

# THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE *Journal*

**MWL Signs exclusive  
agreement On  
Supervising Halal in Japan**

vol.46

Rajab 1439/April 2018

No.7

**We call for the preservation  
of the shared values**



**The Japanese appreciate the ASEAN's Participation of the MWL**





# Letter From the Editor

## KAICIID CONFERENCE: Sustainable Peaceful Coexistence

At a conference organized by the Vienna-based King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), leading representatives of Muslim, Christian, Jewish and other religious communities worldwide spoke up in one voice for social cohesion, peaceful coexistence and respect for religious diversity.

Religious leaders attending the conference concentrate on the unity between Christians and Muslims on vital issues, such as common citizenship cannot be ignored. Unity among religious leaders is the strongest message of hope the region has seen in many years.

Interreligious Dialogue for Peace, Promoting Peaceful Coexistence and Common Citizenship, are the main issues discussed by the participants. It is important to note that the programs and initiatives that the Centre has completed since its foundation, has played a significant role in the promotion of dialogue.

The violence committed in the name of religion threatens the cultural, social and religious fabric of relations in and between communities, as well as the very survival of religious institutions and communities affected by the conflicts. In cases such as Iraq, Syria, Central Africa and Myanmar, this type of violence seriously threatens the existing cultural, religious and social fabric of the concerned societies. It damages the relations between cultural, ethnic and religious communities, thus disrupting their peaceful coexistence.

By claiming to act in the name of religion, violent factions and certain policymakers harm the image of religion and lead to an increased polarization and intensification of internal tensions throughout the world. The societies become more vulnerable to other violent acts, even when such acts occur spontaneously elsewhere in the world.

In the light of the above reality, there is an urgency to formulate effective responses to the need

to foster interreligious and intercultural dialogue to face such a challenge. In this context, it was, therefore, necessary to launch a global initiative for interreligious and intercultural dialogue. This initiative has been solidified through the establishment of an international center that fosters dialogue as a tool for peacebuilding and establishes bridges between policymakers and religious leaders – the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID).

KAICIID Conference provides the chance for the gathered religious leaders, policymakers and experts to get involved in a series of dialogues on topics such as the role of religious leaders and policymakers in promoting social cohesion and common citizenship, forging global partnerships for dialogue and promoting social cohesion, interreligious education and common citizenship values, as well as social media as a space for dialogue. Those gathered in Vienna are convinced that dialogue must continue, but it is a must to convince others of the actual impact of this dialogue. Conflicts have increased, but the desire and the hunger for peace are also expanding.

How necessary peace and reconciliation are in our days and in our world, so in need of promoting a “culture of dialogue”, a “culture of inclusivism” respectful of every human person, so as to promote solidarity directed towards the common good. The immense movements of refugees and migrants fleeing the horror of war require the humanity to be united in compassion and awareness of the urgency to address the present challenges.

It is also important to point out that, when seeking to promote dialogue on social media, we need to focus on building bridges and breaking the walls between communities through compassion and peaceful communication. In addition, religious leaders and policymakers should actively promote the involvement of women, as well as ethnic minorities, in dialogue initiatives.



# The Muslim World League *Journal*

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• Rajab 1439/March 2018 •

Vol.46

# CON



4

The discourse pursued by the Kingdom and its moderate approach have put things on the right path



29

How the MWL is regulating the halal market, making it safer for the Muslim World



# TENTS



The Japanese appreciate the ASEAN's participation of the Muslim World League (MWL) in marking the tsunami tragedy anniversary

13



No sign Rohingya will be allowed to return home

41

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## S. G. of the Muslim World League:

The discourse pursued by the Kingdom and its moderate approach have put things on the right path

### Vienna - MWL Journal

*The Austrian capital, Vienna, witnessed a significant conference for the leaders of religions and cultures organized by King Abdullah International Center for Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Dialogue (KAICIID). Among the most prominent personalities that attended the Conference were His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Salih bin Abdullah bin Humaid, Imam and Orator of the Holy Mosque in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Advisor to the Royal Court and Member of Commission of Senior Scholars (Ulama) as well as His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Chairman of the Executive Council of the Muslim World League and Member of Commission of Senior Scholars (Ulama).*











In his address delivered at the inaugural session of the conference, H.E. Sheikh Al-Issa said that humanity still suffers from a “void” with regards to coexistence and harmony, and that the price of failing to address it for humanity in terms of peace and cooperation will be paid by our generations’ future. H.E. said: “The further we depart from our human character, the greater will we lose in worthiness, a loss that is proportional to how far we depart. Religious and cultural conflict is due to erroneous ideas that from the start believed neither in the Creator’s law on difference, diversity and pluralism, nor the right to choose. Violent extremism did not recognize the right of difference to exist.”

His Excellency emphasized that harmony among humankind is essential to the integrity, honor and existence of individual human beings, adding that when we appreciate each others’ particular characteristics regarding religious, sectarian, cultural and “intellec-

tual” conviction, we generally attain a high level of wisdom and civility. Islam has honored human beings, he said, guaranteeing them freedom of choice and guiding them towards moral principles.

His Excellency added that the “values of justice and ethics are not contingent upon certain theories, contexts or many communalities”. “Those who are captive to history and the narratives of historians are dependent on the past they immortalized and adhered to,” he said. “Wise individuals always seek wisdom, irrespective of its source.” “We are in greater need of quality life and humane co-existence to attain social, political and moral justice. How fine would it be if values were documented – according to each context - in nations’ constitutions for reference when they lose their way in the face of trends towards a withdrawal of faith. “This withdrawal has rendered our amazing universe a futile, nihilistic notion, but in denying the metaphysical





aspects of faith, it failed to notice that it had embraced a faith of even greater metaphysical aspects than the faith it disavowed.”

His Excellency stressed that “values mark out the path of interests, not vice versa, and they prevent the open-ended, ceiling-free domination of pragmatism at the expense of positive utopian values”.

“Furthermore, in the context of our current diversity, we call for the preservation of the shared values of human nature that express no specific religious, intellectual or cultural character.”

His Excellency continued: “We must preserve the nature of our humanity so that it doesn’t change into another and our position as humans on this shared Earth doesn’t become imbalanced. Most values of justice and ethics are undisputed human communalities. “Constructive and effective dialogue ends the human isolation that has generated hatred, extremism and counter-extremism. In

the battle of hatred and exclusion the victor triumphs only provisionally, for in the final count he is the loser. The law of Allah has ensured the sustainability and beneficence of the society of values and the happiness of its members. Together we must share with each other the many common virtues.”

