa pointed out, in the lecture, the importance of civilized communication between nations and people in all diversity of their kinds, in order to promote rapprochement, understanding and exchange. He added that, this means the removal of negative barriers and misconceptions that find their environment in the absence of dialogue or lack of seriousness or lack of reasons for its success.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed that there are many humanitarian shared things. He said that civilizations depend on values, justice and the right perspective for their survival and strong. It also depends on the efficiency of management and the skill of communication and respect for the principles of common law, which is the natural law. He added “the adoption of justice, values and positive openness with the skill of anticipation and communication are foundations of leadership towards pioneering in civilization”.

He said “building the national character with an enlightened vision is an essential pillar in leading and in resolving many problems of nations and countries. And that the spiritual values are often applied in an informal



A wide student participation witnessed by the lecture

manner, so it is natural that the touchable behavioral effect is missing”.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa added “civilizations erode with time when they align with utilitarianism at the expense of values, and when they challenge the principles of common humanitarian law. And that sovereignty or media and artistic dominance, if not characterized by values, it works to falsify facts and brainwashing”.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa explained that the true power is no longer depends on solid power only, but also the soft power, which often represents the decisive factor, and resulted of open civilization

and closed civilization. He explained that the true power is no longer depends on solid power only, but also the soft power, which often represents the decisive factor, and happens off an open or closed civilization.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa talked about the descriptions of flexible and rigid civilizations and reviewed many examples, one of which is the Russian model. The openness of the Russian model has led to considers the houses of worship as part of the national cultural heritage and then supported by the government.

While some secular regimes are drowning in the



One of the students asked during the lecture

separation of spirit and matter, and the lack of appreciation for the religious side and even rejecting it out from the concept of formal existence. It reached a matter that some religions are recognized and some are ignored. This duplication does not serve national harmony and complicate the integration plans. Therefore, we see the informal and inefficient performance of some integration ministries.

The lecture addressed the religious and national component and its civilizational participation. Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said that positive national integration contributes to the power of civilization,

provided that all components are treated fairly, including minorities, are treated as a part of the national culture regardless of their religion and ethnicity.

After the lecture, there were an open dialogue between the Secretary General of the Muslim World League and the audience. Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa answered questions about civilized communication, and corrected some concepts about Islam. Including the call for Muslims to unite their political views, their attitude towards others and Islam view of Western culture.

The difference between understanding and convic-

tion and the characteristics of Islamic civilization, which understood the difference and global diversity, and considered that some of it to be richness. He also explained in a talk with the faculty of Orientalism college the concept of unity in diversity, the legal concept, and in the Islamic Sharia. To achieve the goal of the text, which is the legal objectives and the Sharia objectives.

It should be mentioned that Saint Petersburg University is the oldest in Russia. It was established in the early 18th century by Caesar Peter the Great. Today, it has seven million reference books, more than six thousand teachers, more than thirty thousand students, more than twenty-four colleges and three research centers, and gained a global leadership.

The Rector of Saint Petersburg is appointed on an exceptional basis by the Russian President. The university affiliated directly to the Prime Minister, not to the Ministry of Education. The top leaders and politicians in Russia's modern history have graduated from the university, including Russian leader Vladimir Lenin, current President Vladimir Putin and a large number of lawmakers and Nobel laureates.



Governor of Saint Petersburg receives Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa

Saint Petersburg - MWL

His Excellency, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa has met Mr. Alexander Beglov, the Governor of Saint Petersburg, which is the Cultural capital of Russia.



The meeting of Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa with the Director of the University of St. Petersburg and the deans of a number of colleges

During the meeting, Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa and Governor Beglov discussed issues of common interests in many fields. They also discussed areas of cooperation and means of enhancing the work to consolidate the concepts of tolerance, coexistence and peace.

Governor Beglov praised the lecture by Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa at Saint Petersburg University and the important topics he talked about in the lecture. He also praised the great efforts by the Muslim World League saying: “We are aware of your great efforts and work, and we praised your global role in serving harmony and human peace”.

Governor Beglov also expressed his hope to intensify efforts of cooperation, and holding more conferences and activities of the Muslim World League in Russia in coordination with the relevant authori-

ties.

The Governor also praised the importance of the Muslim World League presence in the Cultural capital of Russia, Saint Petersburg, to activate more inter-related meetings with common goals.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa thanked Governor Beglov for his hospitality, stressing that the experience of the Russian Federation in harmony between different religious and ethnic diversity of 192 national, is a leading model that deserves praise and benefit from it globally.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also pointed out the importance of communication and dialogue to support cooperation in all areas aimed at promoting national integration programs of various kinds, stressing that successful experiences should be an inspiration to all.



President of Tatarstan received the Secretary-General

President of the Republic of Tatarstan receives Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa

Kazan - MWL

The President of the Republic of Tatarstan, Rustam Minnikhanov, has received the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa at the Kazan Kremlin in Kazan city, the capital of Tatarstan.



Leaders in the city meet the delegation of the MWL

The President of Tatarstan welcomed Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa's visit to the Republic of Tatarstan, and praised the international efforts of the Muslim World League in spreading the true concepts of Islam and clarifying its tolerant principles, which call for harmony, peace and tolerance. He also commended the current positive efforts of the Muslim World League in the Russian Federation, which gained an exceptional governmental attention at the highest levels.

The meeting also discussed a number of issues of mutual interest, concerning the presence of the Muslim World League in the Republic of Tatarstan.

Following the meeting, President Minikhanov witnessed the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Muslim World League, represented by its Secretary General, and the Central Religious Organi-

zation - the religious administration of the Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan, represented by the Grand Mufti of Tatarstan, Kamil Samee Allah Iskandar.

This agreement builds on the visions, orientations and efforts of the Muslim World League as a global organization concerned with clarifying the truth of Islam and its tolerant principles. In addition to building cultural bridges between different religious and ethnic diversity around the world. With the aim of promoting harmony among all basing on the principle of faith in Allah's will in diversity, variety and multiplicity. In addition to the role of the religious administration of the Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan, as a religious institution educating Muslims there of the provisions of their religion and the dissemination of the culture of Islam and promote the spirit of tolerance and unity



Dr. Al-Issa signed an agreement with the religious administration of the Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan in the presence and care of President Minikhanov

among Muslims and others in their one national state (Russian Federation).

The agreement included the exchange of experiences and the achievement of common

goals based on convergence of visions and ideas towards moderate religious and intellectual issues aimed at promoting the values of love, openness and harmony among all.



Side of the meeting

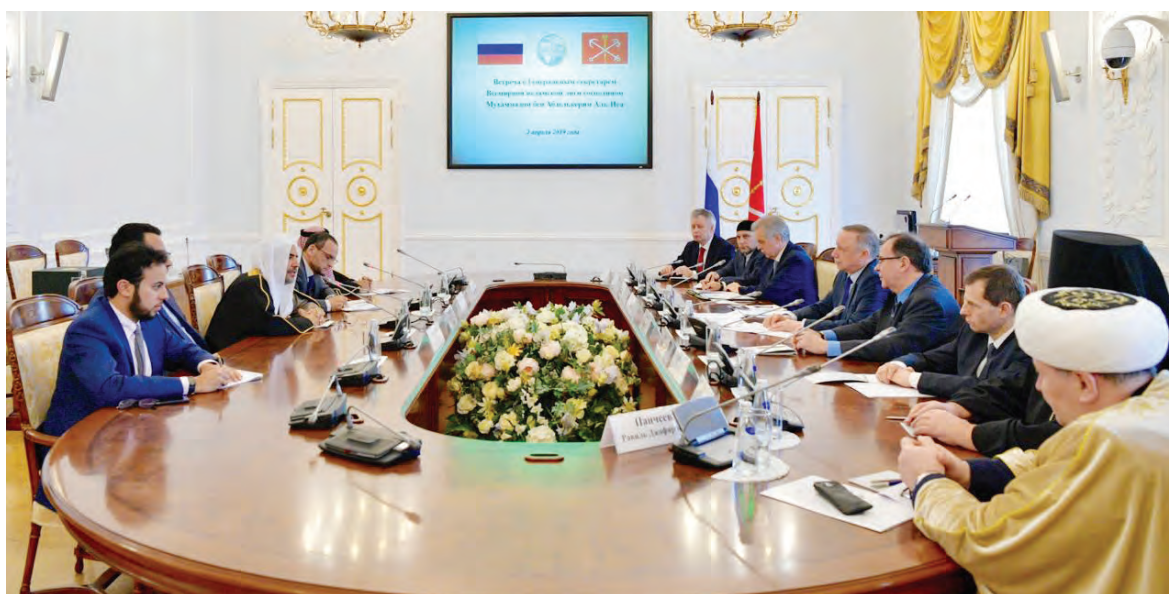


The agreement also included cooperation and coordination in the defining Islam and its principles, spreading moderation and mildness, combating extremism and Islamophobia and stating how Islam oppose extremist

movements and deviant trends. It included also cooperation and coordination in teaching, memorizing and publishing Qur'an, and organizing competitions for memorizing and reciting Qur'an and Sunnah.

The two parties agreed to implement joint activities, in which subjects, obligations of each party and appointment dates of shall be agreed upon. It will include conferences, seminars, lectures, programs, and panel discussions aimed at discussing issues of mutual interest. As well as agreeing to exchange invitations and visits to participate in the activities organized by each party.

The agreement included the preparation of studies and researches regarding to areas of joint work between the two parties with translating and publishing. It also included exchanging of information, experience and publications, organizing meetings with academics, thinkers and researchers from other cultures and cooperation to correct the image of Islam and to highlight its universal human values.



Leaders in the city meet the delegation of the MWL



'10 percent' of similarities enough for world peace, says MWL chief

Kazan - MWL

Tatarstan: People need to cooperate on the 10 percent of things they have in common to achieve world peace, the Saudi Press Agency quoted the head of the Muslim World League (MWL).

Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, was giving a lecture in the southwestern Russia city of Kazan.

He said cultural communication was important and so were conversations about religious and national diversity, especially in countries where there were different faiths and ethnicities.



“Humankind has no other option to achieve harmony and peace but to fully understand the inevitability of differences and diversity, and then cooperate through similarities, of which 10 percent is enough — we believe — to achieve world peace inside countries and between them.”

He was at Kazan Federal University, in the Republic of Tatarstan, and his audience included faculty members and students.

The university employs 11,000 people, 4,000 of whom are academics. It has 47,000 students and one-third of them are from Muslim countries.

