

MWL holds Serving the Qur'an and Sunnah Forum in Makkah

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**MWL SG meets government, religious
and intellectual leaders in Utah**

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Letter From the Editor

Caring for Youth

Caring for youth and their issues are among responsibilities deserving arduous efforts and time. Youth are the pillars of the present and future and the progress for all societies, at all times and everywhere. It is necessary to create conditions for young people upbringing and prepare them to take over the responsibility for their religion and country.

The Muslim World League pays more attention to youth and provides them with education and training opportunities. It has recently held seminars and conferences with the aim of diagnosing youth problems and proposing the appropriate solutions together with holding forums for dialogue among youth and scholars and the elderly in the Hajj seasons and others.

The seminar entitled “Service of Qur’an and Sunnah”, organized by the Muslim World League, is considered an occasion to stress its key role in boosting and promoting youth who formed most of the participants.

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa stressed in the seminar that the Islamic world is in a dire need to promote the legitimate and intellectual awareness of its youth. He also said that the Muslim World League through its branches and organizations realizes its responsibility for raising Muslim youth to adequate awareness of the right values and principles of their religion.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said that scholars and jurists of the Islamic nation are the only people responsible for promoting Muslim

youth’s awareness. Because of the globalization of ideas and cultures, today’s young people need an example consistent with the nature of their thinking and open to them with all transparency to touch their conscience and feelings.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said that the Muslim World League has launched Muslim youth forum concerned with the open dialogue with scholars and intellectuals on issues related to strengthening faith, backing the middle-of-the-road approach and answering their questions together with simplifying some contemporary intellectual issues.

The Muslim World League also plans to launch a global youth forum through which non-Muslim youth will be educated with the aim of teaching them moderate teachings and right principles of Islam, according to the Secretary General.

Scientists have observed that if more than 30% of the population is young, this indicates a serious structural disorder and severe societal explosions, which causes popular uprisings and revolutions. Due to this phenomenon and the globalization of ideas and cultures, today’s youth need to be aware of their reality and future.

It is no secret that there are efforts to divert the energy of youth in a way that does not serve themselves or their society together with creating a state of alienation between youth and their Islamic society. We wish the best, peace, safety and stability for our nations and youth.



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Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa meets government, religious and intellectual leaders in Utah

MWL-Utah

In response to an official invitation, Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL), Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa visited the US State of Utah, where he was officially received by Governor Gary Herbert. They discussed prospects for cooperation and a host of issues of shared interest, stressing the desire to cooperate to achieve the common goals.



Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa giving lecture at the University of Utah

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa paid a visit to headquarters of the Mormon community in Utah and met with the community leader and his aides, and discussed means of strengthening the relationship between followers of religions and cultures to promote peace and positive harmony among everyone. The Mormon community's leader and his aides hosted Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa at a tribute dinner attended by members of the Utah's government, representatives of the US Department of State and the Muslim community. Dinner's organizer, Elder David A. Bednar, extended his sincere thanks saying: "In my name and on behalf of Utah, I thank you very much for your inspirational words that clearly work on bringing religions and cultures closer together, and fighting

hate speech and violent extremism."

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also held an extensive dialogue with members of the editorial department of the Utah's Deseret News, during which he recalled the urgent humanitarian commonalities of pressing interest that would build bridges among nations and peoples, remove fences and barriers created by isolation, lack of dialogue and understanding and receipt of information from unilateral sources that do not convey the truth. He discussed in detail a myriad of related topics that received the interest of the Deseret's editorial board, stressing the importance of promoting common ethical values such as justice, tolerance and humanitarian action, supporting peace efforts, harmony and positive national integration, especially in countries with



A meeting between Governor Utah Gary Herbert and Secretary General of the MWL

religious, cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as enhancing awareness of the understanding of God's way in difference and diversity.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa and Deseret's editorial department reviewed the contents of the Makkah Declaration, which, for the first time in the Islamic history, achieved a consensus among 27 sects represented by more than 1200 muftis and senior scholars of the Islamic world. The editorial board praised the Makkah Declaration's content and its importance. They emphasized that all religions came down with mercy, not hatred, clash and wars, and that Islam is a model of moderation and mercy for all people, advocating the values of justice, love, tolerance and re-

spect for diversity. The board stressed the importance of the media's role in creating content that influences public opinion positively, stressing that media must abide by the truth, professionalism and impartiality so as not to lose credibility and distort its message. According to Deseret's coverage of the dialogue, editors referred to the excellence and depth of the dialogue, and happiness for hosting Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa in the first dialogue on his first visit to Utah.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa also visited the Welfare Square in Salt Lake City, and was briefed on the Mormon community's experience of humanitarian work, as it established factories and facilities for manufacturing food, clothing and



Uta Gary receives the SG of the MWL

furniture to distribute to the needy in the United States.

The MWL Secretary General accepted the invitation to visit Utah State University where he met with Kevin Worthen, Rector of the University, and delivered a lecture attended by hundreds of students and members of staff. The speech was followed by an honoring ceremony to hand the University's Shield of Honor to Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa and then a luncheon in honor of the MWL's delegation. Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Worthen said: "It is a great honor to have you here today at our university, especially since you are now a global figure and your efforts are evident in building bridges among





Open dialogue of Dr. Sheikh Al -Issa with the dignitaries

the followers of religions and cultures, and we are very grateful for that. We recognize that there are many positive commonalities that bring us together with the Muslims you represent.”

In his lecture, Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa asserted that the MWL has carried the message of building bridges and removing barriers and fences that resulted from the absence of dialogue and the receipt of information from unilateral sources. He stressed in this context that all followers of religions, cultures and civilizations share high moral values, and that focusing on these common values ensures the realization of peace and harmony among humankind. He said that we must focus on human knowledge as much as we do

on science. He stressed the need to focus on the formulation of the mind in a proper way from childhood, explaining the responsibility of the family, education and legislation. He noted that the divine religion came down with mercy and peace to the worlds. He held an open dialogue with the students of the Middle East Studies Department, and a discussion on contemporary issues in the fields of cultural communication among nations and peoples.

At the conclusion of the official visit, the State’s government held a tribute dinner for the MWL in the presence of representatives of the government and the Mormon Church, and a number of ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps.

MWL SG meets religious leaders and members of Congress in the US

MWL-Washington

Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) and President of the Makkah-based International Organization for Muslim Scholars, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa met with the US Congressman John Courtis during his tour in the United States.



Open dialogue of Sheikh Al - Issa with the Council on Arab - American Relations



Dr. Sheikh Al-Issa during his meeting with Michigan State Representative Debbie Dingle

After discussing a raft of issues of common interest, John Courtis praised the important role Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa plays on behalf of the MWL aimed at promoting and strengthening ties among nations and peoples. Courtis also lauded the MWL arduous efforts towards addressing the discourse of extremism.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa met in Washington with US Congressman Debbie Dingle, representing the State of Michigan, who appreciated his strenuous efforts towards encouraging the religious minorities to live in harmony with their new societies. She stressed that Michigan having the largest Muslim community in the United States

benefited from these great efforts

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa explained to Dingle that the approach of the Muslim World League is to constantly call upon Muslims and all minorities to adhere to the constitutions and laws of their

countries and not to receive religious fatwas from external parties unrelated to the place where they live.

The Secretary General also met with the US Senate Barry Black and reviewed a raft of issues of mutual interest, most notably ways



of promoting religious and national harmony in societies with religious and ethnic diversity and boosting coordination among religious institutions in the world with the aim of disseminating the spirit of tolerance and love among members of the human community.

The National Council on Arab-American Relations hosted the Secretary General and held an open dialogue in the presence of a group of politicians, intellectuals, media and religious leaders. During the meeting, Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa stressed the importance of communication and dialogue among followers of the different religions and cultures to reinforce understanding and cooperation among them. Regarding the various and common denominators that bring together all humanity, Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa answered questions of researchers and academicians together with presenting the MWL's activities aimed at enhancing world peace and harmony. He revealed the reality of some negative theses and wrong interpretations.

At the end of the open dialogue, the National Council on Arab-American Relations awarded Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa the Order of the Council. According to president of the



SG of the MWL with Senate Pastor Barry Black

Council John Duke, Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa is the first international expert to be awarded this Order for his sincere efforts appreciated by the Council. The Secretary-General of the Muslim World League extended gratitude

and appreciation to president and members of the Council for this generous honor, stressing that the MWL is committed to its approach aimed at spreading and promoting good human ties to achieve the common goals.



Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa meets MP John Curtis



Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa engages in dialogue with US research centers and Trump's advisor

MWL - Cairo, Washington, New York

Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa met with the White House Senior Advisor Jason Greenblatt at the White House in Washington.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa discussed with him a raft of topics related to the issues of violent extremism and terrorism and initiatives of

promoting the values of human and national brotherhood among followers of different religions, ethnicities and cultures.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa held extensive meetings in New York and Washington with the presidents and members of the longest-standing and important international research centers including the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Atlantic Council and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

The meetings came in the context of the ongoing programs of the Muslim World League in the United States under the leadership of Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa who continues to meet high-ranking American political, religious, intellectual and media figures, as well as the leaders of the most prominent research institutions and centers.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa held open dialogues with a raft of US research institutions and addressed a number of ideas and initiatives of common interest, stressing the importance of cooperation and partnership with the Muslim World League as well as its international initiatives aimed at promoting peace and harmony among nations and peoples and casting light on the true and tolerant image of

Islam.

The leaders of a set of these research institutions also stressed the importance of the recent report conducted by the US State Department, which appreciated the role currently played by the Secretariat of the Muslim World League in the light of initiatives and programs internationally set by the Secretary General of the MWL.

Research institutions appreciated the contents of the recent Makkah Charter issued by the Muslim World League Conference recently held in Makkah. This Charter was endorsed by more than one thousand two hundred mufti and scholars and considered one of the most important documents of the modern era.



Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa meets with White House advisor Jason Greenblatt

Egypt's President awards Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa Order of Merit for Science and Art

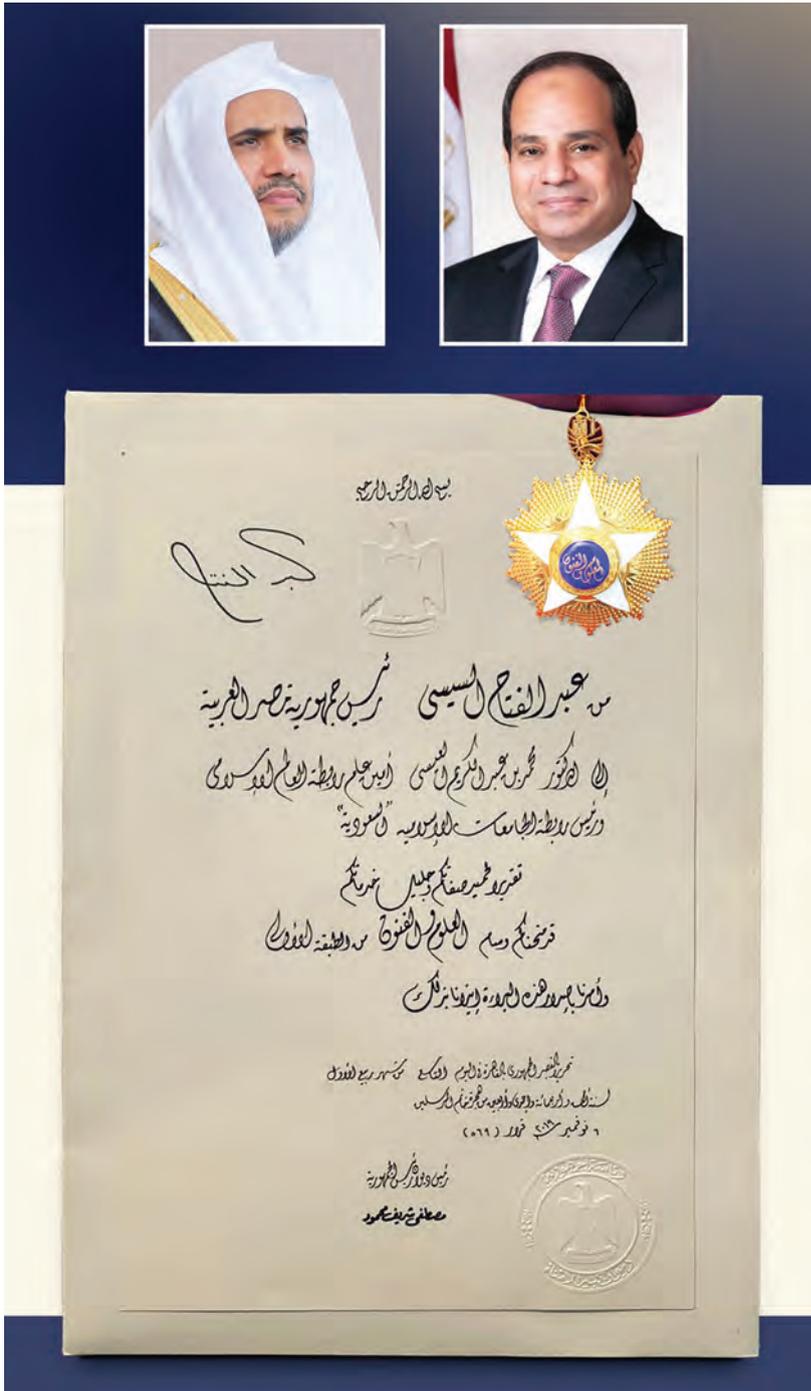


MWL - Cairo

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El Sisi has awarded Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa the Order of Merit for Science and Art for his arduous efforts.

The order of merit is given to distinguished personalities who have provided exceptional and transformational services in the fields of science, art and literature. It recognizes the sincere efforts and the role of such figures in these fields.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa expressed his great appreciation to the Egyptian President, considering the Order a source of honor and pride from the Egyptian President and beloved Egypt.





Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa speaking at the opening ceremony

MWL holds Serving the Qur'an and Sunnah Forum in Makkah

Makkah - MWL

The Muslim World League (MWL), represented by the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an and Immaculate Sunnah (IOHQS), held a forum entitled "Serving the Qur'an and Sunnah" in Makkah.



Students from different countries participated in the seminar

Attended by a large number of Holy Qur'an reciters and senior spokespersons as well as scientific institutions concerned with Quranic and Hadith studies, the Forum made a number of recommendations: The religious discourse should observe the correct method of the Qur'an and the Sunnah in line with the current times.

Another recommendation is that the concerned authorities should review fatwas without enough knowledge. There were calls for the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an and Immaculate Sunnah and associations working in the field of teaching the Qur'an and Sunnah to create practical programs that help understand and interpret texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah so that students of Quranic associations can practice the mean-

ings of these texts in their daily life.

The attendees and participants called for using modern technologies and social media to serve the Qur'an and Sunnah while establishing a platform for the production and review of smart software and applications related to the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. Such review and filtering should be conducted under the supervision of the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an and Immaculate Sunnah, which will be responsible for approving these programs and applications.

Recommendations included the launch of an international award to serve the Qur'an and Sunnah under the umbrella of the Muslim World League and the promotion of Waqf projects serving the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Forum stressed that it is important to invest in information and media to raise



Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa Shaking hand with the participants of the seminar

public awareness about employing Waqf and expanding the activities of IOHQS to link all Islamic countries with each other and also boost their efforts that contribute to linking Muslims worldwide to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

The participants lauded the Muslim World League and IOHQS for their arduous efforts in the service of the Qur'an and Sunnah all over the world. The Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa announced the launch of the Forum's sessions with the participation of Quranic and Hadith studies scholars and academics from all countries of the Islamic world and Muslim minorities from 36 countries.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said, "We worship

Allah and get close to Him by serving His Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. The only way to achieve this is to get enough information and knowledge in this regard."

He stressed that the Muslim World League, represented by the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an and Immaculate Sunnah, carried out programs related to the memorization of the Holy Qur'an and the proper application of recitation rules in 78 states. Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa made clear that the Quranic institutions affiliated to IOHQS reached 68 colleges and institutes, which have over 7,500 students. About 61,275 students graduated from these colleges and institutes. The IOHQS implemented 193 training courses and granted about 3,000 scholarships.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said, "The Muslim



Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa receives the delegates of the seminar

World league dispatched 11,457 Qur'an reciters to perform Taraweh prayers in all Islamic countries in addition to distributing two million copies of the Holy Qur'an. The IOHQS established an electronic Qur'anic recital from which 24,215 people benefited. It also has set out rules regulating jurisprudence in the field of scientific miracles in the Qur'an and Sunnah".

The MWL Secretary General said the Islamic world needs to promote legitimate and intellectual awareness, especially among young people and the Muslim World League is aware of its tremendous responsibility for focusing more on youth who should be brought up on Islamic teachings and principles. Islam, he explained, advocates compassion, tolerance, and coexistence among

all human beings, stressing that the religious discourse should be simple and clear to be understood by all.

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said the religious discourse should keep the pace of history and its conditions to be suitable for all times and places. Today's youth are in a dire need for role models who absorb the spirit of the era. That is why the Muslim World League plans to launch a forum for Muslim youth, focusing on having an open dialogue with scholars and intellectuals regarding issues of strengthening the sound faith and supporting the moderation approach. The Muslim World League also plans to launch a global youth forum through which non-Muslim youth will be educated with the aim of teaching them the moderate principles of Islam.



Students from different countries participated in the seminar

Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa said, “We will cast light on the methods of the practice of extremism, and anti-extremism to mislead people, especially distorting the meanings of Qur’anic and Sunnah texts. Islamic Shari’ah came to the benefit of the whole world.”

He shed light on the Charter of Makkah, which is considered a historic document for establishing the values of coexistence among followers of religions, cultures, races, and sects in Islamic countries as well as for achieving peace and harmony among various segments of society. The Charter follows the example of the “Madinah Charter,” drafted by the Prophet (peace be upon him) 14 centuries ago to preserve the diversity of the Islamic nation and its coexistence.

The Secretary General of the Muslim

World League announced that the MWL will later organize an international conference in Al-Madinah to celebrate the Document of Al-Madinah previously drafted by Prophet Muhammad, which is regarded the most important historical document in the human history.

The Muslim World League plans to establish the Museum of “Prophet Muhammad’s life and Islamic Civilization” in Makkah under the patronage and presence of His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Al-Faisal bin Abdulaziz, Governor of Makkah Region. The Muslim World League put the foundations of this museum in its headquarters in Al-Madinah last Ramadan. Upon a request from the Indonesian Government, the MWL approved the construction of a large-scale branch of this museum in the Indonesian capital Jakarta on



A group photo during the Seminar

an expansive area. He said the MWL received 23 requests from different governments to establish branches of this museum.

Sheikh Khalid Hassan Abdulkafi, Assistant Secretary-General of Educational and Scientific Affairs affiliated to the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an and Immaculate Sunnah made clear that it is a good opportunity to exchange viewpoints and experiences among scholars, Imams, and jurists.

Sheikh Khalid Hassan Abdulkafi stressed that the International Organization for the Holy Qur'an and Immaculate Sunnah seeks through its programs and institutes to graduate students memorizing and understanding the Holy Qur'an. During a speech delivered by senior Holy Qur'an Reciter in Lebanon Sheikh Ahmed Akkawi who said serving the

Holy Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad Sunnah with all means is considered among the greatest works. A group of senior scholars and intellectuals together with high-ranking figures delivered speeches at the forum. They stressed the importance of strengthening the Muslims' association with the Qur'an and Sunnah in terms of learning, education, understanding, and interpretation. They also extended gratitude to the Muslim World League for its strenuous efforts in the service of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The research papers conducted by scholars and jurists focused on the great position of the Qur'an and Sunnah. They also highlighted the arduous efforts that safeguarded the great Islamic heritage to pass it on to the generations of Muslims.

Nouakchott Conference adopts “Makkah Document” as a contemporary reference

Nouakchott-MWL

The 32nd International Conference of the Prophet’s Biography wrapped up its activities in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott.

The Conference was organized by the Islamic Cultural Gathering under the title: “Mohammedan Ethics and their Effects on Disseminating Values of Peace and Brotherhood among Peoples and Nations”. In its final communiqué, the Conference praised the contents of the Makkah Document and considered it a contemporary reference to spread the values of peace and organize relations among peoples and nations.

In his opening speech, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Al-Hafiz Ennhoui said that the Muslim World League (MWL) plays

a great role in promoting the values of love and global coexistence. He praised the efforts exerted by His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa in consolidating the values of tolerance and brotherhood around the world.