His Excellency noted that religions are blameless for unjust wars and persecution committed in their names, as well as for impeding the advancement of knowledge and enlightenment in the East and West. Bloody conflicts throughout history and under whatever banner, he said, are the fault of no one but the individuals and groups involved in them.

He added that the world is “in dire need of enlightenment on justice and values on the same scale as the enlightenment attained through the discoveries of matter and the laws of development”. “The human intellect, which has realized material knowledge, is



still suffering with regards to values and their communalities, upon which we all agree,” he continued. “The more we properly understand the wisdom of our ethnic diversity, the more certain we are that it is a source of integration, cooperation and enrichment, and not of hatred, fear and exclusion.”

Here follows the full text of His Excellency’s speech:

Distinguished guests and participants, We are meeting here in this place at a time when we truly need more than ever before support for harmony and coexistence in order to help civilization grow and to fill with our soft power the empty void.

We can see that humanity to this today still suffers from a void that severely threatens its coexistence, as it has left in its wake tremendous hardships whose price was not only paid by our values, peace and cooperation, but by the precious future of our generations. All this enhances our human and moral bond. It is vital that we move closer to our human and moral characteristic qualities.

The further we depart from our human character, the greater will we lose in worthiness, a loss that is proportional to how far we depart.

When we consider the history of religious and cultural conflict among human beings, we find that it is due to erroneous ideas that from the start believed neither in the Creator’s law on difference, diversity and pluralism, nor the right to choice. Likewise, certain aspects of violent extremism did not believe in the right of individuals professing different views to exist. We have to deal with that type of diversity in some of its cultural and ideological contexts by regarding it as a significant form of enrichment and creativity.

Secondly, that human soul didn’t believe in the fact that its tolerance and cooperation are some of the necessities for its integration, honor and very existence. (Human history bears witness to this with distressing details narrating incidents of extremist barbarity and terrorist brutality resulting from that mental derangement.)

When we appreciate others’ special char-



acteristics, not only regarding religious, sectarian and cultural convictions, but also intellectual ones generally, we attain a high level of wisdom and civilization.

What is more, the religion of Islam (and here we are now speaking on behalf of the Muslim peoples under the umbrella of their representative the Muslim World League) has honored human beings, guaranteed them freedom of choice and guided them to moral principles. To support this notion, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, (peace be upon him), said: “I was sent to perfect good morals.”

As we take optimism in our intentions, which are expounded on in meetings such as these, let us see clearly that our age is the age of political and moral philosophy, an age following on from religious, sectarian, cultural and political conflicts that have worn down mankind, leaving in their wake a history lacking in true awareness of the values of justice and morals, which don’t stop at the theories of Aristotle, Socrates, Ibn Rushd and other philosophers of the reform movement in the ages of intellectual uprisings that took place “from time to time”.



We all in fact select what best suits our joint conviction to secure harmony and co-existence as well as human and civilizational interaction, without being captive to a particular circumstance or context suitable only for its time.

If it may be said that the particular conditions and circumstances (throughout human history) require special rules and values that accept change and transformation, and do not imitate theories designed for a time other than theirs, then our time is particularly so in many cases.

Undoubtedly, in the process of change, creativity, transformation and rectification, we find that the captives of history and historian’s narratives are dependent on the past they immortalized and adhered to.

However, despite the above, we should-note that the wise always seek wisdom, irrespective of its time, place, proponents and source. It is in fact the missing dimension and the missing link in many cases in the world today. As the saying goes: “Truth is not known by men, but men are known for their truth; and men of truth are revered and esteemed.”

We are in greater need of a quality life and humane existence to attain social, political and moral justice. How wonderful it would be were values documented – according to each context - in nations’ constitutions for reference when they go astray in the face of the trend towards a withdrawal of faith.

This withdrawal has rendered our amazing universe of solid matter, in the opinion of certain individuals, a futile, nihilistic notion, but in denying the metaphysical aspects of faith, it failed to notice that it had embraced a faith of even greater metaphysical aspects than the faith it disavowed. This is an astonishing concomitant to this withdrawal.



Also, in the same way, when nations go astray, stripped as they are of values, they subsequently find themselves in need of them, but do not find them, and in that moment have no recourse other than to constitutional or legal texts which are devoid of them.

I recall in this regard a friend of mine who works as a constitutional law professor at a prestigious international university and used to frequently complain about his country's legislature. Although I agreed with his objection from a position of moral principle, I asked him: "What is the reason for your objection?" He replied that the legislature contradicts their spiritual, moral and societal values. Then I asked him: "Why didn't you record such things in the nation's constitution to relieve the justice staff of the burden while they assess whether the legislature is constitutional?"

To conclude that values emerge from interests that design them according to material considerations, is to contradict the correct theory that states that values lay out the course for interests and guide them to prevent the dominance of an open-ended, ceiling-less pragmatism at the expense of positive utopian values. We will inevitably return to a state of conflict and confrontation, not merely with those values, but also with human nature which our universal law has stood alongside from the beginning of creation to this day.

We should not presume, therefore, that everyone should belong to a single religion, sect, philosophy or way of thinking. Our reli-

**Only ten per-  
cent of our  
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is sufficient to estab-  
lish peace and  
harmony in  
our world**

gion of Islam has taught us in an unequivocal text that, that is impossible, and logic and awareness confirm it. All that will help preserve the truth and will not excuse us from delivering it.

However, we call for the preservation of the shared values of human nature which do not only express certain religious, intellectual, and cultural characteristics, but also our humanity as human beings as distin-

guished from other creatures by our Creator in endowing us with intellect and shared values.

We must preserve the nature of our humanity so that it does not turn into another and so that our position as humans does not become imbalanced on this shared Earth that is under threat – before the environmental imbalance – from the destruction of the values of its just and moral balance.

Peoples, countries and all humankind have only enjoyed prosperity, security and stability when they have given mind to justice and ethics, in which there are many shared human values.

Religious and cultural differences in those values on the whole do not affect their objective pertaining purely to the way of living. As for the spiritual aspects, however, we all have convictions of faith that should be understood.

Following on from this we can conclude that it is important to have civilizational interaction and cultural exchange through constructive and effective dialogue.

That will help us end the human isolation that has produced hatred, exclusion, extrem-



ism and counter-extremism. The victor in this process of isolation triumphs only provisionally. In the final count, he is the loser.

All wise people should fully appreciate that true competition should be in the race to uphold both values and the noble work for which the law of the Creator has secured sustainability, blessedness and happiness for those pursuing it.

We should all properly understand the concept of virtues into the culture of each nation and civilization, indeed in every country. Furthermore, we must share and promote together the many common virtues.