The university has a cen-

ter for Islamic studies, which seeks to promote Islamic culture and train scholars. The center also has 13,000 manuscripts, 5,000 of which are in Arabic.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said the MWL endeavored to promote the true version of Islam

and counter extremist ideologies falsely attributed to Islam, as well as other forms of extremism, especially the concepts of the extreme right in Western countries.

“The MWL also aims to extend bridges of communication and dialogue to





followers of other religions and cultures, to partner with them and provide initiatives that serve common goals, in addition to extending bridges of support to everyone, regardless of religion, race or color. Even though Muslims are proud of their religious affiliation, they know that this does not conflict with their national identity.

“In fact, Muslims know that this national affiliation, which seeks good for all, is a key element for achieving harmony between their religious and national identities and that extremist ideas contradict these just concepts.”

Last week, he and the grand mufti of Tatarstan signed an agreement to cooperate in the dissemination of moderate Islam and its principles of tolerance and coexistence.

Last month, Moscow and the Muslim World League moved to develop closer ties, following a meeting between Dr. Sheikh Al-

Issa and Russia's Parliament Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin.

Dr. Sheikh Al-Issa signed a cooperation agreement between the MWL and Moscow's Fund for Islamic Culture, Science and Education. The agreement focused on tackling extremism and promoting tolerance.

It also addressed the interaction between Muslims and Islamic organizations in Russia and Muslim-majority countries.



MWL Secretary General cooperation on anti-terror campaign with EU coordinator



Delegation of the European Union during the meeting

RIYADH - MWL

The Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (MWL), Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, held talks with the EU's counter-terrorism coordinator, Gilles de Kerchove, in Riyadh.

The two sides discussed cooperation mechanisms to identify and tackle the phenomenon of extremism both in the EU and the Arab world, and de Kerchove praised the efforts of the MWL to spread its message of

tolerance, coexistence and peace in troubled regions affected by religious violence.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa has personal experience in the field, having carried out many missions to combat extremist ideology personally since becoming MWL Secretary-General in 2016.

The Muslim World League itself, meanwhile, is responsible for having developed multiple programs aimed at tackling religious extremism across the globe.



Muslim World League condemns the shootings on two mosques in New Zealand

Makkah - MWL

The Muslim World League expressed its deepest condolences and strong condemnation of the terrorist operation that left scores dead and wounded dozens in two mosques in New Zealand. This terrorist attack clearly reflected one of the most horrendous images of hatred and malice in a world that is in a dire need to uniting around values of love, harmony and peace.

The statement issued by the Secretary General of the Muslim World League and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the World Organization of Muslim Scholars Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa reiterated that this barbaric act is added

to Daesh and Al-Qaeda's bloody practices. The Muslim World League always stresses the importance of addressing extremism and enacting replace with that prevent all forms of incitement and hatred, including methods of religious and ethnic contempt.

The statement warned that such terrorist acts stir similar practices in the light of the lack of legislations and negligence in the education of generations away from values of humanity and morals, stressing that freedoms should be framed with legislative and ethical standards that prevent committing such acts that violate all values of tolerance and peace.

The Secretary General of the Muslim

World League reiterated his confidence in the New Zealand government to bring those involved in this crime to justice as terrorists and prosecute any terrorist organization they follow. He also stressed the importance of lay-

ing down all the necessary safeguards with the aim of preventing the repetition of these terrorist acts. He also asked Allah's forgiveness for victims and wished speedy recovery for the injured.

Al-Issa receives Ambassador of New Zealand



Riyadh - MWL

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa received the Ambassador of New Zealand to Saudi Arabia, Mr. James Monroe, who

confirmed that the shootings of the two mosques would not affect the national cohesion in New Zealand. He also highlighted the statement issued by the Muslim World League and welcomed MWL's visiting delegation to New Zealand.



The world condemns New Zealand mosque attacks

By Qais Bajaeifir

On Friday, 15th March a white supremacist terrorist opened fire at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 50 people, including a three-year-old child, and seriously injuring scores of the faithful – a massacre that he broadcast live on Facebook.

Regardless of the motives behind this senseless and atrocious violence, be it hatred of non-white immigrants or Islamophobia, the cold-blooded terrorist attack has been condemned by global religious, civil and political organizations as well as leaders.



Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz described the terrorist attack as a horrific massacre, reiterating the International Community's responsibility to counter hatred and terrorism, which all religions reject and which are against the values of coexistence and tolerance.

The Muslim World League Secretary General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa expressed his deep grief and condolences for the sad loss of innocent people. In a statement, he said, "Terrorist attacks against people of faith are one of the most inhumane and evil forms of incitement and hatred. The barbarity, hatred and ill-will of this extremist terrorist act parallels the violent acts of Al-Qaeda and Daesh." He called upon governments and religious organizations all over the world to join forces in the face of the scourge extremism and Islamophobia.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa traveled specifically to New Zealand to express his sincerest sympathy in person to the Muslim community and stand by the families of the victims in this dark hour.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary General Dr. Yousef A. Al-Othaimeen conveyed also his heartfelt con-

dolences to the victims' families, describing the attacks as "barbaric acts of a right-wing terrorist."

He said, "Intolerance on the basis of ideology and racism have emerged as a major threat to global peace and security in our world today," noting that hatred and intolerance against Islam have hit alarming rates with growing frequency over the past few years. He thanked the Government of New Zealand for embracing the Muslim community.

The New York-based World Council of Religious Leaders, condemned in the strongest possible terms the senseless and horrific attacks and needless killing of innocent people who were performing peacefully their religious practices.

The council issued a statement describing the attack as "a crime against people of faith and people of decency and tolerance everywhere in the world." The statement stressed that places of worship are a red line that should not be crossed because people of all faiths should be able to practice their faith in a completely safe environment.

The New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Arden said there is no place in New Zealand society for anyone who holds such extremist



ideology. She pointed out, “Many of those directly affected by this shooting may be migrants to New Zealand, they may even be refugees here. They have chosen to make New Zealand their home. It is their home. They are us. The person who has perpetrated this violence against us is not. They have no place in New Zealand.”

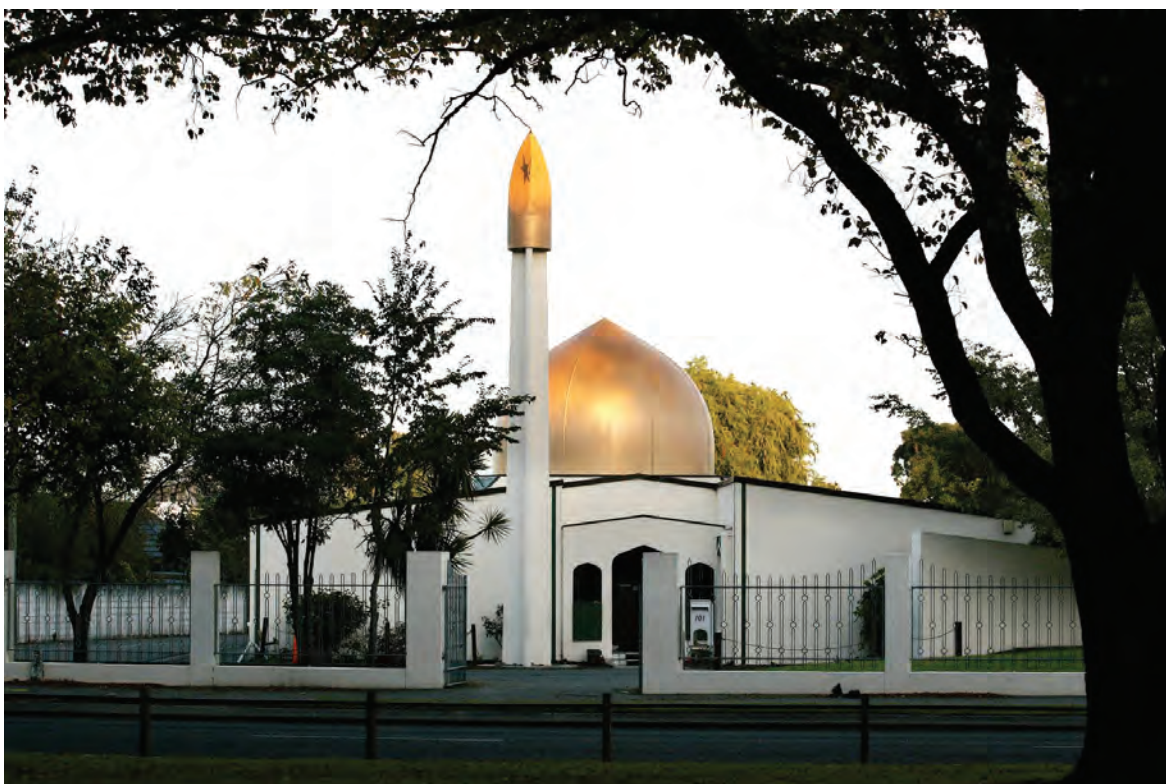
The United Nations Security Council held on the same day of the twin attacks a moment of silence for the victims while the Eiffel Tower went dark in tribute to victims gunned down in Christchurch.

Australian cartoonist Pat Campbell drew a beautiful illustration as a tribute to the victims of New Zealand attacks. His artwork showcased a New Zealand’s silver fern, a specie of a tree native to New Zealand, with the silhouettes of 50 Muslims praying. The number represented the death toll.

On March, 22th, the Grand Mosque of

Makkah, the Prophet’s Mosque in Madinah and Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa of Palestine performed the absentee funeral prayer for the victims of New Zealand attacks. Also, the adhan (call to prayer) rang out across New Zealand on Friday afternoon. All people in New Zealand observed two minutes of silence while the adhan played. The whole nation fell silent as when 26 victims of the Christchurch terrorist attack were buried, including a three-year-old child.

On this day, Non-Muslim New Zealand women donned headscarves to show support and solidarity for the Muslim community while some women posted selfies of themselves wearing headscarves on Twitter with the hashtags #HeadscarfForHarmony and #ScarvesForSolidarity. The newspapers in Christchurch ran the Arabic greeting ‘salam’ or ‘peace’ on their front pages and explained the rituals surrounding praying and funerals.



Terrorism has no religion

Dr. Ali Al-Ghamdi

The way in which New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern dealt with the terrorist attack in which Muslims were killed by a racist Australian national demonstrated an admirable sense of responsibility by a world leader. The mosque shootings killed 50 people and injured a similar number of worshippers, some of them in critical condition, while they were praying in two mosques in the city of Christchurch in New Zealand.