A number of international Islamic and non-Islamic organizations and bodies valued the contents of the Makkah Document, which is considered to be at the forefront of modern-day documents. The Makkah Document was ratified by more than one thousand two hundred muftis and scholars representing twenty-seven Islamic sects and doctrines at the MWL’s conference held last Ramadan in Makkah under the patronage of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz - May Allah protect and bless him.



Tolerance key to promoting inclusive society: EU envoy

RIYADH- MWL

The European envoy to Saudi Arabia on Wednesday called for more tolerance and respect to help bring diverse societies closer together.

Ambassador Michele Cervoned'Urso, head of the EU delegation to the Kingdom, made his appeal as he welcomed attendees to a high-profile lecture to discuss Saudi and European perspectives on religious tolerance and diversity.

Organized by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KF-CRIS), the event gathered together top intellectuals, diplomats and scholars to debate the issues of tolerance, forgiveness and acceptance of others.

Opening the lecture at the King Faisal Foundation building in Riyadh, d'Urso spoke about tolerance and how it was core to the transformation of societies, especially in Europe, which had become more diverse.

"Today's European society is a mixture of cultures, faiths, values, ideas, and hab-



A discussion session organized by the King Faisal Research Center

its. The challenge is to make sure our society is more inclusive, enhance mutual understanding and promote tolerance and respect," the envoy said.

He pointed to the UN's blossoming partnership with the KF-CRIS and the importance of the lecture as key building blocks in the process of bridging cultural and religious gaps between societies.

"I think there are few more teams that are exchanging on the Saudi and European perspectives of religious tolerance and diversity. All

of us know that the KF-CRIS builds from the legacy of the late King Faisal and has been a pillar in promoting Islam," d'Urso added.

He noted that in Europe there were many people of faith that had respect for co-existence.

Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (MWL), told delegates that when he talked about tolerance in Islam, he also meant tolerance in Saudi Arabia as a state that applied and was governed by Shariah law.

He said a state that respected others, human existence and brotherhood could not exist “unless there is respect for diversity and differences as a universal norm that no one can collide.”

According to Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa, the Charter of Madinah (regarded as the first Islamic state constitution) was considered one of the best achievements of civil legislation in human history. “This document was held by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, with the Jews and represented binding legislation for Muslims toward religious minorities.”

The MWL Secretary General noted that the document included the protection of civil and religious rights. “The document cannot be absorbed by extremism, it is clear. These rights and freedoms have been preserved by this legislation. And the Prophet Muhammad coexisted with everyone and understood these differences and diversity.”

In his speech, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Dr. Al-Issa explained how the Qur’an gave Jews and Christians a special name to celebrate their religious origins where they were called “people of the book,” in reference to the Torah and the Gospel. The history of Christians and Jews was also never omitted.

Addressing the event, director of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), Dr. Michael Privot, who converted to Islam 26 years ago, spoke about how the EU was characterized by increasing diversity, including religious and philosophical beliefs, even from the Muslim perspective.

“We encounter such a diversity of ways of being Muslim from a theoretical, cultural, philosophical, ideological point of view. Any single Muslim group or community is represented somewhere in Europe and this situation puts European Muslims in a very unique environment which is different from any other Islamic

majority society in the world,” said Privot.

He pointed out that for the first time in history Muslim groups from Uzbekistan and Senegal were living together and trying to become a community in European societies.

“Societies, which have completely liberalized the market of religions, believe all faiths are accepted,” he added.

Earlier, an MWL forum in Makkah recommended that Islamic discourse should adhere to the principles of the Qur’an and Sunnah, the Muslims’ uppermost legislative sources, which are also known as the Two Divine Revelations.

The forum, titled “The Service of the Two Revelations,” called upon concerned authorities in the Muslim world to regulate Islamic fatwas in a way that prevented extremism and stopped producing any misguided explanations of the divinely revealed texts.

The participants also encouraged the use of modern technology, especially social media, to better serve the Qur’an and Sunnah to help link Muslim youths with the two revelations.

In addition, the gathering proposed establishing platforms for producing software and smart apps related to the Qur’an and Sunnah and the launch of an international service award under the umbrella of the MWL.

Al-Issa added that the MWL had staged a number of Qur’an memorization programs in 78 countries and said there were now 68 colleges and institutes where 7,500 students were studying the Qur’an.

“Some 61,275 Qur’an readers have graduated from these institutes, with 5,055 reciters having obtained authentic reading certificates. The IOQAS (International Organization of Qitab and Sunnah) has also carried out 193 training courses and provided nearly 3,000 scholarships,” he said.

Sonny Bill Williams: "I chased girls, drank alcohol and it only gave me emptiness"

By Shamoan Hafez

It is six in the morning at a London hotel and Sonny Bill Williams has just completed the Fajr (dawn) prayer and is sitting on his mat.





“When I hold my hands up afterwards, I am asking: ‘Ya Allah, please guide me. Keep me strong. Help me become a better person. Help me become a better man,’” he says.

“I know I have my frailties, but strengthen me. Forgive me for my sins. Ya Allah, bless my close ones and those around me. Keep them safe, especially the children. Keep us where our feet are and grateful for what we have.”

It is 10 years since Williams became a Muslim while playing for Toulon in France after a period in his life where he was “wild and at the other end of the spectrum” to where he is now.

Super League newcomers Toronto Wolfpack’s marquee signing seems content with his life, in a happy place having returned to rugby league after five years in rugby union.

The North American side’s general manager reels off Williams’ accomplishments across four disciplines: two World Cups in rugby union with New Zealand; playing rugby sevens at the 2016 Olympics; winning multiple National Rugby League (NRL) titles in rugby league; and winning New Zealand’s

heavyweight boxing title.

The 34-year-old spends half an hour fielding questions during an introductory news conference at Arsenal’s Emirates Stadium, greeting journalists in English, Arabic and Samoan, talking about “humility” having become the highest-earning player in the history of either code, and “earning the respect” of his teammates.

Williams is a man mountain, standing at 6ft 4in and weighing 17st 5lbs, and he dominates a room - but his imposing physique is in complete contrast to his modest, soft-spoken character.

“Alhamdulillah (thanking God) means everything,” he tells BBC Sport. “Drinking a glass of water - Alhamdulillah. Having an opportunity to speak to you - Alhamdulillah. Seeing my wife and kids - Alhamdulillah. I always have my creator in the front of my mind.

“Sometimes I keep my head down on the ground in sujood (prostration) because I know Jesus, Moses and the Prophet Muhammad were in that position.

“Look, I chased girls. I drank alcohol,



spent lavishly and thought I was someone that I wasn't. I lived that life and, in my experience, what did it give me? Hollowness and emptiness in my heart.”

Williams, who met his teammates for the first time on Wednesday in Manchester, adds: “It took a few years for the process, but I found Allah, I found Islam and it really allowed me to turn the wildness in myself into positivity.

“With the way that I have driven as a sportsman to succeed, those two together have allowed me to reach where I am today.”

Williams says there is no feeling like the “genuine love” of a fellow elite sportsman who is also Muslim. Fiorentina winger Franck Ribery is someone he “keeps in contact with on social media”, while he is “quite close”

to former South Africa batsman and captain Hashim Amla.

“In today’s society it is no secret that a lot of us Muslims have been forced to almost be embarrassed to be Muslim.

“For me, I am so proud to be a Muslim - the honesty that it has, what it stands for and what it can give. When I see other sportsmen who are out there and proud, wow it is such a beautiful thing.”

In March, an attack by a gunman at a mosque in Christchurch saw 51 people killed and Williams shared a tearful message on social media in which he expressed his “deep sadness” and hoped those who died “went to paradise”.

A week after the shootings, Williams visited the city and met members of the



community as an act of solidarity.

“Being one of the most high-profile Muslims in New Zealand and playing for the national team, the All Blacks, at the time, I knew that it was my duty,” he says.

“I am a pretty shy guy but I had to step up, and I knew I had to be vulnerable in that space. I stepped up and represented not just the Muslim community that was hurting, but also the New Zealand community.

“I thought that if I could step into that space, a difficult one to navigate through at the time, and just preach the positivity - but also tell them it is real, it hurts but what can we do to move forward in a better way?

“As New Zealanders, we have done that and are leading in that space - and I am proud to say I was a part of that.”

As he approaches the latest test of his distinguished career, almost 9,000 miles away from home, how does Williams feel about the move and how would he like to be remembered?

“I was really humbled and grateful for the

opportunity. It is a really exciting opportunity for myself as a sportsman. Yes, there is a lot of pressure but what better way for a sportsman to try achieving something in this arena?

“‘Legacy’ is not a word that I like. I am just a guy out there who has done his best, who was real, kept it authentic, but liked to take on challenges.”

Last year, Williams performed the minor Umrah pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, describing the trip as an “awesome experience”.

He says: “Makkah is so special, seeing the Kaaba for the first time and then experiencing the serenity and calmness of Medina.

“Yes, I am a Kiwi, a New Zealander, Samoan - but a human being. That is what Islam offers. It is there for all of mankind. I prayed next to an African brother, an Asian, a European, a Middle Eastern, from all walks of life.

“You are in your robes so there are no levels of society, everyone is equal, that is probably the biggest thing.”

--This story was taken from Rugby New Zealand.

Tourism from an Islamic perspective ..

Invitation and other benefits

By Nizar Abdul Baqi Ahmed

Islam has called for tourism in the land, in order to achieve many purposes, such as reflection on the creation of Allah, call to Islam, convey the message to all parts of the earth, seek livelihood, acquire knowledge, communicate with the rest of the world, trade and exchange benefits and other aims.



The concept of recreation and entertainment does not contradict the Shari'ah of Islam, on the contrary, it is compatible with the principles of Islam or the pillars of religion, whether in terms of food, drink or clothing, as well as in moral values, and ensuring that no habits and behaviors that harm the individual and society are acquired.

In recent years, most Arab and Islamic countries have shown great interest in the tourism industry, which has developed and become one of the tributaries of the national income of these countries, so they began to become attractive tourist destinations, to bring tourists from all over the world.

These countries began also to attract their citizens for vacation at home, rather than travel to Western and other countries, and focused their efforts on attracting tourists from other countries. Therefore, the term "domestic tourism" has emerged in many Arab and Islamic countries, because of its prominent importance within the system of developmental and cultural concerns.