Proper assimilation helps avoid all forms of confrontation. We say this in recognition that religions are blameless for the unjust wars and persecution committed in their names, and committed mendaciously under the banner of Allah the Almighty. They are blameless also for impeding the advancement of knowledge and enlightenment, occurring in their names in the East and West.

Bloody conflicts throughout history and under whatever banner are the fault of no one but the individuals and groups involved in them.

The world is in need of enlightenment in justice and values to match that achieved in material discoveries and development laws. In surpassing the ages of regression, our time has not sufficiently cloaked itself in justice and values.

Furthermore, the international community should through the United Nations appreciate the importance of the issue and work for it through serious and effective resolutions and initiatives.

The human mind, however much material knowledge it has acquired, still suffers with respect to values and the communalities upon which we all agree.

The more we appreciate the meaning of “one single human soul”, with which Allah addressed us in the verse: “And don’t kill (destroy ) yourselves”, Surat Al-Nisa’a Verse 29 , the more our horizons expand, and the





better we appreciate the nature of human difference and the need to respect each other's freedom, and the more we appreciate generally the nature of our diversity, and the more we wisely and comprehensively appreciate this particular meaning of the human soul.

The more we properly understand the wisdom of our ethnic diversity, the greater our conviction that it is a source of integration, cooperation and enrichment, and not of hatred, fear and exclusion.

When we reach that level of awareness, we will be closer to achieving humankind's happiness and realizing the hope sought for, and overcoming sporadically increasing suffering through the advancement in knowledge and technology and their full globalization, and the United Nations.

To conclude, we reiterate through this significant event that only ten percent of our common values are sufficient to establish peace and harmony in our world.

Furthermore, with the awareness we seek, we can face all the ways of intellectual

and cultural hegemony, which do not present their vision in a moral and civilizational context that calls for freedom of choice. Instead, its agenda includes the barbarism of imposing the very ideology or employing it for other purposes. History provides unforgettable lessons regarding such individuals, but those who follow such paths will not take lessons even from themselves.

At the end of his speech, H.E. Dr. Sheikh Al-Issa gave a press conference at which he said: "We have received international praise at this conference, which was attended by senior religious figures, and prominent intellectuals, politicians and figures from the media. We received great praise for King Salman Center for International Peace, praise that expressed great confidence that it would set standards for peace based on justice and moderation as agreed upon by the two founding countries, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia." He added that the Kingdom's discourse and moderate approach had put things on the right path.



● Dr. Al-Issa during his attendance of commemoration ceremony ●

**Al-Issa expresses the condolences of the Muslim World to the families of Tsunami victims and visits Tsunami orphanage school**

The Japanese appreciate the ASEAN's participation of the Muslim World League (MWL) in marking the tsunami tragedy anniversary

**Sendai - MWL Journal**

*The Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa participated in the commemoration of the victims of the earthquake that hit the city in 2011.*





● *Section of the audience attending the ceremony* ●

On his arrival, HE the Governor of the city, Mr. Shiroyamada, Mr. U Yeno, Chairman of the Provincial Council of Parliament, and Mr. Takahashi, Mayor of the city, were received at the venue.

His Excellency expressed his condolences on behalf of the Muslim World League to the families of the victims and the Japanese people. He stressed that the earthquake that violently struck their city in 2011, the strongest earthquake to hit Japan, is a painful memory for which we cannot but express our solidarity with the victims' families in

expressing to them our profound condolences please replace with: on harm that befell them.

Dr. Al-Issa has applauded the efforts made by the inhabitants and officials of Sendai city to re-construct their city, especially after the incidents witnessed by the city and sincerer and ceaseless endeavors exerted to overcome the effects of the earthquake and the subsequent floods caused by tsunami and the tragedy that they unfortunately suffered.

In the context of his the participation in commemorating the an-



● *Dr. Al-Issa participates with the inhabitants of Sendai City the anniversary of the tsunami* ●

niversary, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League visited the Sendai orphanage school, which accommodates the innocent children who lost their parents in the ruthless, violent tsunami. During his tour His Excellency met with the teaching staff and a number of orphans. He was briefed please replace with:

on the efforts of the school, which is considered one of the initiatives of the Japanese people to confront the aftermath of the devastating effects of the tsunami. He also distributed symbolic gifts among the children.





*H.E. Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Taro Kono receives H.E. MWL SG Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa in Tokyo.*



*Governor of Sendai, Japan Mr. Shiro Yamada Along with, Chairman of its Parliament Mr. Owenu & it's Mayor Mr. Takahachi receive H.E. MWL SG, Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa. They laud His Excellency's condolences for the Japanese people on the anniversary of painful Tsunami calamity.*



*H.E MWL SG Dr. Al-Issa meets with the President of the Japan Peace Research Center. The number of research & Hiroshima documents Bomb amounting to 10000 used for multi purposes, including medical & social ones. H.E. listens to a detailed presentation, and he appreciates the hosts' welcome and lauds their effort.*







At the invitation of the Dean of the Corps ..

## Secretary General of the MWL opens a comprehensive dialogue with members of the diplomatic corps in Tokyo

### Japan:

*Secretary General of the (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa has emphasized that humanity today stands in the face of complicated historical contexts relating to the created religious and intellectual conflict, which is considered the most important and dangerous catalyst for many consequences of human history as well as the resulting images of hatred, extremism and terrorism. In the same context, he also held “material” media accountable for making significant contribution to fueling this conflict.*

This was represented in the participation of H.E. Sheikh Al-Issa in several events organized recently in Japan. The first important one was his attendance of an open meeting with the members of the diplomatic corps accredited in Japan in response to an invitation extended to His Excellency by the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps H. E. Mr. Walid Siam, Palestinian Ambassador. This was followed by his effective participation in an international symposium, held jointly by the Middle East Research Institute and certain Japanese government officials, and hosted by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the presence of His Excellency Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Taro Kono, who received before the beginning of the symposium HE Sheikh Al-Issa and discussed with him a number of issues of common concern.

His Excellency the Secretary General expressed his pleasure at participating in these events, and said, "stressing that they are meetings in which " These meeting are events in which we share common values towards the concepts of religious and intellectual moderation as well as norms of peace and human harmony, so that to confirm to all our agreement and alliance in confronting all forms of extremism and violence, irrespective of its source or sort".

H. E. Dr. Al-Issa said that the lack of awareness of the law of life and its universal rules as well as the action that we should take even towards the cases of injustice and oppression, were in fact the most important cause of extremism in general, whether it was religious or non-religious, after due saturation with its first stimulus.