After the cowardly terrorist attack, Ardern appeared on television and addressed the New Zealand people, saying that a terrorist act had been perpetrated in their country, which had not been used to such acts. While condemning this terrorist act, her government pledged to protect mosques and change the laws that allowed anyone to carry arms, as a precautionary measure to prevent any similar incident in future.

She promptly labeled the worst peacetime mass killing in New Zealand as terrorism, and set about reassuring a nation that had been largely unscathed by violence and fear. Ardern said the terrorist streamed a live video of the massacre and released a statement before posting

it. “He sought many things from his act of terror but one was notoriety, that is why you will never hear me mention his name,” she said of the gunman. “He is a terrorist. He is a criminal. He is an extremist. But he will, when I speak, be nameless,” she said while urging everyone else to follow suit.

The prime minister not only condemned the horrific attack, but also visited the families of the victims in their homes to offer them condolences and share with them the grief of all New Zealanders. During these visits she appeared to be most affected by the horrific act, embraced the bereaved family members of the victims and reassured them that the tragedy was not theirs only but

also that of her and the entire people of New Zealand. Ardern cited the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying that “the believers, in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy, are just like one body.” “When any part of the body suffers, the whole body feels pain,” she said quoting the Saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Similarly, she emphasized that “New Zealand mourns with you. We are one.”

In a sign of tolerance, she had Parliament begin its session, after the massacre, with the recitation of a few verses from the Holy Qur’an. This signified a mark of sympathy and solidarity with Muslims in general and the families of the victims in particular. In an explicit manifestation



of sympathy and compassion, the Muslim population of Christchurch was joined, in their Friday prayers in the next week succeeding the attack, by thousands of other New Zealanders, including men and women, who stood behind the rows of worshippers. They listened as the call to prayer rang out across Hagley Park, opposite Al Noor Mosque, which was one of the worst scenes of the attack, and across the country on national television and radio broadcasts. Many women, including Prime Minister Ardern donned headscarves in solidarity with the Muslim community.

The imam at the Al Noor Mosque delivered an important speech in which he praised the position of the government and the people of New Zealand with regard to the painful incident and asserted that the terrorist, who was driven by racism and hatred that inhabited his

sick mind, came from Australia to perpetrate his crime in this peaceful country that had not known such crimes.

The prime minister, in her solidarity with the Muslim community gave assurances and promised to take all necessary measures to ensure a safe environment for Muslims to carry out their religious duties and promised to reform gun laws to make access to dangerous weapons difficult. The world recognized her lofty position and tolerant and sympathetic approach toward the Muslim community in New Zealand, something that has not happened anywhere else in the world.

Some people on social media praised the actions of this leader and the solidarity of her people with the victims. All of this had an electrifying impact in mitigating the gravity of the vicious crime. There have also been demands from some corners for

the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to honor the New Zealand prime minister, while some others have called for her to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

An incident occurred in Australia after the Christchurch terror attack. After blaming Muslim immigrants for the deadly shooting by a white supremacist at the two New Zealand mosques, an Australian senator had an egg cracked over his head by a teenager. Fraser Anning, an independent lawmaker, said that the real cause of the bloodshed in New Zealand mosques was the immigration program, which allowed Muslims to migrate to New Zealand in the first place. He was speaking to reporters in Melbourne when the camera caught a teenager standing behind him and cracking a raw egg on his head. The lawmaker punched the teenager and a scuffle broke out and Anning's security guards caught the boy in a chokehold while calling for the police. This teenager may face trial in court for his reaction to the racist comments of the lawmaker.

Dr. Ali Al-Ghamdi is a former Saudi diplomat who specializes in Southeast Asian affairs. He can be reached at algham@hotmail.com



King Salman (middle) in a group photo with winners of KFIP for 1440H(2019)

King Salman honors winners of King Faisal Prize

Saeed Al-Khotani – Riyadh

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, honored winners of King Faisal Prize (KFP) for the year 1440H (2019). He presented them with their prizes in a grand celebration that took place at Prince Sultan Grand Hall in Al-Faisaliah Hotel here on Sunday night Rajab 17th, 1440H (March 24, 2019). On the arrival at celebration venue, the King was received by Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, the Advisor to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Governor of Makkah Region, and Chairman of Board of Trustees of both King Faisal Foundation (KFF) and KFP, Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Chairman Board of Trustees of King Faisal Center for Islamic Studies at KKF, and other KFF and KFP board members.

In addition to KFF and KFP board members, a large high ranking audience attended the celebration. It included princes, senior government and private sector officials, dignitaries, academics, scientists, intellectuals, and journalist.

The celebration was inaugurated by a recitation from the Holy Qur'an, followed by a short warm welcome address by Prince Khalid Al Faisal in which he highly lauded King Salman, and requested the audience to warmly welcome him in appreciation of his generous patronizing of the event.

Then, Dr. Abdulaziz Al Subayyel, the Secretary General of KFP announced the names of the winners and the justifications of granting them their prizes. After, a documentary film on the history of the 41-year-old prize was played, followed by presentations of video clips in which glimpses were offered on the lives of the winners and their professional advancements.

Finally, each of the winners delivered his prize acceptance statement, after which, he received his prize from King Salman. All the winners expressed in their statements, their high gratitude and thanks for being honored by the King and KFP with the prestigious prize.

King Salman (middle) in a group photo with winners of KFP for 1440H (2019). On his right are Professors Babakr, Hegazi, Olsen, and Teitelbaum. And on his left are Professors Wudghiri, Fréchet, Bard, and Dr. Al Subayyel, the Secretary General of KFP.

King Faisal Prize has five prize categories. They are: Service to Islam, Islamic Studies, Arabic language and Literature, Science, and Medicine. This year, the prize was only given in four of these five categories: Service to Islam, Arabic language, science, and medicine. The prize for Islamic Stud-

ies, Studies on the Objectives of Islamic Law, was withheld because submitted works for the prize did not meet the criteria for winning it, said Dr. Al Subayyel.

The 7 prize winners

The prizes in the four categories went this year 1440H (2019) to seven winners, one organization, and six individuals as follows:

Firstly, King Faisal Prize in Service to Islam category went to one winner, the Sudan based International University of Africa (IUA). The university was granted the prize in recognition of its diverse contributions in serving Islam and Arabic language, especially in Africa.

These contributions include teaching Islam and Arabic language to thousands of students in different parts of the world, in particular in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, and converting the scripts of African languages into the Arabic alphabet.

Also, they include serving community by establishing projects like the Institute for the Studies of Disasters Prevention and Refugees Handling, and founding the largest Islamic library in African languages.

On behalf of the university, its rector, Professor Kamal Mohammed Obeid Babakr, received its prize from King Salman. Professor Babakr said in his prize acceptance statement that IUA has graduated over 35 thousand students, since its foundation, many of whom are holding senior positions in their home countries.

The university was established in Khartoum, capital of Sudan, in 1966 with the aim of promoting Islam and its noble teaching, Arabic language, and preserving Arabic and Islamic heritage in Africa.

Began with one college, the Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Studies, the University



King Salman presents Professor Babakr IUA prize

has expanded to 22 colleges at present, becoming the largest Islamic higher education institution in sub-Saharan Africa region, and one of the largest Islamic universities in the world, with its out of Sudan 15 colleges located in Africa, China and Turkey.

Currently, the University accommodates around 15 thousand students from all over the world, providing them with accommodation, and allocating 50% of its seats to Africans, 25% to Asians and Europeans, and 25% to Sudanese.

Secondly, King Faisal Prize in Arabic language and literature category, on the topic of Arabic language and Contemporary Challenges, went jointly to two winners, Professor Abdul'aali Mohammed Wudghiri, a Moroccan national, and Professor Mahmoud Fahmy Hegazi, an Egyptian national.

Professor Wudghiri is currently faculty

member at College of Literature and Human Sciences, University of Mohammed V, in Rabat, Capital of Morocco. He was granted the prize in recognition of his originality and creativity in many of his works, his efforts to face the calls to substitute Arabic language with local dialects and foreign languages, and his educational contributions in linguistics at academic institutions since the emergence of modern Arabic linguistic studies.

Wudghiri was born in 1944 in Fez, Morocco. He received his master and doctorate in linguistics. He taught linguistics at both University of Mohammed bin Abdullah in Fez, and Mohammed VI in Rabat, Morocco.

He was appointed a rector of the Islamic University of Niger affiliate of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and currently he is a member of the University board of trustees. Also, he is the Secretary General of



King Salman presents Professor Allen Joseph Bard prize

Moroccan Linguistic Union which he was a founding member. In recognition of his scientific contributions, he was awarded the Moroccan Book Award three times in the years 1977, 1989, and 2014.

Professor Hegazi is currently a faculty member at Arabic Language and Literature Department at Cairo University in Cairo. He was granted the prize in recognition of his efforts to defend Arabic language, pioneering in its linguistics studies and analysis of contemporary challenges facing it, and spreading Arabic language through original works, and establishing institutes and academies for teaching it.

Hegazi was born in Mansora, Egypt, in 1940. He obtained his license and master degrees from the Department of Arabic language and Literature, Cairo University and appointed as a lecturer at the Department.

Parallel to his university studies, he excelled in learning Dutch at Al-Alsun (languages) School of the ministry of higher education, to become later the first Egyptian to teach Dutch in Egyptian public schools. Afterwards, he was sent on a scholarship to University of Munich, Germany for doctorate in linguistics

Hegazi was appointed as president of the Egyptian University in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and served as professor and head of Linguistics at Arabic Language and Literature Department and Director of Arabic Language Center at Cairo University. Also, he headed Arabic language centers at Lion, Budapest and Amsterdam universities.

Thirdly, King Faisal Prize in Medicine Category, on the topic of Bone Biology and Osteoporosis, also went jointly to two winners, Professor Bjorn Reino Olsen, and Pro-



King Salman presents Professor Jean M.J. Fréchet prize

fessor Steven L. Teitelbaum, both are American nationals.

Professor Bjorn Reino Olsen is a faculty member at Harvard University. He was granted the prize in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field of bone biology, his key genetic discoveries which have enhanced the understanding of bone development, and the basis of inherited skeletal disorders, including osteoporosis syndromes.

Professor Bjorn Reino Olsen

Olsen was born in Skien, Norway, in 1940. He received his medical and doctorate from University of Oslo in 1967, where he became a faculty member at the Anatomical institute and conducted molecular studies on the structure of collagen.

In 1971, he went to the United States to work with Professor Darwin Prockop, and one year later he joined the Department of Biochemistry, at Rutgers Medical School, now UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, where he was promoted to the rank of professor in 1976.