Miscellaneous benefits

The importance of developing the tourism industry is not only about attracting tourists from outside the country, diversifying sources of income and supporting financial and economic resources. Indeed, many countries have been focusing on developing their tourism facilities in order to reduce the flow of cash that their citizens spends annually abroad, for the purpose of foreign tourism, and strive to take advantage of these funds to support local economies, and rationalize domestic spending, which reflects positively on the entire economic process, and lead to the revival of markets and support industry.

Another important aspect to support domestic tourism is the attainment of societal



and cultural security and immunization of young people from the harmful habits that exist in many non-Muslim countries, which are in complete contradiction with the customs and traditions of Arab and Islamic countries. Therefore, domestic tourism can provide a suitable alternative that protects the societies from many negatives habits that do not conform to their guidance.

Pride in identity

Domestic tourism contributes to increasing the link between the individuals and their identity, culture and environment, and drives to protect them against the currents of cultural invasion and societal takeover, especially in this era when cultural influences increased due to the information and

IMPORTANCE OF DOMESTIC TOURISM

- Increase national income
- Diversification of income sources
- Finding new job opportunities
- Saving wasted amounts
- Raise the standard of living
- Promotion of foreign investment
- Reflect civilizational achievements

PURPOSES OF TOURISM

- Call to God
- cultural exchange
- Introducing communities
- Acquisition of science
- Recreation and entertainment
- Reflection on creatures
- Request livelihood and trade

BASIC TOURISM COMPONENTS

- The presence of sea and air ports
- Availability of transportation
- Complete road networks
- Presence of halal eating
- Public parks
- Drinkable water
- Means of communication

ELEMENTS OF ATTRACTIONS

- Distinct natural environment
- Unique archaeological sites
- Perfect infrastructure
- Hospitality of citizens
- Availability of tourist facilities
- Diversity of natural environments
- Existence of housing



technical revolution. In spite of huge currents of globalization, many Arab and Islamic countries are keen to preserve their identity from extinction and melting, and make great efforts and spend huge funds to achieve this goal.

Moreover, members of the same community have a great opportunity to learn

about the cultures and civilizations of their regions. Their contact with tourists coming from abroad provides them with an opportunity to learn about their civilizations and cultural heritage. A human being is very proud of his traditions and human achievements, but he is also a social organism, affected by his surroundings and affect in it, and there-



fore have the opportunity to take from others what compatible with his culture, education and environment.

Unique ingredients

Although tourism plays pivotal roles in the economies of most countries, but its importance seems greater to a country such as Saudi Arabia, which Allah blessed with unique characteristics, more than in another country. It is the land of Islamic message, and the Two Holy Mosques, and there are holy places and historical locations.

Therefore, these natural elements can give the Kingdom a unique competitive position on the world tourism map. As the Kingdom is the cradle of the oldest civilizations known in the history of humankind, which left behind a unique legacy for those who are concerned with religious, cultural and archaeological tourism.

Saudi Arabia has modern infrastructure, roads, electricity and water networks that reach all its cities and villages. There is se-

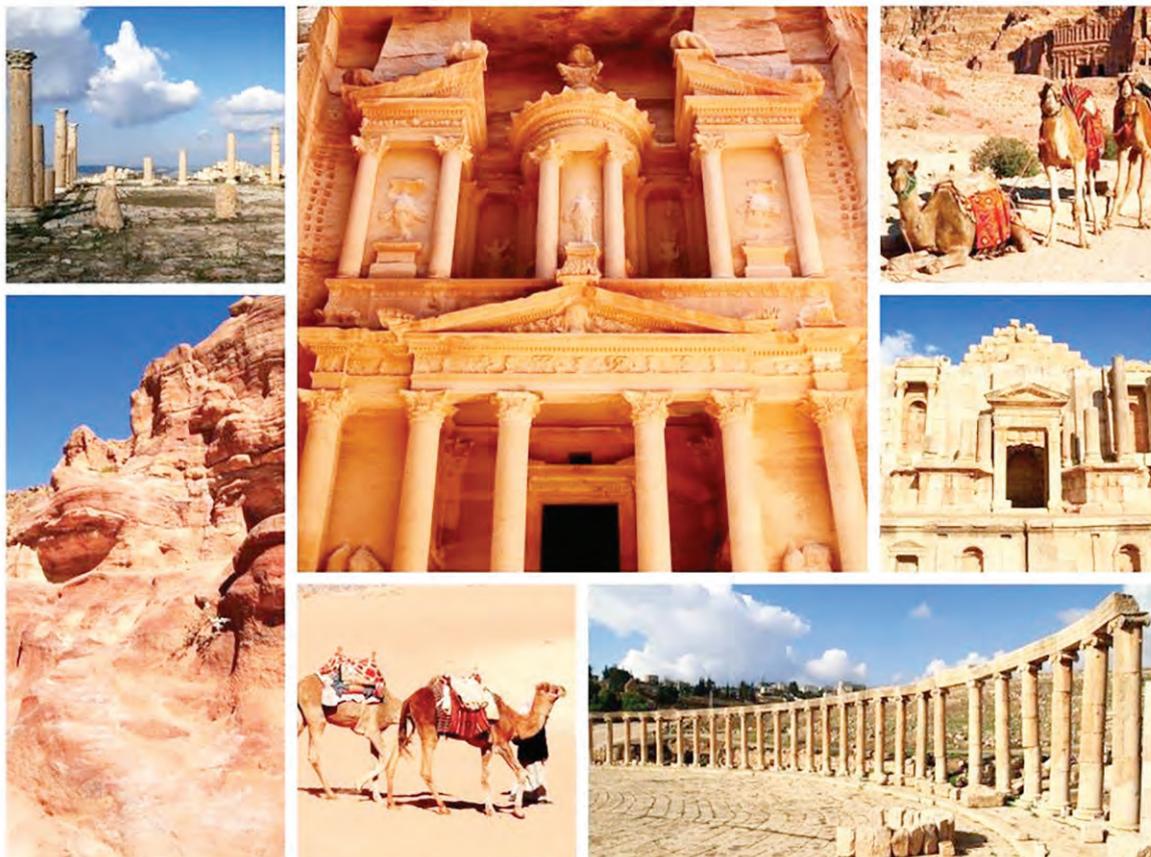
curity in all parts and has a vast geographic area and diverse climate as well as beautiful scenery, the diversity of vegetation, vast deserts, in addition to the historical monuments found in many of its parts.

Vital Sector

Many regions of the Kingdom are characterized by the existence of archaeological areas rooted in the history, reflecting the depth and excellence of civilization throughout the ages, and make it an open museum.

Therefore, the country was concerned to provide all the facilities for investment in tourism, and make it in a suitable situation to receive tourists and visitors from all over the world.

As the Kingdom tends to diversify sources of income, as mentioned in the Kingdom's Vision 2030, attention has been drawn to the exploitation of this vital sector, which can be a major source of income, and can provide tens of thousands of job opportunities for young people.



Many tourist cities have been established, and more attention has been drawn to tourism, to make more development in the standard of living, since most tourism facilities are privately owned, such as hotels, furnished apartments, transportation, shops and entertainment venues.

Modern industry

Dr. Saleh bin Ali Abu Arrad, Professor of Islamic Education at Teachers' College at King Khalid University, believes that tourism has become one of the social phenomena that has attracted the interest of many scientists in various fields of knowledge.

In a study entitled "Domestic tourism in

the Kingdom .. The reality, its main educational dimensions, and the role of some educational institutions in the development of tourism awareness", he says, "Some of scientists view tourism from a social perspective, some from the economic, cultural, environmental perspective."

"Yet, some are interested in studying tourism from an educational perspective, because of the attention of different social groups, and its contemporary activities that have a great importance and diverse influences in different areas of life. Tourism is an important modern industry characterized by its rapid growth and development. It has become a vital activity with many positive influences in various fields of life".

Correcting concepts

Abu Arrad discussed the reality of domestic tourism in the Kingdom. He said, "It is very important to correct the concept of domestic tourism in the Kingdom, especially as it has a religious dimension closely linked to visiting specific places, and the performance of certain devotional rituals of great importance in the life of all Muslims, as well as to perform the pilgrimage and Umrah, and to move between Holy places, and visit the Prophet's Mosque.

The religion of Islam urges Muslims to travel and navigate the land, and reflect on the beauty of nature. Tourism also deepens and consolidates the social ties between the people of this country. It also achieves the need of man to worship Allah. All these requirements bring attention to the religious dimension of domestic tourism, work hard to develop awareness of its importance, strive to revitalize and activate it positively, because it exists and persists throughout all seasons."

Archaeological sites

Dr. Abdullah Sadeq Dahlan, a former member of the Shoura Council, expressed his support to activate tourist programs. He pointed out in a press interview that marketing the historical tourism areas in the Kingdom will undoubtedly attract large numbers of tourists and visitors annually, Muslims and others.

He added that Al-Okhdood (Ditch) area, mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, is located in Najran city, which is one of the important archaeological sites that can contribute to the definition of what happened in that region, and the fact that Christians were burned and killed. Furthermore, there were many historical Islamic archaeological areas in Makkah and Medina. The sites of ancient monuments should be given more attention because they

show the history of past times. He concluded by saying that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is full of monuments and historical sites. And if opened to tourists in the world, the Kingdom will be one of the first countries in the field of tourism.

Universality of Islam

Director of the Center for Islamic Economics at Al-Azhar University, Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Halim Omar, stresses that Islam does not have a counter-attitude towards tourism.

He said in an international symposium held in Cairo under the title "Tourism from an Islamic Economic Perspective" that Islam is an open religion to the world, and never called for closure.

He also said, "Tourism has become a knowledge exchange among the peoples, it is not just an economic activity, it has other cultural, literary and social aspects and benefits, so Islam calls for tourism and encourages it. The evidence is that there were 13 Quranic verses that urge to see the traces of the former, as Allah has ordered the charity to "Ibn alsabeel", the stranger out of his country, and this important evidence that the doctrines of Islam are compatible with tourism, because it has many economic benefits, and is an important tributary to the economy of most countries of the world".