He added that " we can briefly describe extremism that it represents a case in which an individual is saturated with the correct-

ness of his own opinion to the degree that he excludes and hates other opinions. This perception may develop in the individual's mind to the level in which he considers the opposing opinion threatening not only to his opinion but also to his very entity. This forces extremism to confrontation, an act that leads to be fully convinced that it doesn't basically believe in the right of existence for those embracing opposing opinions.

Sheikh Al-Issa said that the lack of efficiency of some religious, intellectual or political leaders, accompanied with their sectarian or material whims, as well as the blowing up in their vacuum, has an important impact in this regard with its dangerous test.

The Secretary General of the MWL pointed out that extremism (is still remaining and) has always remained a very complicated problem that surfaces from time to time, at different levels of activity and damage. Thus extremism generally accompanied religions, policies and ideas ; and in each of its case there was unfortunately a tragic end which was recorded by history in the pages of sermons and lessons.

He indicated that there are other reasons that instigate extremism. These comprise two reasons; the first is the sense of insult or marginalization and the second is the lack of the proper administration of justice, that is conspicuously manifested in the erroneous dealings with religious or ethnic minorities.

He added: "If we have to take an exception to a case of extremism that can survive or become victorious – at a temporary stage - is the case (one) resulting from the above second reason to win the stage is this situation. The reason for this is that the motivation for such terrorism case was not an ideology of hate, but it was only resistance, which is





● *Dr. Al-Issa meets with the former Japanese Prime Minister* ●

usually accompanied by violent practices,”. He drew the attention to the fact that if this reaction has, however, employed religion as a reason that calls it for violent extremism via attempting to secure for it the required legitimacy and motivate others, then in this case, it is counted as terrorist practice. For, this terrorism will eventually be seen as insulting to religion by trying to hijack its principles, distorting its texts and instigating the emotion of its followers with the techniques of religious sermons that inflame feelings and that directly or indirectly call people to practice violence or terrorism.

The Secretary General of the MWL drew the attention to the fact that has extremism was formed in the recent decades in the areas of political conflict, especially after the accommodation of the said conflict to strict religious interpretations. In fact, the contemporary terrorist organizations generally sprang against the background of these events and interpretations; hence the first spark for commencing their activity represented in their departure from the religious concepts that

call for dialogue, peace and harmony, as important human meanings, which are summarized by the religion of Islam in a single Qur’anic verse, in which Allah Almighty addressed the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) by saying “We sent you only but as a mercy to humankind” Surat Al-Anbya’a 107.

He added that: “This cessation / dichotomy led to the inception of religious groups that carry new names and slogans; and that each one of them has its own agenda; they all unite among them against their common enemy. However, after they achieve victory over it – in a temporary stage - -that return to vigorously wrestle against each other till they virtually replete from within. He said,” the long human history stands as a witness for this in all forms of violent extremism, with its all forms, and that is generally attributed to religions. Furthermore, this history with its painful chapters is replete with sermons and lessons”

Dr. Al-Issa warned that the most dangerous thing confronting our world is that extrem-



● *Dr. Al-Issa signs the Earth Identity Project Foundation (EIPF) agreement to promote peace* ●

ism is no longer governed by a geographical area that can be crushed by putting it under control, but it finds its entity existence in an amazing globalization, creating for all an open virtual world that was able to surpass traditional geographical without the need for permits and to open offices everywhere in our world without required licenses. This situation led to the degree that we considered the number of other religious platforms before such a modern communicative invention of the age among the traditional techniques that have relatively limited impact in regard to this extremely tremendous change in the transfer and exchange of information.

For others, this modern opening is one of the traditional ways of limiting the impact and effectiveness of this great transformation in the transmission and exchange of information, However, we are facing classical ideas that have not yet absorbed this amazing equation of influence and movement. Dr. Al-Issa added that I have repeatedly said that extremism- in most of its conditions- did not arise from a political or military entity, but from a quite an adverse and different ideolo-

gy. This necessitates that such a queer ideology must be faced with counter-thought, and with the elimination of the reasons for the growth of these ideologies. His Excellency the Secretary General pointed out that there is a difference between the civilization of the machine, which is devoid of human values, and the civilization of man. The former is more susceptible to tremors and transitions, whereas the latter is the safest and most sustainable, considering in this context that the collective political activity is more confident, reliable, advisable and guaranteed.

He called upon states, civil society institutions and individuals to recognize the difference between the true religion and those attributed to it, just in name, between the religious text and the interpretation of the text, between the genuine interpretation and misinterpretation, between the individuals religiously imbued with logic and awareness, and those who are religiously saturated with an emotion devoid of consciousness, between the religious commitment devoid of political shakings and the one (religious commitment) that has been exposed to it,



and between religious commitment as a contributor to peace, harmony and psychological tranquility that supports urbanization, rapprochement and human tolerance, and between the one (religious commitment) ideology of hatred and exclusion of others.

He called upon the communities to strive to strengthen their national fabric and to fight all forms of religious and ethnic discrimination, because they are considered the biggest obstacles in the building of national unity. Therefore, it is essential to properly activate integration programs for religious minorities. He said, "We are all aware that when religion becomes deep in the minds of individuals, it doesn't merely constitute a transient choice, but it is an important entity that affects their feelings and actions. Unless there is a deep awareness of the reality of religion and a complementary national integration, we will find cases of unconscious religious commitment that carry negative behaviors; and that there are many sites of religious conflict in the world stand as witness to this." Dr. Al-Issa considered the criminalization of the abuse of followers of religions and sects for



● *Algerian Ambassador in Tokyo, commenting on the open dialogue with Dr. Al-Issa* ●

purely religious reasons is one of the most important effective contributions to the process of national integration. To the above, we add the prevention of any method of discrimination, the most important of which are the procedures for national security precautions that must include equally everyone, together with monitoring messages that instigate hatred and target the societal component in particular and the humanitarian one in general. Finally, comes the discouragement of educational institutions that completely isolate the "national" children from their society not to continue this practice, because there is no justification for the isolation of pure material knowledge from society, whose member should positively coexist with it in a manner that preserves for

it in the same time the care of its special entity and the required harmony with its societal and human family within the context of its national state. Furthermore, the religious identity should attempt to prepare special subject concerning them in additional programs, because this procedure preserves for the child's intellectual balance, together with caring for his identity and securing for him the full level of religious education he deserves, including the required social required immunity within the positive context. This can be done and prevents his societal conflict while taking care of his identity and giving him the adequate level of religious education he deserves, including the required social immunity within the positive context. This can be done with the



● *A group photo during the signing ceremony of the Earth Identity Project Foundation (EIPF) agreement* ●

concerted efforts of the family and these specialized programs which should focus on making the child effective, honest and dedicated to his national state ; and that his religious identity or ethnic category should be a unique model for supporting the national harmony.