In 1985 Olsen appointed the Hersey professor of anatomy and cellular biology at Harvard Medical School; now Hersey professor of cell biology. Since 1996 he became senior member of the staff at the Forsyth Institute and professor of developmental biology at Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM), where he was dean for research between 2005-2017.

The work of Olsen on the genetics of vascular syn-

dromes has led to the identification of mutations governing pyrophosphate transport (ANK) and vascular endothelial growth factor receptor 2.

This finding has led to unraveling of complex developmental and disease mechanisms at the intersection between skeletal and vascular biology, as well as highlighting the role of vascular endothelial growth factor in the differentiation that mesenchymal stem cells to osteoblasts and bone marrow adipocytes

Olsen has published over 400 papers and has worked as editor-in-chief of Matrix Biology, and founder and editor-in-chief of BioMed Central's Journal of Negative Results in Biomedicine. Also, he has held leadership positions in several professional organizations, including the International Society for Matrix Biology.

Professor Steven L. Teitelbaum is a faculty member of Washington University in Saint Louis. He was granted the prize for his contribution in the area of bone biology which underpinned advances in the understanding and management of bone diseases particularly osteoporosis, his pioneering scientific work in elucidating the

function and regulation of the bone resorbing cell, the osteoclast.

Professor Steven L. Teitelbaum

Born in New York City in 1938, Teitelbaum obtained BA from Columbia College in New York and MD from Washington University at St. Louis where he rose through academic ranks to become Wilma and Roswell Messing Professor of Pathology, Immunology and Medicine.

Teitelbaum scientific studies included confirming the hematopoietic lineage of the osteoclast and the mechanisms by which the cell re-sorbs bone, which contributed to development of anti-osteoporosis drugs and understanding the importance of clinically arresting osteoclast function as opposed to formation.

He has published over 340 papers and has become a member of the editorial boards of several journals, including *Cell Metabolism* and *Experimental Medicine*. He held leadership positions in several professional organizations, including the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research.

Fourthly, King Faisal Prize in Science Category, in chemistry, also went jointly



King Salman presents Professor Steven L. Teitelbaum prize

to two winners, Professor Allen Joseph Bard and Professor Jean M.J. Fréchet, both are American nationals.

Professor Allen Joseph Bard is a faculty member at Texas University. He was granted the prize in recognition of his groundbreaking development of electro-generated chem.,-luminescence methods, currently employed as bio-analytical tools, realization of scanning electro-chemical microscopy-enabling single molecule-detection in liquids, and lifelong impact on the larger scientific community.

Professor Allen Joseph Bard

Bard was born in New

York, U.S., on December 18, 1933. He received his B.Sc. in Chemistry from City College of New York, and M.A. and Ph.D. in Chemistry also from Harvard University, respectively. He joined the University of Texas as an instructor in 1958 and rose through the academic ranks to Professor of Chemistry in 1967.

He has held many endowed positions including the Sherman Mills Fairchild Scholar at California Institute of Technology, Woodward Visiting Professor at Harvard University. Also, he has held leadership positions in several professional organizations, including the National Academy of Sciences and



King Salman presents Professor Bjorn Reino Olsen prize

American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Bard was the Hackerman-Welch Regents Chair in Chemistry, since 1985, and the Director of the Center for Electrochemistry at the University of Texas, since 2006, and published over 1000 papers, 8 books, and got more than 29 patents.

And, Professor Jean M.J. Fréchet is faculty member at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia. He was granted the prize in recognition of his pioneering work and seminal contributions in the areas of convergent synthesis of dendrimers and their applications, chemically amplified photoresists and organic photovoltaics.

Professor Jean M.J. Fréchet

Fréchet was born in Burgundy, France, in 1944. He obtained a B.Sc., in Chemical Engineering from Institut de Chimie et Physique Industrielles, Lyon, France, MS, and

Ph.D. in Chemistry from Syracuse University, USA.

Then, he joined the University of Ottawa in Canada from 1973 to 1987 where he became Professor of Chemistry in 1982. When he joined the University of California at Berkeley in 1996, he held several academic positions, including Scientific Director of the Molecular Foundry of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and in 2011 he was named Professor Emeritus of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering.

Since 2010, Fréchet joined KAUST where he is a faculty member and Senior Vice President for Research, Innovation, & Economic Development. He has published over 880 papers and holds over 100 patents.

41 years of contribution

King Faisal Prize (KFP) continued its contribution for the past 41 years, since it was granted for the first time in 1979 after it was established in 1977 by King Faisal

Foundation (KFF), offering every year, its prizes without interruption, to distinguished scholars and scientists, and organizations, from all over the world.

The prize has been set up to achieve the following objectives:

- Ingraining Islamic values and ideals in the society and highlighting them to the world.
- Serving Islam and Muslims culturally, intellectually and practically.
- Benefiting Muslims in their present and future, and inspiring them to develop and participate in all aspects of civilization.
- Contributing to the development of mankind and enriching human knowledge.

KFF, a philanthropic organization, was founded in 1976 in Riyadh, the Capital of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by the sons and daughters of the late King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud (the 3rd Saudi King), as a tribute to their beloved father who was a strong advocate and a prominent leader for Islamic solidarity.

The big portfolio of investment owned by KFF has made it able to retain its financial autonomy and maintain its ability to support all its activities. Since its establishment up till 2015, KFF has spent over SR 1.9 billion on these activities including the KFP, key programs, philanthropic projects, educational scholarships and cultural events.

King Faisal Prize was granted for the first time in 1979 in three categories: Serving Islam, Islamic studies and Arabic language and literature. Two additional categories were introduced in 1981: Medicine and science.

The first medicine prize was awarded in 1982 and in science two years later in 1984. Since then the prize continued its con-

tribution to honor distinguished and prominent scholars, scientists and organizations in its five categories until the number of winners reached in to 265 in 2019 belong to 43 nationalities.

The selection of the winners for KFIP is made by a high profile selection committee composed of prominent scholars and scientists who are authorities in the prize topics of the year to which nominations sought.

As granting the prize has been always based on merit alone, it was not surprising that many of KFIP laureates went on to receive other prestigious prizes.

Of these laureates 18 received Nobel Prizes, 13 received Gairdner Foundation International Awards, 11 received American National Medals of Science, 9 received Lasker Basic Medical Research Award, 8 received British Royal Medals, and 5 received Fields Medals in Mathematics.

In a survey by the Muslim World League Journal to find out the ranking of top KFP country winners since the foundation of the prize 41 years ago, revealed the following:

- In the category of Service to Islam, Saudi Arabia came first, Egypt came second, and Malaysia came third.
- In the category of Islamic Studies, Egypt and Saudi Arabia came both first, Iraq came second, and Jordan, Sudan, Morocco, Syria-, Turkey, came all third.
- In the category of Arabic Language and Literature, Egypt came first, Morocco came second, and Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, came all third.
- In the category of Medicine, USA came first, Britain came second, and Canada came third.
- At last in the category of Science, USA came first, Britain came second, and Germany came third.

Muslims in Rwanda on the cusp of entering a new era

AFTAB HUSAIN KOLA

Islam arrived in Rwanda in the beginning of the 20th century, brought by traders braving the seasonal monsoon winds south from the Arabian Peninsula. Today, Rwanda's Muslims have more or less integrated with the majority non-Muslim community and attempting to reap the shares of development, writes AFTAB HUSAIN KOLA



One of Africa's most densely populated country, land-locked Rwanda has a population of 11.6 million of whom approximately 10% are Muslim. The big news is that the local people in Rwanda are getting attracted to Islam and which is why the growth of people being converted to Islam is ever on the rise. The main reason is attributed to the role of Muslims who refused to participate in the 1994 Rwandan genocide between two non-Muslim groups, which resulted in the murders of more than 800,000 people in 100 days, and also helped the victims by providing them succor in times of riots. So the long marginalized tiny minority is now hugged and justifiably so.

Hutu-Tutsi clash

For Rwanda, 1994 proved to be the worst year in its history. The streets were spilled with blood everywhere as the power-hungry military of the old Hutu-led regime perpetrated a campaign of genocide against the Tutsi minority in Rwanda, which ended only when the Tutsi-dominated Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) came to power. Both Hutu and Tutsi are non-Muslim communities in Rwanda. In this conflict, the Muslims played a very positive role of seeking peace and helping restore order. For the victims of this violence any Muslim neighborhood was the safest place. This attitude of the Muslims won them large support from Tutsi community and to some extent from Hutu people. After this noble gesture, the Muslims were looked upon with respect. This episode marked a watershed in the history of Rwanda as Muslims were welcomed, recognized and respected. During the Rwandan genocide between the Hutus and the Tutsis in 1994, Islam was not the principal target. A Hutu could kill a Tutsi or a Tutsi could kill a Hutu without knowing his reli-