An analysis of Islamic insurance

Tasnuva Jahan

In this globalization era, insurance has become unavoidable for economic growth and considerably for loss sharing. As jeopardy may arise in all steps of human life and people are eager to mitigate it, insurance aids indirectly to eliminate jeopardies. Generally, insurance is a co-operative scheme serves both as an economic intermediary and as a provider of risk transfer. Insurance activity promotes financial growth by sharing different risks, in the shape of a premium. Many Islamic jurists consider that the concept of conventional insurance is against the beliefs of Islamic philosophy. Because conventional insurance involves Gharar (uncertainty), Maisir (gambling), and Riba (usury), which are prohibited in Islam (Ayub, 2003).





Understand the differences between **TAKAFUL** & **INSURANCE**

Islamic insurance or Takaful is a phenomenon of financial activities based on the Islamic tradition. Takaful is an Islamic unconventional to a conventional insurance. It is a unique system; it provides financial security in case of any loss or damage occurring to the policyholders. A Takaful business will not be valid in if it contradicts Sharia Principles. In Islam, any transaction is rational to confirm with the Divine rules and restrictions. Any transaction that fails to follow such Divine rules will be invalid (Bilal, 2019). Nowadays, Takaful industry is growing rapidly, particularly, in the Muslim occupied areas growing from west to Africa and, notably in Europe and America as well (Rahman, 2009). Internationally, Takaful market reached around US\$ 19 Billion in 2017 (Market Research,2018). Saudi Arabia, ASEAN, and GCC are the key demand drivers for Takaful with the world Takaful market (Ernst and Young, 2015). Higher risk due to the international financial crisis and economic growth with many uncertain events leads

to growth both conventional and Islamic insurance as a risk reducing instruments. However, there is an absence of Islamic insurance knowledge among the financial and non-financial trades that needs to be developed within the Shari'ah frame.

History and development of Islamic insurance

Takaful is used in terms of Islamic insurance, which is considered as a contract among a group of participants agreeing to mutually help one another against unexpected future disasters occurring to other members of the group. In other words, it is the act of a group of people who agree to share each commercial profit between the providers of funds and those who conduct the business. Islamic insurance is one of the shari'ah-approved financial businesses.

Historically, Takaful is not a new concept. In the early period of Islam, the origin of Takaful is found in the different forms. References were made to the concept of



'kafala' more or less similar to the security and safety of the people. The term 'Takaful' comes from the Arabic roots word 'kafala' that means 'joint guarantee' or 'indemnity' (Ahmed, 2010; Wahab, 2007). 'Takaful' means solidarity or assistance between each other. Before the dawn of Islam, ancient Arab tribes had practiced 'kafala' as the basis of loyalty to their tribes. Its main purpose was to protect their members against any jeopardies within a strong tribal system. They sheltered each other with the basis of cooperation, which is known as 'Aqilah'. As, for example, if any tribal members committed any sort of crime like murder, at that time, which lead to more deaths and misfortunes in tribal groups. These accusations were alleviated by paying compensation, known as blood money. All of the tribal members had to contribute to meet the compensation money for the victim's family. Such contributions were collected to avoid further disputes and tribal bloodsheds (Alhabshi, 2009). Even after the advent of Islam, similar practices of 'Aqilah' continued due to its benefits. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reinforced 'Diyah' or blood money, by which

compensation paid to the victim's successors in case of murder. The second Muslim Caliph Umar bin Al-Khattab established a similar system known as 'Qasamah'. According to this system, people had to pay compensation to the victim's beneficiaries in case of murder (Rahman, 2009). However, there were many examples where the Arab tribes, the Prophet and his companions implemented 'Aqilah' (Archer and Others, 2011; Hamid and Othman, 2009).

In the ancient period, Takaful was practiced in the marine trade (Klingmuller, 1969). The Arabs practiced some methods to indemnify the voyage members of the group to cover any losses in their business activities. They were identified as winter and summer voyages (Ibn Khaldun, 'Al-Muqaddimah'). They paid a proportion of their profits or capital to reimburse any losses faced by any of the voyage members (Khorshid, 2004).

At modern period, in 1965, the Congress of Islamic Research in Cairo discussed the legitimacy of conventional insurance in the Islamic country's perspective. Since then, Islamic jurists and economists have started searching for alternatives. In 1979, Sudan



first announced its Islamic insurance policy. Later, in 1985, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia permitted Islamic insurance in conformity with the Islamic guidelines. Malaysia enacted its first Takaful Act in 1984. Significantly, in Malaysia the benefit of Islamic insurance also attracted non-Muslims. In 1999, Islamic insurance was introduced in developing country Bangladesh. Consequently, Islamic insurance has spread out to the other parts of the Islamic world as well. Currently, there are many Islamic insurance operators around the world in Muslim and non-Muslim countries (Obaidullah, 2005; Sharifuddin and others 2016; Kalil 2011; Fadun, 2014).

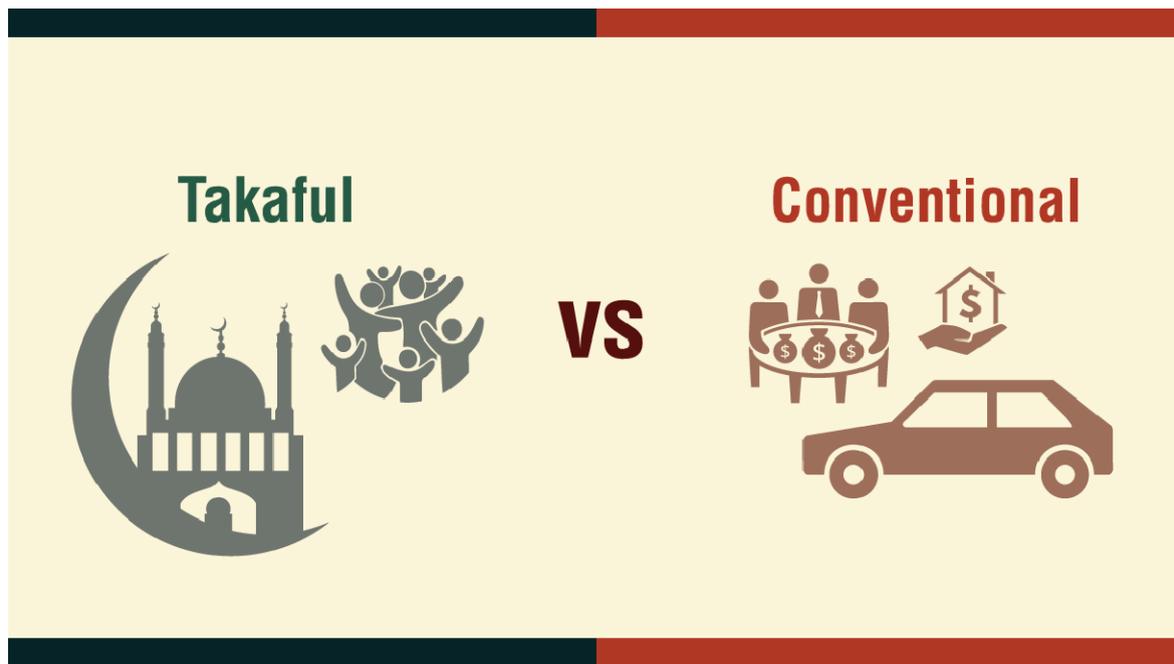
The concept of insurance in Shari’ah perspective:

Islam considers the duty to help to reduce others’ hardship as religious obligations. As a result, the Quranic texts and Prophetic hadiths reflected on the basis of Takaful. According to surat Al-Maidah (Verse: 2), “Help ye one another in righteousness and piety but help ye not one another in sin and rancor: fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment.” This verse teaches Muslims to contribute to good deeds and mutual help. Thus, the aim of Takaful is to support each other in adverse

situations and remove the perils and dangers of the participants in the form of mutual of co-operation.

Islam encourages taking precautionary steps to reduce the impact of any danger without oppressing other parties. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once noticed a bedouin leaving his camel without tying it; he asked the Bedouin, ‘Why do you not tie down your camel?’ The Bedouin replied, ‘I put my trust in Allah.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said, ‘Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allah’ (At-Tirmidhi). This shows that people should protect themselves against hostile incidents, and prepare for probable future events as well as leave the consequences to the Creator. Similarly, shared responsibility towards the damaged person to overcome hazards, established from Muslim’s spiritual and traditional systems. The Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said, ‘Whosoever removes a worldly hardship from a believer, Allah will remove from him one of the hardships of the Hereafter. Whosoever alleviates the need of a needy person, Allah will alleviate his needs in this world and the next’ (Narrated by Imam Muslim).

The concept of mutual assistance and insurance is deeply rooted in another hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that states, ‘The place of dealings and feelings of people with faith, between each other, is just like the body; when one of its parts is afflicted with pain, then the rest of the body will also be affected’ (Narrated by Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim). Additionally, the perception of righteousness and goodness lays out in several Islamic texts. In another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that, ‘Allah the Almighty will always help His servant for as long as he helps his



brother in need' (Narrated by Imam Ahmad and Imam Abu Daud). Therefore, it is apparent that the Takaful concept is highly encouraged in Shari'ah law. The Islamic philosophy is to take care of each other, work cooperatively, and think about the deprived.

Socioeconomic impact of Islamic insurance

The Islamic insurance structure has socioeconomic impacts on the majority of members of society. As the Islamic monetary system considers not only capital owners, but also takes into account other participants that are connected with transactions. The Islamic insurance strategy is to spread the loss over many other persons who mutually agreed to cooperate with each other at the unpleasant events or time of loss. In fact, the risk is shared with them by payment of a certain premium on calculation of loss. If the loss is borne by individuals, it may cause severe damage to the particular person. In Islam,

Takaful can be considered as a social device to alleviate the uncertain mishaps to a person.

The nature of Takaful business is non-profit oriented. At this point, the Takaful operator merely receives a reasonable compensation as being an agent for the participants or policyholder besides through a share in returns on investment of the collective funds. Conventional insurance business is owned by shareholders. Conventional insurance industry is established for profit-oriented. Its objective is to make the most of the revenue to shareholders. Islamic insurance is founded on the motive of social welfare and protection. Neither insurer nor insured has the priority in Takaful protection system. Everyone contributes jointly under a common protection scheme, which is available for participants. In view of this, we can say that Islamic insurance prioritizes the enhancement of social well-being. Besides the institutional method concentrates on the soundness and stability of the scheme.

In Islamic insurance system, anyone would be able to safeguard from an excessive interest based system. To increase the growth of this sector all stakeholders should play a role to develop a financial system truly reflective of the Islamic principles.