He also stressed that any sermons or religious, political or ideological messages that would isolate any group from coexistence with their societal linking or call for creating a gathering or grouping under a slogan that opposes or incites the national state should be prohibited as far as possible. He added that “We must also distinguish between the philosophy of certain countries regarding the separation of religion from the state and between the respect of the conviction of followers of

religions, as the failure to make such distinction would instigate religious emotions and divide society, and may generate extremism, especially among the young adolescents who receive today the messages of their virtual world, which is extremely difficult to follow and control only with securing social preventive immunity and full conviction”, calling for strengthening the initiatives of religious harmony between all segments of society.

He concisely added that abstract sectarianism, political sectarianism, provocation of religious sentiment with religionphobia discourse, and the contempt of followers of religions and sects, the absence of proper justice administration, marginalization and the weakness of religious awareness all come at the

forefront of the primary motivations for setting the scene of extremism and terrorism. Furthermore, he indicated that “ we should make conspicuous distinction between the environment of terrorism and its internal intellectual causes and its external instigating and supporting ones , in addition to the fact we take into account the responsibility of negligence on the part of the responsible, academic, intellectual and social confrontation forums before the scientific, intellectual and social frontiers of responsibility as well as catalysts of extremism. He concluded by saying that” Japan is considered according to our vision among the list of countries that are distinguished with their national harmony. In the name of the Muslim peoples, who are under the umbrella of the Muslim World League (MWL), we salute this pioneering distinction”.

On the other hand, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League signed the Earth Identity Project Foundation (EIPF) agreement with Ms Hiroko Kawahara, head of the Earth Identity Project Foundation, a pioneering project in cultural work that calls for harmony, peace and teaching children the value of civilization.





● HE Dr. Alissa signing the agreement ●

**Executive Director of NGOs: The cooperation of the MWL gives us strength .. Signing of the agreement is a historic event for Japan**

## MWL signs exclusive agreement on supervising and regulating Halal food market in Japan and during Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games

**Tokyo: “MWL”**

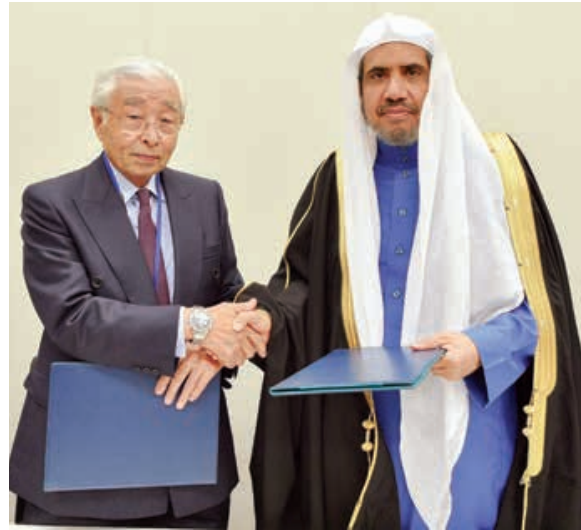
*The Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa signed with the Chairman of the Japan Halal Association (JHA), Mr. Seiji Sakta, an exclusive agreement to regulate and supervise Halal food in Japan, hence making MWL exclusively responsible for it in Japan in general and during the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo in particular.*

The signing of the agreement was attended by H.E. Mr. Mia Koshi, the senior advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan and His Highness Prince Oke Mitsu Hirosha, the Emperor's cousin, and a number of representatives of Islamic centers, ministries, various Japanese government bodies, and major companies.

Based on the above, the Muslim World League (MWL) will jointly share with the Government of Japan the responsibility of regulating and supervising the affairs of Halal food, as well as making sure that they conform to requirements and that relevant Islamic specifications are complied with in Japan as a whole. Furthermore, MWL has undertaken to observe the compliance with the highest Islamic and legal specifications of the Halal project in Japan in general.

Furthermore, His Excellency the Secretary General of MWL, Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa lauded the significance of this harmony between MWL and the relevant Japanese institution, commended the presence of high-level officials at the signing of this important collaboration agreement, which is governed by the terms and provisions of its various articles, emphasizing that it reflects the level of mutual trust relationship.

He pointed out that MWL occupies an important position in the Muslim world, as an international, Islamic and umbrella organization that represents Muslims and is concerned with their affairs in general. Such concern includes the elucidation of the reality of their religion that promoted good deeds for all and interacted with them for the benefit of humankind. Allah Almighty addressing his Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "We have sent you but as mercy to mankind" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I was sent to complete the moral principles."



● *His Highness Prince Oke Mitsu Hirohashi, uncle of the Japanese Emperor's cousin during the signing ceremony* ●

**Al-Issa: We do appreciate the Japanese confidence. We are impressed by its distinctive model of integration and national harmony**

He added: "The MWL is also concerned with the humanitarian issue for all, both Muslims and non-Muslims, and it has in this regard humanitarian, cultural and civilizational initiatives that constitute a considerable portion of its programs. These are organized and implemented in collaboration with various religions, sects, cultures and civilizations with a view to reaching our common objectives".

Dr. Al-Issa said "We feel glad in Japan when we see the high level, and even model, of national integration, which is far away from any form of extremism, irrespective of





● *Describing the agreement as historic, the Japanese media applauds  
the honorable attitudes of the MWL towards Japan* ●

its source “. He also emphasized that “When we reach the joint work for the common good with due sincerity, seriousness, and faithfulness according to the requirements of coexistence and positive national harmony, this is seen as an important requirement in the mission and objectives of the Muslim World League.