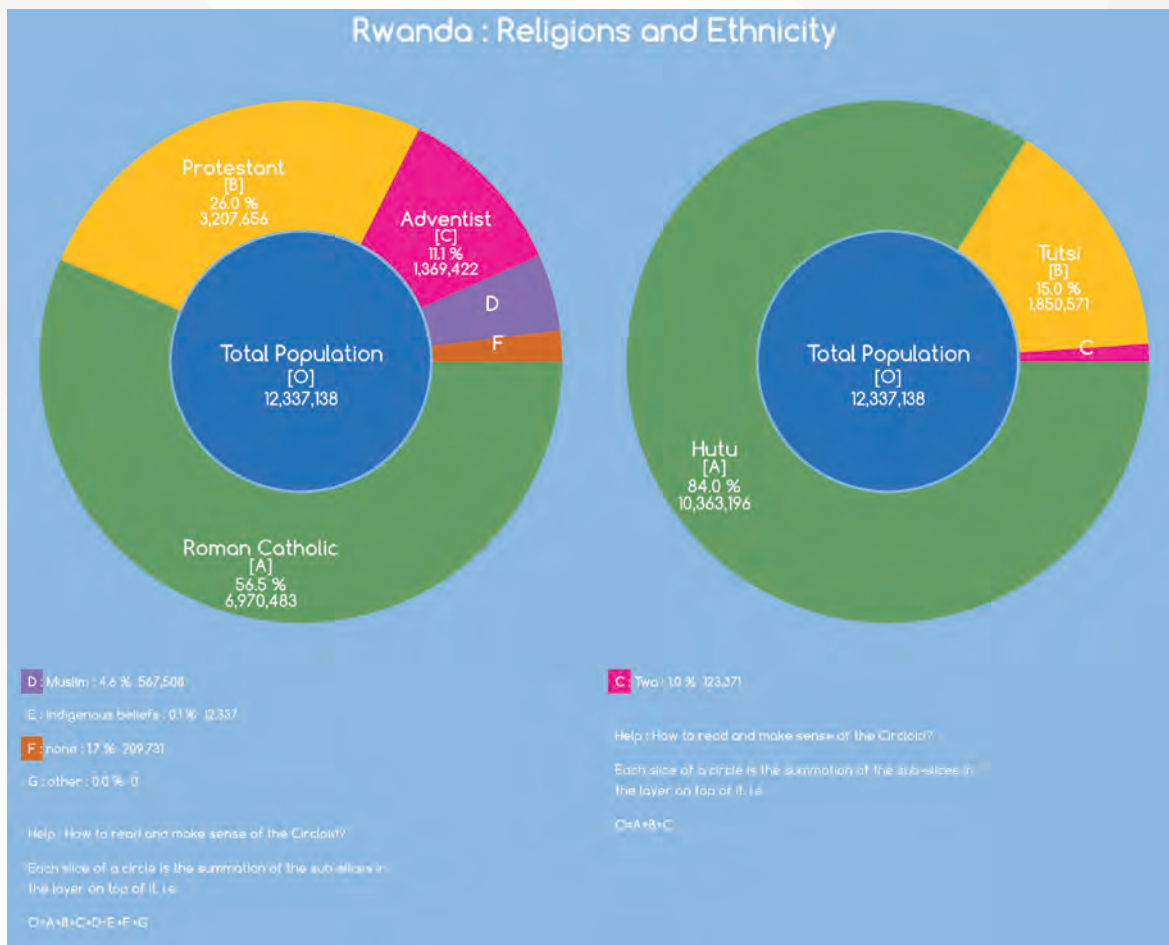
gion. Today, in what is still a predominantly Catholic country, Islam is the fastest growing religion. Majority of Rwanda's Muslims live packed together in the Biryogo neighborhood of Kigali. Kigali was in the global news in 2016 known as Kigali deal on curbing the emissions of HFCs (hydrofluorocarbons). Founded in 1907 by German administrator and explorer Richard Kandt, Kigali served as a home for civil servants and Muslim traders. Its multi-cultural status makes the city lively.

New dawn for Muslims

As a result, Rwanda's Muslim community now boasts so many converts that it had to embark on a crash campaign to build new mosques to accommodate all of the faithful. About 500 mosques are now scattered throughout Rwanda, doubling the number that existed a decade ago. More people, including a large chunk of women, are embarking on Hajj than before.

Villagers wearing caps and scarves equipped with copies of Noble Qur'an in their hands for a weekly discourse on Islamic is now a familiar sight in Muslim-dominated villages. There are qiraat (Noble Qur'an recitation) competitions held to encourage students to become Huffaz (memorizers of the Qur'an). It may be recalled that a 9-year old Rwandan Muslim boy, Abdallah Cyusa, was among the World's top 40 competitors, and the only child, during the Ramadan Qur'an recitation contest held in Dubai some years ago. New schools and madrasas have sprung up.

The Zaidi ibn Sabiti Qur'anic school in Kigali's Bilyogo district where more than 40 girls and boys aged between five and 17 — selected for their knowledge of the Qur'an — study for free. The main platform for the Muslims is the Rwanda Muslim Community



(RMC) based in Kigali as it serves as a center for Rwanda Muslims. Since the inception of the Rwanda Muslims Community in 1964, the organization until now is the apex body representing the Muslims in Rwanda. Since then, the history of Muslims in Rwanda classifies itself in two periods namely the pre-liberation and post liberation periods.

The Rwanda Muslims Community focuses on building unity among believers and Rwandans in general, curb and fight extremist ideologies, building sustainable development projects to benefit the Believers and streamline cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders and partners.

Rwandan Muslims, themselves tolerant of other religious beliefs, are well perceived

by other religions, and, since the coming to power of President Paul Kagame, himself a Protestant, almost 10 years ago, also finds some representation in the administration, though more needs to be done on this front. The government has listed Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha as official holidays.

Rwanda history and political power

Rwanda government website writes, “For centuries, Rwanda existed as a centralized monarchy under a succession of Tutsi kings from one clan, who ruled through cattle chiefs, land chiefs and military chiefs. The king was supreme but the rest of the population, Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa, lived in symbiotic harmony. In 1899, Rwanda be-

came a German colony and, in 1919, the system of indirect rule continued with Rwanda as a mandate territory of the League of Nations, under Belgium. After Kigali fell to RPA (RPF's armed wing) on 4 July 1994, RPF formed a Government of National Unity headed by President Pasteur Bizimungu, bringing parties that did not participate in the genocide together. In 2000, Parliament voted out President Pasteur Bizimungu and RPF appointed then Vice-President and Minister of Defense, Major General Paul Kagame as the President of the Republic to lead the coalition government. In 2003, President Paul Kagame was elected with landslide majority to serve a term of seven years. During those seven years, the country made unprecedented socio-economic and political progress and consolidated peace, stability as well as social cohesion among Rwandans. In 2010, President Paul Kagame was re-elected to serve a second term and on a platform of rapid development for the transformation of the lives of all Rwandans."

Agriculture is the backbone and key component of Rwanda's fast-growing economy while tourism is the largest source of foreign exchange earnings in Rwanda. The country has also put in place a National Industrial Policy which aims at diversifying the economy by increasing the share of industry to the country's GDP, increase exports to 1.5 billion US\$ by 2020 and increase the number of off-farm jobs. Rwanda President Kagame is getting the Muslim support in building the country.

How Islam came to Rwanda

Carried by the sail, Islam first entered East Africa when monsoon winds powered Arab dhows across the Indian ocean to East Africa's Swahili coast. By the 10th century, a

sizable chunk of Persians and Arabs had made their home in coastal settlements, providing the East African terminus of trading networks along the Indian Ocean littoral. It was not just trade that the locals were interested but welcomed the Arabs on having cultural exchanges. So, places like Zanzibar was full of Omani Arabs. Much later, some Omani traders landed in Rwanda around 1908 AD. It is also believed that prior to this some Muslims first arrived in 1894 or 1896. Dealing in clothes, needles, threads, razor blades and other household items the locals needed in their daily life, these Omanis set up trading centers in places like Rwamagana in Rwanda's eastern district, Byumba in northern region and Astrida in – currently Huye – and decided to settle and marry local Rwandan wives generating a new community. Since there were no Muslim women, these traders married local women — very often Tutsi women.

In different pockets of Rwanda, especially in Huye, the extant buildings of these Omani traders bear testimony of their bygone days. Now that they have integrated fully into the Rwanda community. Besides Omani Arabs, there were others who came from neighboring countries — Uganda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc.

In 1913, the first mosque was built in Rwanda. Masjid Al Fat'h is the most popular, largest and one among the oldest mosque of Rwanda, located in suburban area of Nyamirambo (commonly known as Nyamijos) about 7 kilometers southwest of Kigali city center. Also called the 'Green Mosque' because of its green and white minarets, the Masjid Al Fat'h was constructed in 1930s when Arab traders had some say in the area. Very soon, it became an important center for learning Islamic teachings and Noble Qur'an.



IN THE VERY BEGINNING, THE MUSLIMS ALSO ENJOYED CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE AUTHORITIES WHO RULED RWANDA AS WELL AS THE RWANDAN MONARCHY OF THAT TIME

The mosque also houses an Islamic Research Center on a small scale. Along with Gaddafi mosque and other mosques, this mosque also proved to be a safe haven for the non-Muslim victims of 1994 Rwanda genocide.

The Gaddafi mosque, also home to an Islamic Centre, is always filled with Muslims during prayer hours. The late Libyan leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi was a popular figure here and roads, mosques and bakeries were named after him.

Though Christianity is the majority religion in Rwanda, there are certain quarters which are home to a good number of Muslims. Nyamirambo, the oldest part of Kigali, is the Muslim Quarter. It is said that when the Belgian colonial administration took a decision to divide city dwellers according to race in 1935, the area known as “the plateau of Kigali” was reserved for the Belgians, while Arabs and other Asians were allotted the area below the mosque in town.

For a very long time Muslims were in the abyss of educational backwardness and bereft of any economic support from the government, and lived in fear all the time, regarding themselves as second-rate citizens. A Muslim face in public office, in police and military service, or in local government were a rarity. Confronting all odds, and with a solid faith they devised means to survive, acquiring as much informal skills as they could

—in welding, driving, small retail businesses, mechanics, hair dressing, tailoring, and art, a legacy that stands to this day. And today, the situation is changing for the better. Islam’s attaching great stress to family values was endorsed by the non-Muslims. And Muslims’ dealings in businesses were also greatly admired. These aspects coupled with an overall good behavior won some converts. And there was a slight increase in the population of Muslims in Rwanda.

In the very beginning, the Muslims also enjoyed close relationships with the authorities who ruled Rwanda as well as the Rwandan monarchy of that time. Thus, Muslims from a low key, marginalized community suddenly started to be perceived as important. They eventually began to marry into the Rwandan elite, even into the family of the monarchy. This social position did not last for a long time.

It is reported that after World War I when administrative control of Rwanda was taken away from the Germans and handed over to the Belgians, Muslims were started to being marginalized yet again, just like that of the Tutsis. As a result, it was alleged that the Islamic community had to bear the brunt the Belgian rule who were against the Muslims. Around 1925 when Muslim traders were trying to come up in business which the authorities did not like, Muslims faced undue hard-

ships. It was further alleged that basic rights to proper education, ownership of land, and jobs were denied to Muslims. Discrimination was to the extent that the Muslims were even denied the right to move freely around the country, requiring written permission to visit their families if they did not live nearby or to have those family members visit them. This situation continued for almost two decades. Thereafter, a bond of *bonhomie* was maintained with the Tutsi community which saw Muslims as their well-wishers. It was mainly due to the fact both the communities were equally sidelined and discriminated upon which brought them together. So, they became friends. After the genocide in 1994, Tutsis got closer than before with the Muslims considering their help, attitude and concern for safety and when a new government was formed by the Tutsis, the Muslim community has been lending full support to the reconciliation process which is currently going on in Rwanda.