Differences between Islamic and conventional insurance:

Islamic and conventional insurance have a common objective to reduce financial risk when a catastrophe occurs to the contributors. But, still there are some major differences in the underlying concepts between both insurance contracts.

Islamic insurance or Takaful policy is based on the principles of Shari'ah. Basically, Shari'ah directs Muslims to avoid haram (prohibited) transaction and encourage halal (permitted) transaction in their regular activities within the business. Alternatively, conventional insurance is not formed under any religious boundaries.

Takaful is centered on the concept of mutual cooperation or help. In Takaful system, risk is not transferred from the insured to the insurer. Importantly, risk is shared by the participants who are involved a joint guarantee system under a common pool. The insurance company serves as a manager of a pool or Takaful operator (Yusof, 1996; Maysami and Kwon 1999; Billah, 2003). On the other hand, in conventional insurance, the risk is transferred from the policyholder or insured party to the insurance company (Pfeffer, 1956).

The Islamic insurance contract, normally involves the concepts of tabarru, mudaraba, and wakala. In Islamic insurance system, risk is not switched by way of contribution payments made to operator. The operator is neither selling the risk handling nor the con-



tributors purchasing it. The takaful operator is handling and investing in the contributed funds on behalf of the participant along with the operator (Fisher and Taylor, 2000). Oppositely, in conventional insurance business offers and sells protection to undertake the risk. The policyholder or participant accepts and buys the premium at a fixed sum of money on the happening of uncertain incident within a fixed period of time (Spence and Zeckhauser, 1978). Conventional insurance framework is regulated on the risk assumption, even though it may pay more or less than the actual rate of the insured property (Ali, 1989).

In Islamic insurance system, participants mutually pay a sum of money, in order to support each other against catastrophe or uncertain mishaps. Conventional insurance targets to provide facilities through risk transferring and material gain on behalf of another. Whereas Takaful established on the perception of risk sharing, trusteeship and brotherhood (Yusof, 1996; Maysami and Kwon, 1999; Billah, 2003).

Conventional insurance contains prohibited elements, which contradict the basic principles of Sharia laws (Siddiqi, 1985). Generally, gharar or uncertainty is not allowed under Islamic law. Highly uncertain business transactions that can cause any unfairness against any of the parties are discouraged in Islam. It must be agreed that uncertainty cannot be

entirely avoided in any business; if it is extreme uncertainty that should be prohibited (Khan, 2011). It is essential to bring down gharar or uncertainty to acceptable levels under Shari'ah law. It is also vital to make contributions as conditional donations to reduce the damage suffered by any one of the participants. In contrast, conventional insurance system contains gharar or uncertainty on the theory of risk taking (El-Gamal, 2000). Uncertainty is mainly related to the occurrence of loss and amount of compensation.

Maisir or gambling is avoided under Islamic insurance system (Siddiqui, 2000). Participants make the contribution in the spirit of brotherhood and purity. It relieves to remove the element of gambling. (El-Gamal, 2000; Billah, 2003). But conventional insurance involves maisir or gambling. Maisir or gambling chances are closely related with claim level, as the policyholder pays a certain premium against the certain claim. If the insured event does not occur, the company enjoys all of the amount paid as premiums and the insured gets nothing. If the loss or insured event does occur, the insurer compensates the client and losses a larger amount than collecting as premium (Khan, 2011). There is always a winner, and a loser in such a contract.

Islamic insurance policyholder would be able to terminate an insurance policy in a manner that is not provided in terms of the contract. Importantly, paid premiums are refundable after deducting the operations costs or administrative fees (Fadun, 2014). On the other hand, in conventional insurance policy the premiums may be forfeited on termination of a policy (Billah, 1997).

In Islamic insurance, contract specifies how and where the premium would be invested. In Takaful scheme, collected funds are normally invested in riba-free



or non-interest-based instruments. Profit is gained through Shari'ah basis financing (Hachemi and others, 2014). On the other hand, in conventional insurance, there is no such obligation. Conventional insurance company made investments in interest-based activities (Alhabshi, 2009). In this system, fund investments are mostly in fixed interest base instruments like bonds, securities, etc. which are not permitted in Shari'ah law.

Concluding observation:

Islamic insurance is a justifiable alternative to conventional insurance for the Muslims throughout the world. Even it is a fastest growing industry in the Islamic fiscal market. Takaful made a substantial point in both, eastern and western world. Islamic insurance plays a crucial rule in controlling the funds. Takaful industry's pooling fund system is distinctive. It encourages economic growth and development in the whole economy as no one is a winner or loser under this system. Still, this conventional concept of insurance is totally ambiguous and not allowed in Muslim society under Shari'ah. Nevertheless, the complexity of business contracts and increasing growth of Islamic insurance and finance require the improvement of additional standards within the Islamic framework.



Library on horse spreads joy of reading to rural Indonesia

AFTAB HUSAIN KOLA

With the aim of promoting reading habit among students in rural habitats, a horse library in Indonesia's Central Java is making waves. One man and his horse are on a mission to spread wide the joy of reading. This mobile library is bringing books and joy to the children, writes.



Children of today prefer the comfortable confines of plush air-conditioned book stores in cities to get a copy of comics, or order books on Apps like Kindle Unlimited, that allows users to read books online. But for those living in rural pockets and remote settlements, access to libraries is virtually ruled out. Thus were born the mobile libraries where a vehicle loaded with books used to travel to such places where adults and children could entertain and educate themselves by books. Even bullock carts have been used for mobile libraries. In Indonesia's central Java region, a unique concept of horse library is making waves. Kuda Pustaka (Horse Library), the project initiated by 43-year-old Ridwan Sururi, and his friend Nirwan Arsuka, caters to the children

and new literates in the villages, who look forward to each visit of the horse library with great excitement and enthusiasm.

Ridwan Sururi, aged 45, with his horse named Luna, hails from the village of Serang, in the Purbalingga region of Java island, cocooned on the edge of one of Indonesia's most active volcanoes, Mount Slamet.

It is a fact that for all those interested in reading books but cannot afford to buy books or even access them, such a mobile library is Godsend. Stocked with select titles on various topics, the horse library covers the many tiny villages dotting the region. Children turn out in good numbers when they sight the horse. Joys writ large on their faces when Ridwan approaches them with new comics and books. According to Unesco



there are more than 977,000 illiterate adults in central Java, Ridwan's region. An elderly person impressed by the horse library said that the mobile library is an eye-opener for us and especially children and housewives who thought reading was dying and the new generation is not interested in reading.

Ridwan travels from one village to another with books stacked in boxes balanced on horse Luna's back. He visits schools three times a week - every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Mostly he goes alone but occasionally brings along his daughter, Indriani Fatmawati. It is just a free service and no charge is taken for borrowing books.

It was Nirwan Arsuka, a fellow horse enthusiast and friend of Ridwan who sug-

gested they need to help the society in some way or the other. Both being horse enthusiasts and committed workers, the idea of horse library was the best option they could think of. Horse was borrowed since they knew the horse owners. But then what about books? Arsuka was quick to donate 136 children's books to begin with and later gave more and more books and comics. With the news of horse library going viral on social media platforms and getting wide coverage in international media many came forward to donate books. As a result, there is no dearth of books and the collection has grown to around 5,000. Ridwan has opened a library in his house from where he organizes the village trips. But as Ridwan widens his reach, more books are but required.

A typical scene at Serang in the Purbalingga region on the island of Java is one full of excitement. As the white mare Luna is spotted with Ridwan in tow, children from classes spill out to surround the horse library to borrow the books or comics. The horse itself is a point of attraction for the kids. Says Ridwan, “Their happiness gives me inner peace. It is our wish that they have access to these books. Their smiles prove it.”

The project Kuda Pustaka (Horse Library) is now talk of the town. Ridwan, who started this mobile library in 2014, lives with his family in the remote village at the foot of Mount Slamet.

From Tuesday to Thursday, Ridwan makes use of one of the seven horses entrusted to him to travel and serve as a mobile library. In about four hours Ridwan visits not just schools but also places where the habitat has sufficient population, Quran

learning centers, and farms.

Being a horse caretaker, Ridwan has been taking care of the horses for a long time in his home village of Serang. So, up-keeping the horses is not a big issue.

It was hand-to-mouth existence for Ridwan and his family as salary was hardly enough to meet his and family’s expenses. From taking care of the horses, Ridwan was permitted by the horse owner to rent the horses to tourists who visited the strawberry farms on Saturdays and Sundays. It was a little extra income for him.

Ridwan is committed to continue the horse library notwithstanding his financial situation. Talking to media, he pours out his feelings, “I am very passionate about running the library. My financial position does not permit to donate to the project but I will give my time and energy for a cause which is dear to me and my friend. Children’s smiles



after getting the books are enough for me to move forward.”

He added, “Books stimulate kids’ imagination, curiosity and creativity, thereby educating them and enriching their lives. Books help them in augmenting their academic skills and so I feel horse library is the best contribution from our side for educating our children.”

Ridwan initially encountered many problems in finding books of children’s interest but now everything is in place though more books are required. He also has books on subjects of interest to adults and housewives, like on farming, history, etc. Being a junior high school graduate with a Paket C certificate equivalent to a high school diploma in Indonesia, Ridwan’s commitment is unflinching. He avers, “When we studied, it was hard to find books. Now everything is easier for them, the books are even transport-

ed to their doors, so they should be more enthusiastic. But these kids in remote villages will have to depend on mobile libraries for additional books.”

“Students of my school have been benefited in many ways by Ridwan’s horse library. The collection of books is quite good. In fact, kids have started taking more interest in reading,” says one of the school head of a village in the Region.

Ridwan is now delighted to observe the change in his surroundings. He has a bookshelf in one of the Region’s famous tourist spot. “Tourists picking up the books from my shelf make me happy,” said Ridwan, referring to tourists who read his books.

Inspired by Ridwan’s concept, the Kuda Pustaka project has now been replicated in a place called Rangkasbitung, Banten, West Java. Clearly, reading books movement is on. In letter and spirit.



Religious coexistence in Islamic countries .. **act confirmed by reality**

Jeddah – Alwaleed Jaafer Elias

The Christian Science Monitor has highlighted the reality of Arab and Muslim communities with a unique religious coexistence that resists all forms of intolerance and hatred.