The Secretary General of MWL added that “We seek to achieve positive national integration in all countries the world over, among all religions, sects and races, to achieve the coexistence, harmony and peace that is required of all of us, as such integration will serve from another aspect as a counter-message to any form of extremism that constitutes any attempt to get through to the Japanese individual, who is distinguished by his human values and continuous contribution to the values of coexistence and growth, irrespective of whether the source of such attempts is religious, intellectual, ethnical or otherwise. “

Al-Issa said Japan has proved that it is a

distinctive model for integration, national harmony and peaceful coexistence all over the world. He also recalled the visit he paid, heading the MWL’s delegation, to the city of Sendai, his participation with the city’s inhabitants in their commemoration of the tsunami disaster, and the visit to the orphanage school, where he met with the children sponsored by the school, after they had lost their parents in the catastrophe. Dr. Al-Issa stressed that “We must feel that humanity is one family and that our values dictate on us that we employ our diversity for acquaintance and cooperation. Likewise, we take advantage of the hardships of natural life as lessons from which we learn so that we can present through them the noblest images of human solidarity as well as reflect the value of love as inevitable truth promoting good deeds and wishes of happiness for all mankind “

Dr. Al-Issa and MWL’s delegation visited the Hiroshima Museum, where he was shown documents pertaining to the nuclear



**MWL undertakes to observe the compliance with the highest Islamic and legal specifications of the Halal project**

bomb which was mercilessly dropped on the city. Furthermore, His Excellency commended the degree of accuracy and precision attained by the museum with regard to the documents of the atomic bomb dropped on the city. He also informed them of the accuracy of the documentation and the magnitude of the disaster that afflicted Japan that was able to surpass it with strong will and determination, together with the sagacious tackling with the country's tragedy. Thus, the country has given via all the above extremely significant historical lessons that cannot be forgotten.

At the conclusion of his speech, His Excellency Dr. Al-Issa said, "We were really delighted to have a high-level Japanese presence during the signing of the exclusive agreement on the supervision and regulation of Halal food in Japan as well as the resumption of mutual cooperation in Japan".

For his part, H.E. the Executive Director of non-governmental organizations, Dr. Nuka Miyajima, emphasized that the cooperation with the Muslim World League (MWL) gives the Japanese the required strength; describing the signing of the agreement as a historic event for Japan.

Furthermore, H. E. Mr. Miyajima has applauded the tangible social contributions of the Muslim World League (MWL), expressing his welcome to it and its future presence in Japan through the commencement of the activities of "Halal" project Center.

He further stressed the Japan's commitment to dealing with the MWL and to cooperating with it based on the great trust MWL has deservedly acquired through the intellectual and humanitarian projects implemented by it in the whole world in general and in Japan in particular, expressing his aspiration to continue working with it.

He also commended the role played by the MWL in raising awareness among the Muslim communities in Japan and in the countries of the Muslim world, and other countries, as well as in following up the affairs of such communities and in supporting their integration into their respective communities in non-Muslim countries.

H. E. Mr. Miyajima praised the noble positions of the MWL in many humanitarian issues in the areas of war and conflict. He drew the attention to the fact that the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has welcomed the Muslim World League as an in-



**Described by Japanese media as historical, the signed agreement resumes mutual cooperation with Japan**

ternational body, an act that means the MWL was given great trust. He also confirmed that the two sides will strive to find global standards for Halal products in Japan. This will be carried out in cooperation with three prestigious Japanese universities, that are authorized to thoroughly examine, supervise and monitor these standards.

It is worth mentioning that, according to the terms and provisions of the agreement and the understanding between the two parties to it, the MWL will regulate and standardize the specifications of Halal products in Japan. In line with its pioneering role in the Islamic and humanitarian work, the MWL will also deal with whoever desires to enter as a producer or investor in this field of Halal food.

The MWL oversees Halal food and services as well as provides its expertise and advice to the relevant Japanese Association. It works, cooperates and coordinates with the

**Japanese media: The “historical” signing of the agreement reminds us of the recent honorable attitudes of MWL towards the Japanese prisoners of wars**

said association in any action or procedure before the Japanese Government, companies and community at large, as the agreement is a complementary work that reflects the main function of the MWL, which focuses on serving humanity in the whole world in general and in Japan in particular.

One of the MWL's tasks regarding Halal products is the issuance of required Halal certificates for products, whether such products are prepared to be consumed locally by the Muslim community in Japan or to be exported abroad, especially to Arab and Muslim countries. The MWL will also be concerned with supervising the imported products and ensure that its Islamic and procedural standards are properly applied in the preparation of products. Furthermore, the MWL will solely be responsible for regulating Halal food, as well as importing and supervising food during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic games and for due consumption in the Japanese markets.

Through this agreement, the MWL will generally be responsible for regulating and issuing required and stamped Halal food certificates, in addition to the application of relevant Islamic standards and conditions pertaining to Halal food products produced in Japan or imported to it. However, the MWL has undertaken to generally apply the highest Islamic and procedural standards and conditions in Japan.

It has to be observed that the signing ceremony of the agreement was attended by a large number of media representatives who agreed that this historical event reminds them of the recent honorable attitudes adopted by the MWL concerning the Japanese prisoners of wars, an act that strengthened the MWL positive image among the Japanese people.

# HALAL MEAT



## How the MWL is regulating the halal market, making it safer for the Muslim World

By Qais Bajaeifir

*With many millions of Muslims living in non-Muslim countries supplying the Muslim World with considerable amounts of halal products such as meat and medicines, it is only right to be concerned that traditional slaughter practices are being respected.*



According to research on Islamic marketing and tourism, more than 80% of halal products are controlled by non-Muslim countries such as Brazil, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, and India. In some countries, such as Japan, China and France, the halal industry accounts for a sizeable volume of their gross domestic product. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs figures show that South Korean halal food exports to Gulf Cooperation Council countries in 2015 amounted to \$860 million. Similarly, according to a recent Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry report, Chinese halal food manufacturers are expected to provide \$1.6 trillion of investment this year alone.

Figures from the Muslim Council of Britain, the Halal Development Council of Pakistan and Reuters' State of the Economy Report 2016, further reveal just how big a business halal is:

- Brazil exports one million frozen halal chicken and 300,000 MT of halal beef products annually.
- France exports 750,000 MT of halal frozen chicken annually.
- Forty percent of New Zealand's beef products are halal.
- The overall value of the UK's halal food market is £700 million.
- GCC halal food imports are worth some \$44 billion annually.

Despite the increasingly fierce competition, however, business is set to continue thriving, with forecasts predicting that the halal food and lifestyle industry is set to be worth \$2.6 trillion by 2020.

All of which begs a serious question, however: Do all halal food manufacturers properly observe traditional Islamic slaughter practices?



The Muslim World League (MWL) plays a pivotal role in introducing standards to monitor and control halal products exported to Muslim countries, and this report highlights its work in ensuring that such products are 100% halal.

### **What is halal?**

As a general rule, halal food should be free of all ingredients that Shariah forbids Muslims from consuming, such as alcohol and pork.

### **Halal authority**

To ensure that all products labelled halal meet the necessary criteria, the MWL established in 2013 its Halal Meat Department. The Department strictly monitors all stages of halal meat production to ensure that manufacturers follow proper Islamic methods of animal slaughter, and applies rigorous procedures to all food products imported from non-Muslim countries. It also works with



food authorities in Islamic countries to further control the halal food that enters, such as the Saudi Food and Drug Authority.