Launched by Protestant and evangelical churches and Muslim communities in 2003, the Interfaith Commission for Rwanda (ICR) designed to promote unity and reconciliation and activities that foster it is one of the many initiatives that help restore confidence among Rwandans. Then led by Anglican Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini and the leader of Rwanda's Muslim community, Mufti Saleh Habimana (head mufti of Rwanda from 2001 to 2011) it supported aid programs that help reconcile genocide survivors, prisoners, and their families. It also used development to promote reconciliation, such as a community water project jointly managed by a committee involving an area's major religious communities. The ICR has also hosted an international event on "Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa," which brought many internation-

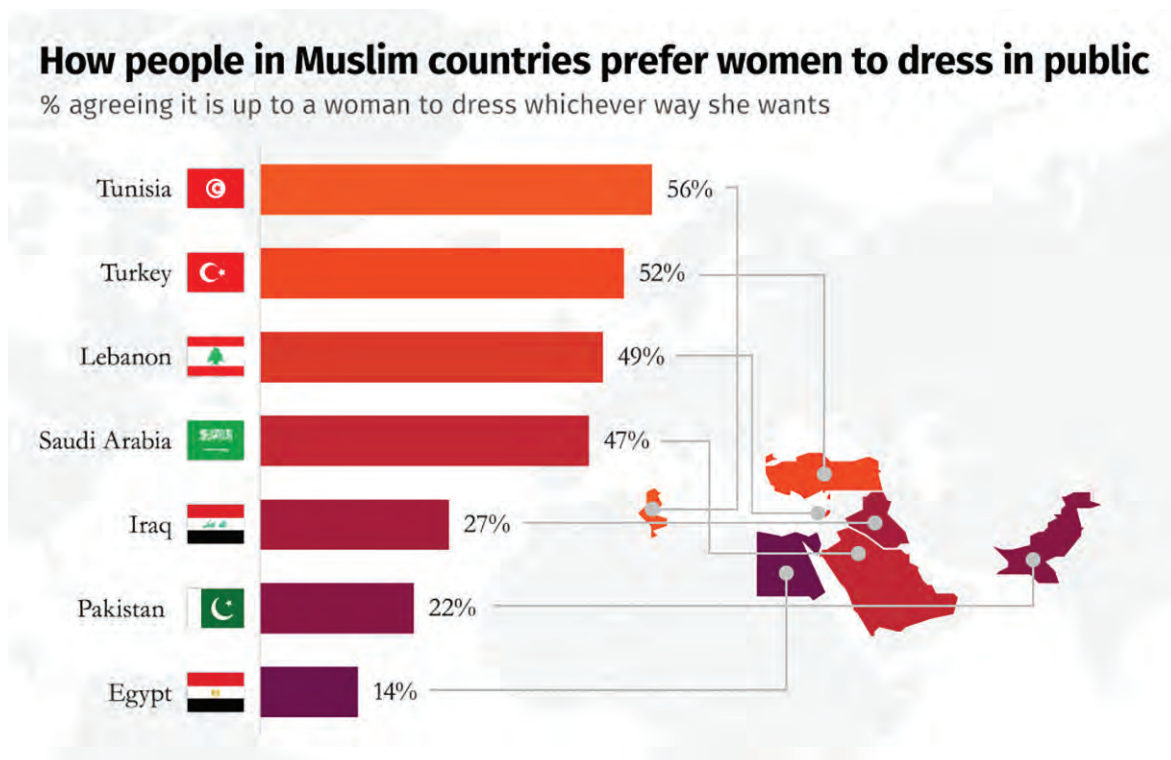
ally-based religious groups to Rwanda to discuss further cooperation between religions and how best to promote reconciliation. The reconciliation efforts offered an opportunity for the Muslim community to come to live closer with non-Muslims in Rwanda. Once seen as second-class citizens, today Muslims and non-Muslims are together working as partners in reconciliation initiatives.

It may be recalled that Saleh Habimana served as the head mufti of Rwanda from 2001 to 2011, where he focused on the development of the Islamic Community of Rwanda, particularly the education of Muslim youth, and the larger need for social reconciliation among all the people of Rwanda. In 2008, two United Religions Initiative-affiliated groups presented Habimana with the Golden Rule Peace Medal Award for his work in promoting peace and development. Currently, Saleh Habimana is Rwandan Ambassador to Egypt. Sheikh Abdul Karim Gahutu was elected the new Grand Mufti of Rwanda for the next five years after the term of Saleh Habimana. Sheikh Ibrahim Kayitare was appointed Mufti in place of the embattled Mufti Abdul Karim Gahutu who was deposed before completing his mandate. Kayitare was followed by Sheikh Salim Hitimana who was elected as Mufti of Rwanda in 2016. Sheikh Salim Hitimana attended the world Interreligious Summit held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this February. He said, "The interreligious summit held in Abu Dhabi is paramount for us; we are sharing experiences and learning from our fellow religious leaders on how to tackle issues faced by those we lead in faith; we are as well joining efforts ensuring the betterment of our people's livelihoods and promote mutual respect among us hence living in a war-free world." For now, the future of Rwandan Muslims looks bright.

Islamic Law regarding Dress

By Shah Abdul Hannan

Islamic law has provided humankind with appropriate instructions and guidelines regarding dress for men and women. Islam wants to achieve two things through appropriate dress. Firstly, to cover the human body properly as it is not right to expose human body indecently. Secondly, for the purpose of beautification and adornment.



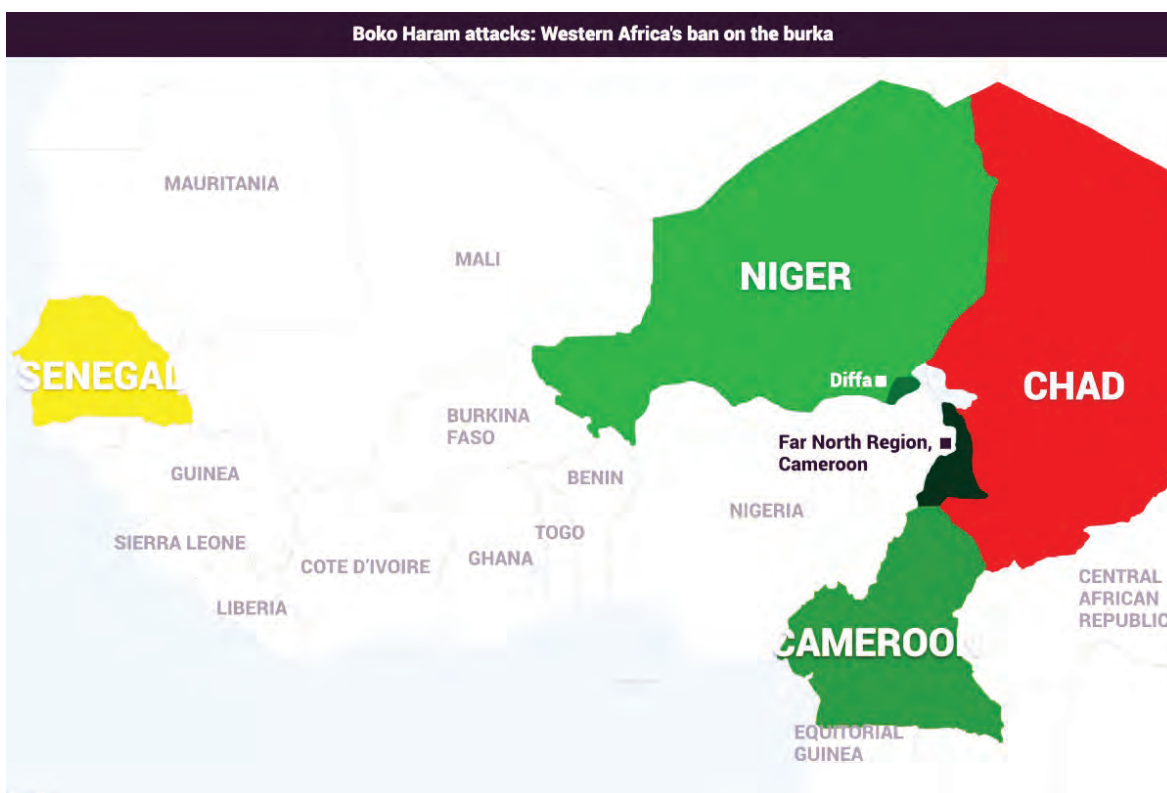


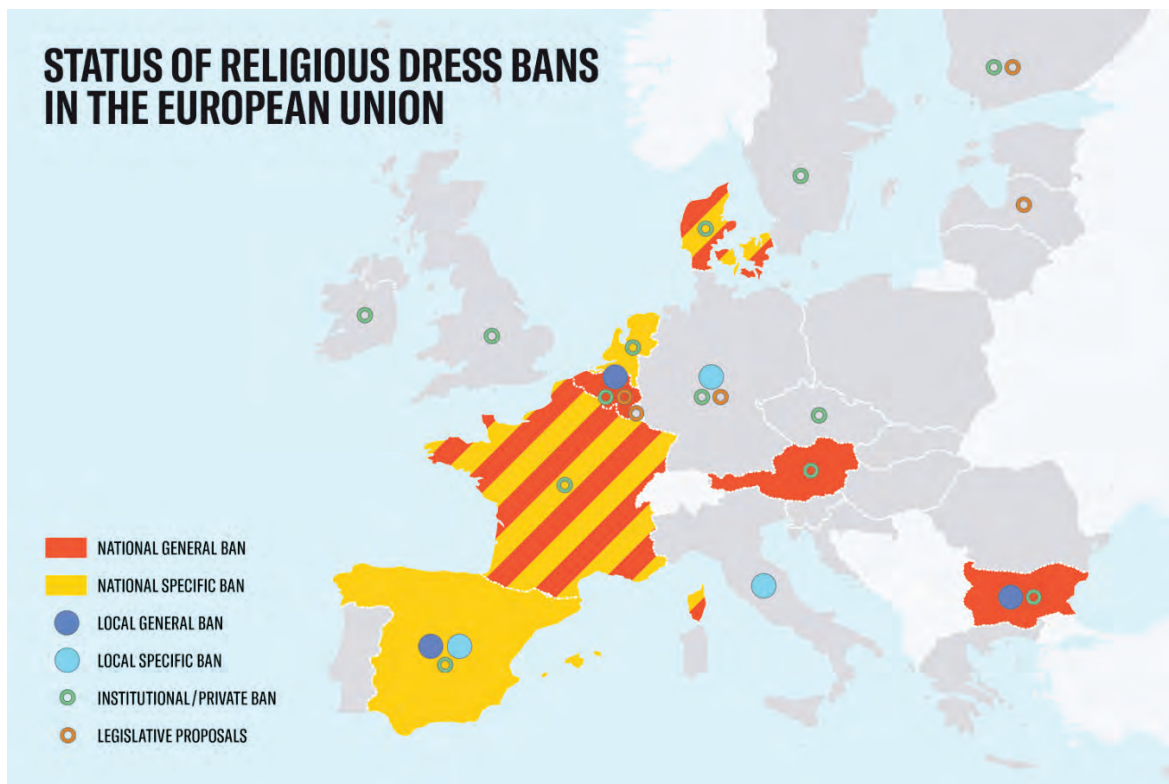
The Qur'an, the book of Allah, states in this regard, "O, children of Adam, we have sent down to you clothing in order to cover the shameful parts of your body and serve as protection and adornment and the best garment is the garment of piety" (Surat Al-Araf, Verse 26).