“The streets of Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, are packed every Sunday with scenes of Indian women dressed in saris as they prepare to enter the Catholic Church, while a number of Ugandans and Nigerians are admitted to the same church,” the newspaper said in a report prepared by its journalist, Taylor Luck, adding that a number of Arabs and Maronites, including Coptic families from Egypt and Sudan, gather in front of the neighboring Coptic Church; some of the British to the Anglican Church. These scenes are not at an international festival, but reflect an image on Sunday in Abu Dhabi. “

The report adds that due to the arrival of immigrants from all over the world, the UAE has become an attractive place for



people of different religions and cultures. UAE leaders describe their country as a leader in interfaith dialogue, declaring this year a “year of tolerance”, most notably the visit of Pope Francis, Pope of the Roman Catholic Church to Abu Dhabi in February. With the emergence of their country as a leading force in the region, UAE leaders



are committed to maintaining a friendly and tolerant image of Muslims and followers of other religions.

The relationship of the UAE with the followers of other religions dates back to the pre-unification of the state in its modern form. Christian workers, Hindus and Sikhs had a foothold in the country before the advent of oil, and with the beginning of the renaissance increased the number of these workers, engineers and administrators. In 1960, Christian doctors established Al Waha Hospital in Al Ain. Doctors at the hospital provided significant medical services and revolutionized newborn health-care, reducing their mortality rate from 50% to 5% within a few years.

In 1967, the Catholic Church estab-

lished St. Joseph's School, the first private school in Abu Dhabi, and a year later, the St. Mary's High School in Dubai. To date, these two schools have a great deal of communication with citizens. "The government and the people respect the Christians and appreciate their efforts in the development of the country after they have proven themselves to be confident," says Pastor Gandalf Wilde.

Now there are more than 40 churches and dozens of chapels shared by Christian denominations, as well as the great Sikh temple, a Buddhist temple, and two Hindu temples. Many Jewish prayer groups meet in rented spaces. These groups coexist naturally with Muslims who attend mosques for their prayers.

“We come from all over the world and speak different languages, but we are all united in our love for this country that respects our religions,” said Lawrence, a Christian student.

In one of Dubai’s buildings near the sea, coexistence is evident, with Hindus praying on the second floor. On the third floor, the Sikhs perform their rituals after covering their heads. A small kitchen connects the two temples where the Sikhs serve small meals for everyone, Hindus, Sikhs and visitors as well.

The strict separation of worship and politics has created harmonious relations not only between the state and religious leaders, but also between the various religious groups whose leaders are happy to

keep them in this way.

Human rights monitors say that religious freedoms for non-Muslims in the UAE are well-respected. The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, and the government does not require religious groups to register.

In 2017, with the aim of fostering inter-faith communication, the UAE created the world’s first ‘Ministry of Tolerance’ led by Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak, a member of the ruling family, after Shakhboot Al Nahyan, donated a piece of land for the first church when he was ruler of Abu Dhabi more than half a century. “We have a history of religious coexistence and respect for the other, and we treat it as one of the principles of Islam. We are working to protect



future generations from intolerance,” said Sheikh Nahyan.

Jews in Morocco

In a similar report, the newspaper says that after decades of economic migration and geopolitical tensions that have reduced Jewish communities in North Africa from hundreds of thousands to a few thousand people, hope began in Morocco and Tunisia, where Jews retain many of the characteristics of their societies, as well as the unique model in the area. Muslims and Jews living side by side, in perfect harmony, each one of them performs his religious rites with the utmost freedom. Even at a time of global polarization, Moroccans and Tunisians have proven that historical ties bind Jews and Muslims, and that their common past paves the way for a better future. The Jews came to Morocco, Tunisia and modern Algeria about two thousand years ago.

In Morocco, a country where Muslims make up 99% of its population, Hebrew culture characterizes many cities. There are a number of streets with expressive Hebrew names, historical temples, districts, and many Jewish products. Moroccans are quick to tell you that this is not only a Jewish heritage, but a Moroccan heritage.

“Here we have Jewish life from birth to grave,” says Moroccan anthropologist and curator of the Casablanca Museum of Moroccan Judaism, Zohour Rahil. “Morocco did not sever its relations with the diaspora even during the Israeli-Arab wars, because they were part of us, and when they left, for us Moroccans, it was as if part of us had left,” he said.

King Mohammed VI encourages the return of Jews who have left the country





and welcomes tourists from anywhere, as well as funding for the preservation of 162 ancient Jewish cemeteries and numerous synagogues throughout the country. Under Moroccan law, anyone with Moroccan Jewish origin can claim citizenship. The constitution states that Morocco is a “sovereign Islamic state whose unity is fed by its African, Andalusian, Jewish and Mediterranean components.”

Casablanca has four Hebrew schools, 15 synagogues, and rabbinical judges. “Visiting Arabs and Israelis see the atmosphere on the streets, Jewish and Muslim families living together in the same apartment building, and it is hard for them to believe it, but

this is the truth, not just slogans or dreams, it is a daily life for us, and this is a model we need to keep for the world “ says Serge Perdugo, secretary general of the Council of Jewish Communities.

From his office on the 13th floor, which overlooks downtown Casablanca and the King Hassan II Mosque, Berdougou, 80, works tirelessly to highlight and preserve Moroccan Jewish heritage.

History of the Jews in Tunisia

In Tunisia, the history of Jewish existence goes back many years, with what is believed to be the oldest synagogue in Africa. While the island of Djerba occupies a special place for tourists, Jews are a big part of Tunisia’s pulse and its lifeline. “Andalusia was a model of harmony between followers of religions and coexistence that we can still learn from today. When Europeans occupied southern Spain, Jews and Muslims fled together to North Africa and formed their own neighborhoods with an Andalusian character in towns and villages in Morocco and Tunisia “.says Dean of the University of Tunis, an expert on religious minorities, historian Habib Kadagli.

Kadagli points out that Arab nationalism and wide anger that accompanied the wars with Israel provoked a spate of vandalism against Jewish property and shops in Tunisia, before coexistence between the two sides again.

“There are bigger issues than the Jewish community and the Israel issue,” says Mr. Finnish, a famous shopkeeper. “We left the troublemakers behind, and now we all live in a new Tunisia together.” Finish as everyone watched the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected president, Qais Saeed.



Mother Schools .. Soft Power fights terrorism from homes

Nizar Abdulbagi

The Christian Science Monitor described the efforts of Ms. Ed Schlaffer to enable mothers to immunize their children against extremist ideas as an exceptional act, noting that what she is doing is part of what has become known as the “intellectual security” that all countries are keen to achieve. The newspaper added that the fight against terrorism is not only by means of security or military confrontations, but by immunizing young people from falling into the trap of terrorist gangs that recruit them, through chanting lies and attempts to exploit religious emotions.



The newspaper said that Schlafer was happy when 60 mothers in southern Germany received diplomas from the mother school, which she created to educate mothers, added that Minister of Social Affairs in the southern German province of Bavaria was keen to attend the ceremony. She pointed out that Schlafer began teaching her own curriculum in mother schools nine years ago, and the beginning in Tajikistan for women who were concerned about the recruitment of extremists to their children. The program has since become a global movement aimed at fighting extremism, not by soldiers, but by mothers.

Now, Germany has the first group of graduates, women with roots in Syria and Algeria. They learned not only to detect and respond to early signs of extremism appropriately, but also how to better communicate with their children. When she met these women she noticed that they were ashamed of sitting down, looking at the floor, but on graduation day their heads were high and proud, as the state's top politicians attended.

Remarkable Success

Before the ceremony, Ms. Schlafer realized that her tireless efforts to bring mothers to the forefront of the fight against terrorism were paying off. For women whose lives were on the sidelines and did not receive formal education, the graduation ceremony was an extraordinary moment in their lives. "Our success has been a clear sign that society always views mothers as an important element, that needs trust and support. They are our security makers, because they are closer to children who may be at risk," says Schlafer, an Austrian citizen.

Some 3,000 women in 16 countries, from Tanzania to Bangladesh to European countries including Austria and Belgium, benefited from the mother school. UNESCO has awarded the "Best Model of Practice" award and has been honored by the European Union's Network on Extremism Awareness about three years ago. "Ms. Schlafer has made an important achievement to get the mothers out of their isolation and to have their children look at them



very much,” Emilia Müller, Bavaria’s Minister of Labor, Social Affairs, Family and Integration, said at the graduation ceremony.

Early Attention

The newspaper goes back to the beginning of Schlafer’s interest in women’s issues, says that began in the sixties of the last century, where she was a student in sociology. After graduating as a lecturer and researcher at the university, she traveled to several countries and documented women’s experiences. She says her perception of violence and brutality against refugee women and their children prompted her to be active.

In 2001, she founded the non-profit organization “Women Without Borders”. It aims to empower women to become agents of change in their communities. The start was by allocating a hotline for women victims of extremism in Yemen, and organizing recreational activities for women who were victims of the genocide in Rwanda. She later founded “Sisters Against Violent Extremism”, the world’s first women’s counterterrorism platform.

Fear and Isolation

“In 2010, I was visiting Tajikistan for a research assignment,” Schlafer was quoted as saying. As I talked to some women, I



started thinking in my head the idea of mother schools when some mothers indicated that their children were leaving school, joining extremists and cutting off contact with them. They were afraid and isolated, but they were enthusiastic to regain influence over their children, but they were powerless and unsure how to do it. The idea jumped into my head when one mother told me: “I know what we need. We need to go back to school. At that moment the idea of mother schools was born in my head.” Mothers are on the front line against terrorism. We must provide them not only with confidence, but also with the right tools and techniques to better interact with their children. “

Exceptional Moment

When an Afghan refugee child, just 17 years old, launched an ax attack and

wounded five people in the southern Bavarian city of Würzburg, in July 2017, it signaled that terrorism exists not only in Muslim countries, but also communities in Western countries that need awareness, and that refugee and migrant children also need intensive attention. Schlafler says she was disturbed by the actions of the French government in that period, which merely punished the offenders and deported them to their countries, deepening the gap between national security officials and civil society.

“The long experience has taught me that security or political measures are not capable of fighting extremism, and that the family can play a more positive role. So leaving them alone to confront extremist ideas remains untrue and is like playing with time bombs.”



Strengthen Confidence

After that, Schlafer began to establish mother schools in a number of European countries. In London, for example, she worked with an immigrant from Bangladesh.