In its efforts to become the primary authority on halal in the Muslim World and beyond, the Department has recently undergone restructuring, bringing on board a number of experts and Islamic jurists as part of its continuous process of enhancement.

One recent result of the Department's work has been the various legal actions taken against violators of halal standards. Some manufacturers were found to have been using prohibited methods such as captive bolt stunning, concussion stunning, and drowning prior to slaughter. Some were found to be in possession of fake halal certification.

The Department withheld halal certification from several beef-exporting unions and associations for their failure to comply with slaughtering criteria and their use of halal labelling on meat that had not been slaughtered according to Islamic methods. Others were issued with two-week warning notices for various violations of halal regulations. One beef manufacturer, the MWL discovered, had labelled as halal pork to be

exported to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Four beef producers had their operations suspended for exporting meat to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that had not been slaughtered in accordance with Shariah rules, while warnings were issued to another 23 producers suspected of similar violations.

The MWL recently stated that it would take draconian measures to prevent halal meat manufacturers using fraudulent methods and circumventing the MWL's halal standards, reiterating that it would act in accordance with its mission and responsibility towards the Muslim World and in line with its bylaws.

As a result of the rigorous procedures that the MWL has introduced, many governments in Asia and Europe have signed up to agreements whereby the MWL monitors and controls halal product exports and ensures products meet its standards. A number of other countries are set to sign similar agreements in the near future. Many Asian and European governments, moreover, have invited MWL to act as their accredited body for their halal exports.

### **Website and largest halal center**

The MWL has also launched in Holy Makkah the largest halal center in the world, designed to act as a global reference for all things halal, from food and medicines to all other relevant products. It is also set to launch a website in more than 20 languages that will serve as a reference authority on all types of halal products.

As its efforts to establish itself as the principal authority on halal products all over the world increase and take effect, the MWL is ensuring that Muslims' traditional practices are respected and that the halal market is both reliable and safer for consumers.





## Introduction of Islam to New Muslims at ICC

Dr. Mozammel Haque

*An Introduction of Islam Course both to New Muslims and others was organised in the Islamic Cultural Centre, London on 26 November 2017. In the main opening speech, Dr Ahmad Al-Dubayan, Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre (ICC) started by saying Assalamualaikum and then he explained what it means. He said, “Assalamualaikum means peace be upon you or on you.” Then he talked about the course, he said, “Introduction to Islam is an idea to say to those who do not know Islam at all or to give more knowledge for the Muslims who know about Islam but they have questions or they want to deepen their knowledge about Islam.”*

At the beginning of the course he asked the gathering who is attending the course for the first time and after knowing that most of them are attending for the first time; he asked again who are Muslim amongst you. After that Dr. Al-Dubayan expressed his thanks generally to both Muslims and non-Muslims because you wanted to learn about the faith.

### **Knowledge brings tolerance**

Dr. Al-Dubayan said, “Let me thank you both; to Muslims because you want to learn more about your faith and the non-Muslims because they want to know about Islam because we believe knowledge brings tolerance and better understanding of society from everybody. The more you know about people actually you have less fear about them and you are close to them. Actually the less you know about them the more you have fears about them because you are suspicious about them because you do not have enough information about them. So, that will give you more space for stereotypes or false stories about other people; because you are not close to them. This is exactly everywhere in the world, not only about one nation or one country, it is everywhere, everybody.”

### **Why we talk about Islam?**

Now why we talk about Islam? Dr. Al-Dubayan explained it is especially important nowadays for many reasons. He said, “First of all, Islam is one of the biggest largest religions in the world. It is, may be, the fastest growing religion in the world; every day, every month, every year we have more followers, more people come to Islam. Of course, there are many reasons for this; I am not going to talk about this all but this

will give us an idea why we want to know about this religion. Why people come to this faith and what this faith means and what it has? What is the philosophy of this religion itself?”

“Secondly, Muslims are now western citizens, in the UK, in France, in Germany. Many Muslims are there, they are Germans, they are French, they are British and at the same time they are Muslims. And they do not see any contradiction in the values of Islam and being citizens of these countries. And there is no contradiction actually,” said Dr. Al-Dubayan and added, “So it is better to know about our neighbours, our friends, our colleagues in the work who are Muslims; and they are sharing with us many every day and we know a little bit about them. Better to know more about them. I have to come to this. I have to thank also non-Muslim friends who are with us today; because they would like to know about Islam and about Muslims. Thank you very much; welcome to the Islamic Cultural Centre.”

Dr. Al-Dubayan then gave a brief history of Islam. He said, “The purpose of this is really to give more support for tolerance, more support about co-existence, about people; when they know about each other, they know more about each other. Historically, Islam came in the seventh century; and Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him died in 632 AD. This is about 600 years between Jesus Christ and Muhammad peace be upon them. Prophet Muhammad started from Makkah. Makkah is a city. This is where Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him was born in that time; and this is where he started the Call for Islam.”

### **What Islam means itself?**

“What Islam means itself? The word it-

self. Islam comes from Arabic; the language of the Qur'an is Arabic. Islam means submission; it comes from the word 'Salam'. Salam means peace; Salam peace. Islam also means being peaceful to other people; submission to Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala. Submit yourself to the Orders and Instructions from Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala. To Him, to Allah; following the teachings or following the Orders from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. They came from the same roots or from the same language," said ICC chief and added, "When you see Muslims greet one another person they say Assalamualaikum; same word, Salam. It came from the same word Islam. It is sometimes in Hebrew Salon; Salam in Arabic, it means peace; this is the meaning of the word."

### **Foundation of the Call of Islam is Tawheed**

Dr. Al-Dubayan then explained the core of Islam. While doing this, he said, "Prophet Muhammad actually started new call in Makkah. The new call was actually calling people to worship Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala- Only One God; do not have many gods like the Arabs used to do in those societies in those days. Then after that, the Prophet started this. The main foundation of the Call of Islam itself is Tawheed. Tawheed means you recognise and believe in your hearts that God is One; the One Only. The Oneness of God, there is only One God; there is no second god; or three gods or four gods or whatever. No goddess or no goddesses; except One Only. He is the Only One Who deserves to be worshipped. This is the foundation of the whole story of Islam. If someone does not accept this and does not deeply believe in his heart, he is not Muslim; even if he follows the other

rituals or other things. This is the core; this is the theme of the whole religion."