There should be a balance between the appropriate covering of body and adornment. If this balance is destroyed, this will be a deviation. It is like following the way of the devil.

The Qur'an states in this regard, "O children of Adam, let not Satan seduce you in the same way as he caused your first parents to be driven out of the heaven and stripped them of their garments in order to expose their shameful parts before each other" (Surat Al-Araf, Verse 27).

Islam has not permitted the use of the





same type of dress or garments by men and women. Islam wants to maintain the distinction between man and woman. It is not proper for men or women to imitate the other sex in respect of dress. Prophet (peace be upon him) of Islam said:

It is prohibited for men to dress like women and it is prohibited for women to dress like men (Narrated in the books of tradition of Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawood, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban). The Prophet (peace be upon him) of Islam has also cursed such people (Narrated by Imam Bukhari in his book of tradition of the Prophet). Islam has prohibited show and pomp in the matter of dress. The Qur'an has stated, "Allah does not like any proud person" (Surat Al-Hadeed, Verse 22).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) of Islam said, "Any person who will unnecessarily lengthen his dress to touch the ground

only to show his pride, Allah will not look to him on the day of Judgment (Narrated by Imam Bukhari in his book of tradition). Any dress should be very clean as Islam has emphasized on cleanliness. The Prophet (peace be upon him) of Islam said, "Adopt cleanli-

ISLAM WANTS TO MAINTAIN THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN. IT IS NOT PROPER FOR MEN OR WOMEN TO IMITATE THE OTHER SEX IN RESPECT OF DRESS.



**ISLAM, THEREFORE, PRE-
SCRIBED THAT WOMEN
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OUTER GARMENT (GOWN)
OVER NORMAL DRESS WHILE
GOING OUT TO DO WORK OR
FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

ness because Islam is a religion which upholds cleanliness.” (Narrated in Ibn Hibban, a book of tradition of the Prophet).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) of Islam has permitted the use of gold ornaments and silk by women. He has not permitted the use of these for men. The reason probably is that these are more suitable for women than for men. Men and women should wear decent dress. It is the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that men and women should cover their body properly. However, men are allowed to expose their body except for the portion between navel and knee for the need of work or otherwise. Women should cover their body very properly.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that, “It is not appropriate for a grown-up girl to expose any part of her body except the face and forehead (to any male who is not her husband or a close relation).” (Narrated by Abu Dawood in his book on tradition). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that, “Women are not permitted to wear any thin garment through which their body can be seen.” (Narrated by Imam Muslim). Islam believes in the dignity of women and wants to protect them from lustful eyes of evil persons. Islam, therefore, prescribed that women should put on a flowing outer garment (gown) over normal dress while going out to do work or for other purposes. The Qur’an has stated, “O Prophet! Ask your wives, daughter, and women of the believers to put on a flowing outer garment (covering their bosom and head). This is better for recognition of good women so that they will not be bothered.” (Surat Al-Ahzab, Verse 59). If humankind follows the principles of dress given by Islam, it will indeed ensure dignity of women and men and also help establish a decent society.

FRANKINCENSE – THE FAMED SCENT OF ARABIA

By Dr. Fatima Taneem Ruknudeen

The Arabian Peninsula has been famed for its fragrances since antiquity and has been alluring several civilizations with its indigenous aromatic products like the Frankincense which has played an important part in the economic history of Arabia.





Frankincense was very popular and highly venerated by the ancient societies in Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome and resulted in extensive trade networks that spanned Africa, Asia and Europe. Although its demand has receded in recent centuries, it still is highly embedded into the Arabian culture and is an important ingredient of many perfumes and cosmetics of modern times. Also, recent research studies have highlighted its importance and benefits in the treatment of many illnesses and disorders such as Rheumatoid

Arthritis, osteoarthritis, Crohn's disease and cancers. It is also being touted as the 'King of Essential Oils' and a vital part of aromatherapy and is still traditionally used in Chinese and Ayurvedic medicines. Thus, Frankincense is slowly regaining its prominence like in the ancient times when it was considered priceless as gold.

This article traces the origin, history and the ancient trade routes of this famed aromatic commodity of Arabia- Frankincense.

Frankincense is an ancient aromatic resin

Myrrh Gel Oil

Crowned as one among the first and best gifts to baby Jesus by the Biblical Magi, *Myrrh is a panacea and is a symbol of wishing good health and happiness.*



Ayurveda accentuates Myrrh as a trusted remedy for treating arthritis, dysmenorrhea, anemia, menopausal problems, bronchitis, asthma, obesity, mouth ulcers, digestive problems, gum diseases, cough and rheumatism.

which has been entrenched in the history and culture of myriad of societies across the world for more than 5000 years; being used for a variety of medicinal, religious and social purposes.

Frankincense is the dried resin obtained from a species of trees of the genus *Boswellia* in the family of *Burseraceae*. These trees usually thrive for long periods in semi-dry regions of the world in precarious environments like rocky eroding slopes and chalky soil. They are native to Oman, Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia and India. The *Boswellia* trees are rarely cultivated and usually grow wild in wadis and dry gravel beds. They grow up to 8 feet tall and have an outer scaly bark and an inner bark containing the trees' sap with the aromatic resins. The resin harvested from different *Boswellia* trees varies from species to species and also within the same species depending on the local climatic conditions. The best Frankincense is claimed

to come from Southern Arabian Peninsula which have the ideal climatic conditions.

Boswellia trees

Although more than 20 species of *Boswellia* trees are known to exist, only 5 are considered important to produce the frankincense and these are outlined below :-

- *Boswellia carterii*- It is mainly found in the Arabian Peninsula in Somalia and Somaliland growing on limestone and volcanic rocks. This dried resin is commonly used for making the natural incense. It has a deep rich aroma.

- *Boswellia sacra* - It is grown in the Dho-far mountains of Southern Oman and in the Al-Mahrah and Hadhramaut region of Yemen. The dried resin from this tree is considered to be the finest frankincense like Howjary, Silver belong to this subspecies. It has a pungent, woody, astringent aroma.

- *Boswellia fraraena* - It grows in the Northern Somalia on higher altitudes than



B.carterii. These trees are typically the source of Maydi Frankincense (Somali Frankincense) and are used as incense, medicines and a popular chewing candy. It has a citrus-lemony and earthy aroma.

- *Boswellia serrata* - It is widely distributed and grown in the dry, hilly parts of India. It is known as the Indian frankincense and is most commonly available as incense. Its aroma is more sweeter and delicate as compared to other frankincense. It has been used in Ayurvedic medicine since ancient times.

- *Boswellia papyrifera* - It is grown in Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is known as Sudanese frankincense and its aroma is characterized by a fresh lemon-pine scent.

The resins from the different *Boswellia* trees are available in various grades and depend on the time of harvesting, color of resin



and size of 'tears'. The 'tear' refers to the hardened streaks of resins. The different resins are known by their local names such as Hasiki, Nejdi, Howjary, Fusoos, etc.




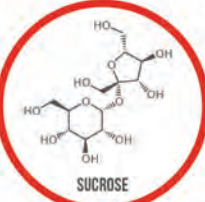









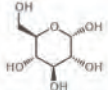
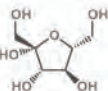
HARVESTING

As the *Boswellia* trees grow in remote hillsides and cliffs; the harvesting of frankincense is a dangerous task and usually these grooves are known only to the traditional harvesters of frankincense who sometimes have to walk for days along difficult foot trails to reach these trees. The traditional harvesting techniques are still employed to collect the frankincense and have remained unchanged for thousands of years.

Frankincense is usually harvested twice a year from the *Boswellia* trees during the spring and early autumn season. The trees are harvested like rubber by cutting the bark and letting the milky sap to seep out. Multiple slashes on the tree trunk at the same points at regular intervals of 10 days are done to collect the frankincense. The initial cuts on the trunk opens the 'pores' of the trees and this resin is usually discarded as it doesn't yield marketable frankincense. The subsequent incisions on the same spots later allow the resin to exude. The second scrapping yields low quality frankincense. It is the third cutting that produces the 'true' frankincense and these are either scrapped off after they harden and form crystals on the tree trunk or these are also collected from the ground after the resin has fallen from the tree and dried naturally. The collected dried resin crystals are then stored in the shade, preferably in caves for at least a couple of months to dry them completely. These crystallized resin rocks are then sorted by hand and taken to the local markets for sale as frankincense.

The dried resins resemble pebbles or ir-

THE CHEMISTRY OF CANDY

Crystalline Candy				Non-crystalline Candy		
						
FUDGE	NOUGAT	FONDANT	SUCROSE	LOLLIPOPS	CANDY CANES	CARAMEL
 LOWER SUGAR CONCENTRATION THAN NON-CRYSTALLINE	 SUCROSE SOLUTION BOILED AT LOWER TEMPERATURE	 CONTAIN MANY SMALL, FINE CRYSTALS OF SUCROSE	Interfering Agents	 HIGHER SUGAR CONCENTRATION THAN CRYSTALLINE	 SUCROSE SOLUTION BOILED AT HIGHER TEMPERATURE	 FROM VERY SATURATED SOLUTION - NO CRYSTALS
<p>Generally smooth & creamy. Crystalline candies contain crystals of sucrose in their finished form; the sucrose molecules are able to align and form large lattices. They are best formed by slow cooling of a sugar solution, without stirring, which can disrupt crystal formation.</p>			<p> GLUCOSE</p> <p> FRUCTOSE</p>	<p>Generally hard & brittle. Non-crystalline, or amorphous candies, form when crystallisation is prevented. This can be accomplished by the addition of sugars such as glucose and fructose that interfere with the development of crystals. Often, their mixtures are too viscous for crystals to form.</p>		

regular gummy candy which are also called ‘pearls of the desert’ and are available in various shapes, sizes and colors. They range in color from silvery-white to brown with the light and clear frankincense being considered to be more superior in quality than the muddy, brown ones. Generally, the bigger and whiter the rock, the better quality it is assumed and more expensive it is. The chunks of frankincense are sold as incense or processed into essential oils and sold.