In Austria, which ranks second in the European Union, after Belgium, in terms of the presence of ISIS extremists, Schleffer used Chechen immigrant, Minat Kurbanova, to enter the world of Chechen immigrants in Vienna

“Unfortunately, many women are unaware of their enormous potential, and with mother schools, they get a chance to think about what they can do in a reliable and protected environment,” Corianova said.

In Germany, the Bavarian government took an important step by asking Ms. Schleffer to set up a branch of the Mother School, as a measure to prevent violence and hate in the state. “Mothers in this re-

gion are now seen as an important source of information, assistance for change, and support.”

Entertainment Activities

Recently, about 15 mothers in the town of Mettelsberg, near Würzburg, met at the mother school and attend classes one day a week for 10 weeks, and this was instrumental in enhancing mothers’ self-confidence, teaching them how to observe children’s psychological development, and monitoring their use of the Internet identify changes that suggest their outreach to extremist groups.

“Activities in the mother school are not limited to serious lectures. There are recreational activities. It’s not just about fighting extremism. We start from being all mothers. Our language is the language of mothers”. said Bushra Mishri, a translator and member of the school team.



Never Give Up

There was an emotional moment at school, when Yezidi's mother admitted that although ISIS killed her husband in her native Iraq, set fire to her village, and took women as sex slaves, she realized that most Muslims did not support the organization and were not extremists.

Shaden, who asked to use her first name only for safety reasons, says her origins originate in Syria and that she fled to Germany with three children under the age of 14. After graduating from the mother school, she confirmed her determination to better protect her children.

In total, the Mother School in Germany contributed to the graduation of 200 women, including some whose children traveled to Syria's fighting areas, but came to the mother school because they refused to surrender.





APPLICATION OF SHOURA TO SUSTAIN DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

BY DR. BUSARI, K.K.

This article elucidates mutual consultation (Shoura) as contained in the Qur'an and how it can be applied in order to sustain democracy in Nigeria. It discusses reasons for mutual consultation (Shoura) and the qualities of the one who would be engaged in consultation. It concludes that sincerity, piety and readiness to involve people in the process will make people have confidence in our political leaders and guarantee a sustainable democracy.

Principle of Consultation – Islamic Perspective

It is by a special mercy of Allah that you (Muhammad) deal softly with them (your followers). And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have dispersed from you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness (of Allah) for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And when you are resolved, then put your trust in Allah. Surely, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him). (Surat Al-Imran, Verse: 159)

The Qur'an is the first source of the Islamic law. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in Arabic Language. It was also on the pattern

of poetry of the Arabs but not a poetical book. The Arabs are challenged in several places on the pages of the Qur'an to produce a book like the Qur'an but they are unable to do so due to the inimitability of the Qur'an. Its inimitability manifests itself in the ability of the Book to have and address all the issues that need to do with economic, social and political lives of the humankind and its ability to stand the challenges of the time. Among the issues addressed by the Qur'an is democracy and how it can be practiced effectively. To this effect, a whole chapter of the Qur'an is titled Surat Al-Shoura (The Chapter of Mutual Consultation).

The Arabic word used in this Qur'anic passage for consultation is 'Al-Shoura'.





Baalbaki (1996) gives the literary meanings of 'Al-Shoura' among other things as 'consultation'; 'deliberation'; 'opinion', etc. 'Al-Shoura' can, therefore, be defined as a principle with which democracy is put in place in a way of discussing certain issues with people before making a decision about that issue.

Though, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not elected to the prophethood, he demonstrated his commitments to the rules of mutual consultations on the issues that affect lives, especially where the Qur'an is silent. For instance, Gawash (1973) narrated how the Prophet consulted with his companions during the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, when he and his companions were denied the entry

into Makkah to perform the rites of lesser hajj (Uumrah).

Ahmed (1988) enumerates reasons why Al-Shoura is necessary thus:

- i. It is very unfair to single-heartedly decide on matters concerning two or more people. After mutual consultation, nobody has the right to make a unilateral decision.
- ii. If a man acts autocratically or arbitrarily, he does so either to usurp the rights of others or considers himself superior to others. From moral point of view, this attitude is reprehensible.
- iii. It is a great responsibility to take decisions on matters affecting the rights and interests of others, such people must also be a party to that decision making process. One who is conscious of Allah and

His inevitable judgment will not take such decision alone; he has to consult people.

People to be Consulted

There should be certain qualities to be possessed by the people who are to be consulted with. Shittu (2003), quoting Olagunju (2003) highlights some of these qualities.

Piety: This is very significant since Islam strongly recognized the degree of piety. It will determine the kind of trust which can be given to the person.

Good Character: The behavioral aspect of life is considered very paramount and it is pertinent to qualities of each member. Good habit with all and sundry of the same community and out-side the society is highly recommended by Islam.

Knowledge: A person of lower intelligence is not recommended but those that possess wide knowledge are qualified to be consulted.

Trust: Honesty and sincerity are elements which are regarded very imperative.

Maturity: Certainly, an immature person even with all the previous qualities is absolutely disqualified until the person becomes mature.

Experience: Islam does not play with experience. It is the best teacher, and one cannot buy it or learn it literally, but can be achieved only through many experiments.

Democracy and Military Rules in Nigeria

Democracy is simply defined as the government of the people, by the people, for the people. However, there are many types of democracy, but the one that is familiar to us in this country is the 'constitutional' or 'liberal' democracy, whereby the powers of the majority are exercised within a frame work of constitutional restraints

designed to guarantee the minority in the enjoyment of certain individual or collective rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, etc. (Shittu, 1979).

Since 1966 when the military staged the first coup in Nigeria, there have been six successful coups and many other abortive ones. Whenever there was a change in the governance of the country by the means of military coup, the army would claim that they had intervened so as to take a corrective measure. Based on this, people usually welcomed them. But unfortunately, when they settled there, what they termed to be 'corrective' measure would turn to be 'destructive' measure.

Nigerians are already fed up with the military intervention in the governance of the country, so any attempt by any military junta this time around will be definitely resisted. Nevertheless, the behaviors and utterances of our politicians in the recent time show that they only pay lip-service to the stability of democracy in the country. They rig the election, attack physically or send assassins to one another.

Transition from a civilian administration to another one has already taken place successfully and peacefully to some extent through general election. Yet, our politicians have not learned to be good losers. Some of them went so far as to call for mass disobedience as well as cancellation of the election results. The reason for this is just the mere fact that their intention to be in government is to satisfy their pocket rather than satisfy their people.

Application of the Verse for Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria

To make democracy sustainable in Nigeria, there is the need for our leaders, especially the politicians to apply the contents



of the verse which are as follows:

1. Mutual Consultation

This is very important as far as sustainability of democracy is concerned. Consultation is the essence of democracy. The Qur'an (Surat Al-Baqarah, Verses: 30-32) tells us that when Allah intended to create our father Adam, He consulted with the angels. This emphasizes that consultation is very important in any society.

2. Asking for Allah's Forgiveness for the People

This indicates that a leader should not be selfish. His asking for Allah's forgiveness for them means that he thinks always of them and how life will become abundant for them.

3. Kindness

As can be seen in the verse under study, a tyrannous leader only scare people away from his side. So, in order to make democracy sustainable in this country, our leaders should be lenient and soft. The Prophet used to say to his people that he had only been sent as a mercy to the world. The masses only think of a change in gover-

nance when the rulers are harsh-hearted and fail to make them taste the dividends of democracy.

4. Trust in Allah and asking for His guidance

Since leadership, according to Islamic tenets, is not that of a sovereign, but that of a vicegerent. This means that powers are not vested in any one individual, family or group of people, but in the whole community. In fact, there are many verses of the Qur'an that specifically mention Allah as the Sovereign and for instance, Surat Al-Imran, Verse: 26 reads thus:

Say: O' Allah, Owner of Sovereignty! You give sovereignty to whom You will, and You withdraw sovereignty from Whom You will...

It is only a pious leader who will put his trust in Allah, knowing that with the trust in Allah, a leader will succeed.

5. Forgiveness

A leaders should be ready to forgive all the time. A Yoruba adage states: "Bi a ko ba gbagbe oro ana, a ki i ri enikan a a ba sere".



Meaning: 'If one does not forget past offending issue, one would hardly find anyone to live with'. This indicates that for our democracy to be stable and sustainable we have to forgive one another.

Conclusion

In this article, we have been able to discuss 'mutual consultation' as contained in Surat Al-Imran, Verse: 159 and how it can be practiced effectively. Finally, one will see that consultation is the essence of democracy. If our leaders are God-fearing, sincere and ready to carry us along in their deliberations and policymaking, everyone will have confidence in them and thus our democracy will become stable and sustainable.

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The Holy Qur'an.

The Right We Unknowingly Confiscate

By Reem Al-Saeedy

If the Arabic language is “the language of the heart” for its speakers, a generation who is aware of the importance of their mother tongue language will definitely emerge.

The importance of the mother language here is relevant to strengthening the religious ideology; feeling of pride regarding identity, heritage, and culture; as well as self-confidence. Australian rights activist Noel Pearson states that the mother language is the language that connects persons to their selves, emotions, and identity – he justifies it saying that a mother language is the language they hear while inside their mother’s womb. It is the language that helped form their emotions and feelings at that stage.

This brings us to reflect on the status of the Arabic language. For instance, if a child is born into existence to this mother language, the Arabic language, and was exposed to foreign languages through basic education, how will this education influence or affect the child’s heart, mind, and soul? Given that there will be an exception for children who grow up to more than one language

since birth.

Without a doubt, such education will be disconnected from child’s feelings and emotions regardless of its advancement. In other words, child will not be able to reach language proficiency of the mother language and process his/her thoughts which are working like an engine for feelings, because language is like a bowl of thought, so to speak.

It is not a secret to most of us that the presence of the emotional factors in the educational process is essential as it ensures information not only be communicated easily and practically but also has a significant influence and effect that does not go away even if not present within the short-term memory.

Therefore, it is primarily the responsibility of the parents. The parents should make sure that their children respect their mother language since their early family planning stages, given that the right of language is a basic right for children just like the rights of care, breastfeeding, education and all other rights. This is important so that they do not unknowingly confiscate their children’s rights.

Let us raise civilised, balanced, intellectual, and informed children.



The Kiswa Kaaba