HISTORY

Since Millennia, frankincense has been greatly prized and revered in the ancient civilized world; being steeped in the cultures of many ancient societies including Egyptian, Greek and Roman. The incense producing regions of Northeast Africa and Southern Arabia had developed extensive trade networks with overland caravan routes and sea

routes to the markets in Greek, Roman and Parthian Empires.

As the demand for frankincense from Southern Arabia increased between 1000 BCE to 700 AD, the overland routes through Arabia also greatly improved especially after the domestication of camels around 900 BCE. The camel caravans carried frankincense from its production centers in Southern Arabia (Qana and Ubar) to Gaza port on the Mediterranean Sea from where it was shipped to different parts of the world. Thus, the Southern Arabian regions prospered, becoming an important overland trade link between the ancient civilizations of the world and their indigenous commodities along with other luxury goods reaching their ports were highly in demand in the societies in Egypt, Greece, Rome and Mesopotamia. Even the region along the routes which were involved in trading also flourished especially in the

Nabatean Empire.

The main kingdoms in Southern Arabia which prospered by the frankincense and spice trade were the Minian, Sabaean Himyarite, Qataban and Hadhramaut kingdoms. The market for frankincense was so great that myths and fables were promulgated by its traders to keep the rivals away and monopolize its trade. The Lihyanites and Nabateans up in Northern Arabia also prospered because of this trade by monopolizing and taxing the camel caravans that passed through their territories.

The Southern Arabian kingdoms became so rich that it became known to the Greek and Roman historians as Arabia Felix (Blessed or Happy Arabia) with Pliny, Strabo, Theophrastus among others all using this term. Pliny, the Roman historian, has vividly described the Frankincense trade network in the 1st century AD. Also the Ancient Greek navigation manual, Periplus of the Erythraean Sea reveals the export of frankincense from the ancient ports in Southern Arabia. Frankincense is also deemed sacred in the religious texts of the Jews and Christians who used it in their religious rituals.

The peak period of frankincense trade occurred in the 1st and 2nd century AD, when Southern Arabia exported more than 3000 tons annually to Greece and Rome. There are many archaeological and textual evidences supporting the use and trade of frankincense from the early times with the earliest reference to its trade found in the Egyptian archives of around 1500 BC, although many researchers conclude that this trade had occurred much earlier.

In the Middle Ages, Franks (people of modern France and Germany) popularized frankincense in Western Europe where it became a symbol of luxury associated

with prestige and tradition. The English word 'Frankincense' is derived from the Old French word 'franc encens' meaning 'superior quality incense'. Frankincense is also called 'olibanum'. Its Greek and Latin words 'libanos' and 'libanus' originate from the Arabic word for frankincense which is 'luban' which originates from a root word referring to the 'milky whiteness' of the gum resin. The Arabic scientific name for the gum resin is 'kundur' and is derived from the Greek pharmaceutical term 'khondrous libanou' meaning 'grain frankincense'.

Frankincense's popularity markedly diminished with the decline of Roman Empire and rise of Christianity banning the pagan rituals which had utilized it excessively. Also, the cremations were replaced by burials in the 4th century onwards. The availability of artificial, cheaper chemical substitutes of frankincense further stagnated its trade. Though the Christians did use frankincense in a smaller scale, it didn't warrant imports from the Arabian Peninsula at a large scale. Thus, the use of frankincense became restricted mostly to the Arabian Peninsula only where it still continued to be an integral part of its culture and tradition.

TRADE ROUTES

Since more than 5000 years, frankincense has been traded in the Arabian Peninsula and the Northeast Africa with markets in ancient Egypt, Syria, Greece, Persia, Rome and India through the ancient overland routes and sea routes.

Between 2000 and 1000 BC, complex trade networks evolved to transport the much in-demand frankincense along with other aromatics, spices and other luxurious goods from the cities and ports in Southern Arabia to Mediterranean ports such as Gaza and Al-

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE & MYRRH

These three substances are brought as gifts by the Three Wise Men in the Christmas story - in this graphic, we examine the uses and chemistry behind them.



Gold

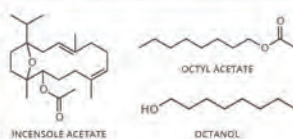


Electron Configuration: $[\text{Xe}]4f^{14}5d^{10}6s^1$

Gold's structure consists of a lattice of cations with a 'sea' of delocalised electrons. Its golden colour is due to it having the correct energy difference between its 5d and 6s electron subshells to absorb photons of blue light.



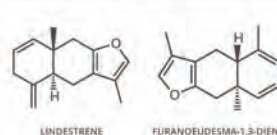
Frankincense



Frankincense resin is used as incense, with its smell the result of various compounds produced when it is burned. These include those shown above, as well as several terpenoid compounds. Research suggests that the compound incensole acetate could help alleviate anxiety & depression.



Myrrh



Myrrh resin, like frankincense, can be used in incense & perfumes, though it also has medicinal applications. Its aroma comes from a family of compounds called furanosesquiterpenes. Animal studies have suggested some compounds in myrrh can have an analgesic effect.

exandria from where it was further shipped to distant lands. Although overland routes were much in use, even maritime routes were utilized to ship the precious frankincense from Southern Arabian ports up north to Greece and Rome. The main ancient sea ports were in Sumhuram in present day Oman and Qana in present day Yemen from where it was loaded on larger ships bound for distant lands. But, the two main trade routes by which the frankincense and other precious cargo from Southern Arabia reached their destinations were the Frankincense Trail Routes (or the Incense Road) and the Maritime Silk Road.

Frankincense Trail Route

The ancient connecting trade route between the sources of frankincense in the Arabian Peninsula and India to Mesopotamia and Europe is called the Frankincense Trail Route. The Indian ships laden with their lux-

ury goods including gems, ebony, silk, spices and textiles would reach the ancient ports in Southern Arabia and from there the Arab merchants would take all the precious items along with their indigenous commodities up north. The Frankincense Trail Route passed through a series of pre-Islamic trading kingdoms of Southern Arabia- Mian, Hadhramaut, Sheba and Qataban; and then paralleled the Red Sea coast about 70 miles in land and passed through Makkah and Medina before reaching Petra. From Petra, frankincense travelled in overland routes to Asia Minor, Palmyra, Damascus and the Parthian Empire. It also reached Gaza and Alexandria from Petra.

The cities arising along the 2000-mile-long Frankincense Trail Route became prosperous and included Qana, Shabwah, Marib, Najran, Madain Saleh and Petra. An important frankincense trade center of the ancient

times was the Shisr oasis and Ubar in the present day Dhofar region of Oman. This outpost exported frankincense across Mesopotamia, India and China from its ancient port of Sumhuram. Qana was another important port in present day Yemen whose wealth and status directly depended on the frankincense trade. At its height of prosperity, Qana received shipments of up to 10,000 tons of frankincense from nearby sources and stored it fortified warehouses. For almost a millennium, from 500 BC to 500 AD, it was involved in frankincense trade.

The Frankincense Trail Route came to an end around 100 AD when it ceased to be profitable resulting in the collapse of the many trading kingdoms who depended entirely on frankincense trade.

The great empires of the 1st millennium BCE including Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome, each tried to gain control of the Arabian spice trade, but were unsuccessful until the later part of 1st century BCE.

Maritime Silk Road

Around the 1st century AD, trade developed between India and Rome and the Greek kingdom in Egypt on what became the Maritime Silk Road. Ships travelled from India and docked at the ports on Gulf of Aden and on Red Sea from where short caravans took the goods to Alexandria on the Mediterranean Sea resulting in prosperity to these ports such as Aden, Al-Munza, Beren-like, at the expense of overland Frankincense Trail Route which came to end around this time.

The Maritime Silk Route enabled the merchants to reach Alexandria much earlier than the overland Frankincense Trail Route and it did not cost as much as the inland taxes were avoided. With the fleet of Roman warships dispatched in Red Sea by emperor

Julius Caesar to protect his merchant ships from piracy, increased number of ships began to sail northwards. Thus, enabling the coveted frankincense to reach the Roman Empire faster.

However, with the stagnation of the frankincense trade due to its dampened demand, its popularity decreased and the trade routes were abandoned and over time the trading cities also were engulfed under the sea of sand.

Yet, the recent revived interests in the use of Frankincense as incense or essential oils and its promising applications in the physical and mental well-being as well as treatment of many illnesses is gradually taking the inimitable odor of frankincense to larger audiences across the world. Hence, frankincense's fame of yesteryears is slowly making a comeback.





Osman Abu Zeid

Nomophobia

When I reached the flight information desk at King Abdul Aziz International Airport in Jeddah, I fumbled in my pocket for my cell phone for vain but could not find it. I must have forgotten it at home!

I was heading to Madinah to partake in a university seminar. I saved the files on my cell phone including the flight ticket information, the presentation of my research and the short speech I was going to deliver at the opening ceremony. I lost everything in a second, including the cell phone number of the university's representative who was waiting for me at the Madinah airport.

What an unpleasant surprise!

I thought that my trip failed and that I had to go back, but I got a grip on myself and explained my situation to the airlines desk officer. In a few minutes, I was on my way to board the airplane. I heard the employee joking with me, asking, "But can you travel without your cell phone?"

When on board, I remembered the American term "Nomophobia", short for No Mobile Phobia.

Nomophobia is the fear of being out of cell phone, or the anxiety relating to sudden loss of a cellular connection.

As soon as I arrived, I bought a watch although I had not worn one for many years. I arranged a wake-up call with the hotel receptionist to wake me up at the dawn prayer call

(azan) although I did not need to, because the prayer call of the Prophet's Mosque will wake you up twice, one at the first azan and the other at the second.

Everything went fine at the seminar. I delivered the speech from memory, not relying on any notes. Perhaps my performance would not have been as good if I had read the notes off the screen of my cell phone.

I felt that not having a cell phone gave me a chance to dedicate more time to religious obligations and walking.

For the first time I discovered some stores adjacent to the Prophet's Mosque that worth a visit. Having one's cell phone all the time can be addictive and can hold us from engaging in many activities.

The so-called social networking has nothing to do really with 'social interaction'. People are spending a lot of time on cell phones talking with one another. Even families do not spend as much quality time together as they used to. Everyone is living in the virtual world as if they were escaping the true world.

Two days later, I realized after being disconnected from the social networking world that dependency on these devices makes us lose our energy and vigor, and most importantly concentration. I came to realize that nomophobia made me sleep better.

Try to stay off your cell phones for hours.

Grand Mosque in Grozny