### **Islam – continuity of other religions**

The ICC chief then explained that Islam is a continuity of other religions. He said, "Islam itself is not a new religion. The Qur'an is telling us about Abraham; about other Prophets, about Moses, about Jesus Christ. Islam is presenting itself as a continuity of other religions. That's why; the Qur'an itself calls Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others as Muslimeen; as Muslims. And the Qur'an says: The Message Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala delivers to all Messengers, to all Prophets came, there is Only One God; and He is the Only One to be worshipped. He is the Only One deserves to be worshipped. That's the Foundation."

Of course there are some differences, Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned. He said, "There are differences in rituals, for example, how to fast, how to pray. May be during the days of Abraham, not like we are doing now; there were different instructions based on the societies based on the news may be, but the rules of the religion itself - The Oneness of God and Only we Worship Allah and we don't worship any other god, or any other idol or goddesses, or any other - whatever. The Qur'an is very clear about this. Most of the Qur'an talks about this point; in one way or other. Even the stories of the Qur'an tell us about other Prophets; it says all the Prophets came to deliver the same Message I sent and O Muhammad the Last one who came to carry this Message for everyone."

### **How Islam sees the whole existence**

There were other speakers who were going to talk about pillars of Islam and articles of faith. That's why; Dr. Al-Dubayan was



concentrating about the philosophy of Islam itself. How Islam itself sees the whole world. This is the main things you have to understand Islam. If you are actually not Muslim and you try to understand Islam this way.

Dr. Al-Dubayan explained How Islam sees the whole existence. He said, "First of all, what you see all around in the universe is created by ONE GOD. He is Allah; He is God. You can use the word God, you can use the word Allah, and you can use the proper name Allah for Him. God is the Creator of the Universe. Everything you see in it, everything yourself, around you, whatever it is; even it is air actually created by Him. So He is the Only One who deserves to be worshipped. And He is the Only One who created us also."

### **Existence of Humankind**

Speaking about the existence itself of humankind, Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned the existence is divided into two parts – first part is this life and the second part is the life after death. He explained, "The existence itself of humankind is actually divided into two parts - the first one is this life; where you are living; beginning from the birth till the end to death. It is for everybody; does not matter how long you live; the beginning is birth and the end, everybody is going to die. That's the first part of it. The second part starts when the Day of Judgement comes, the day of resurrection when people will come back again to life, actually to be judged according to their practices and deeds in this life."

### **First part is the part of trial and testing**

"So where are we now? We are in the

first half; the first one. The first part is actually the time of testing. It's the time of trial, when Allah gave us a chance to see what we are doing in our life; what we do with our bodies; what we do with other people; what we do with everything around us; starting from ourselves then going to other people; to everything around us; everything. All the good all the bad which we are doing will be counted, counted and counted till there is an account after death we come to see it," explained Dr. Al-Dubayan.

"Why there is this chance?" He questioned and immediately said, "This chance Allah wants to see what we are doing and gives us a chance to be judged later on. So Muslims believe whatever you are doing it will never be forgotten; unless you are forgiven. Everything that will keep your eyes always opens about your action or about your intentions. What I do to you is counted actually even if you forget it. Or even if you harm somebody and he does not know who does to him; he does not know but Allah knows who does it; so it is counted. Nothing will be missing; nothing will be actually lost or be mistaken."

He also mentioned, "The person who understands Islam very well is always watching his actions and behaviour because he always knows whatever he or she does is all counted always and it will come later on."

### **Characteristics of Islam itself**

There are some characteristics and things about Islam itself. Actually, Dr. Al-Dubayan started, first of all, mentioning the Oneness of God. Secondly, about how Islam sees this world - what we do; why we do not do and one is our first life and the



second one is the second life; everybody is going to come actually and everything will be seen. You cannot hide anything; everything will be counted. So nobody can escape from the crimes or the evil things he or she does; even if the law cannot punish the person who did all these bad things; there is another law which will come to make judgement about it.”

Then Dr. Al-Dubayan gave an example. He said, “Muslims after all these atrocities happen to them and all the wars, they said Alhamdulillah. For example, some mothers in Syria when asked, How do you feel; they say Alhamdulillah, thanks to Allah; everything is okay; we are fine, to be better; we are thankful. Why? Because they know that nothing will be missing; nothing will be lost. This person has killed his children or this person has lost his woman; whatever he does he or she goes without any punish-

ment; okay, that is not the end of the story. There is another time; there will be a Day of Judgement when everybody from A to Z of us; from the first human being on earth to the last one will be actually stand; will be standing there and they will be judged according to their accounts; what they have done in their lives. When you believe in this; you have to be very careful; you have to be very careful in your life.”

“So whatever you are doing it is not lost; was not forgotten; even if people do not know about it. So that makes you like in the process of observation all the time. All the time you are observing yourself; all the time you are protecting and you protect yourself and this is Iman the real faith in the heart of the real believers,” said Al-Dubayan and added, “Those who forgets this they live as they want and they don’t care about what is happening. They sometimes do some bad

things to some persons or kill some innocent persons; this woman or harm this animal or destroying natural resources they don't care about it. Who knows; nobody knows; the important is money what we have. This is what's happening now everywhere. But in the sight of Allah everything is counted and everything is there. This is something very very important in Islam."

### **Islam itself is a Universal Message**

The ICC Director General then explained another characteristic of Islam. He said, "Islam itself is a universal message. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) delivers this message; but it is not only for certain nation. Islam represents itself as a message for everybody on this earth; everybody. It is a universal message for all worlds. That's why when the Qur'an talks about Prophet (peace be upon him) Allah said: We have just sent you to be the Mercy for the Worlds; to everybody; not only for Arabs; or for his own people or for his family nobody but for everyone. That's why; after the beginning of Islam Muslims started to call other people to Islam. It is the guidance, the right path to call people to know it. It's the same way like the Christian missionaries do. This is the right to call other people to it."

"Christianity and Islam, may be, they are the only religion or most religions which are mostly doing this missionary works and calling people. Other faiths sometimes they don't care; or they think this is a private faith or religion for certain people; or they make it very individual so everybody having his own. I don't care what he believes; I have no responsibility to call. But in Christianity and Islam, they believe this is a light of Allah; I am calling people to know it like

I knew. And it is their choice: they can accept it or reject it; it is up to them. But my duty is to convey the message; to bring it to them. That's one. The universality or the message being universal," explained Dr. Al-Dubayan about the universal Message of Islam.

### **Islam is the law of equality of humankind**

Another characteristic of Islam is the principle or law of equality of humankind. While explaining the law of equality in Islam, Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned, "Secondly, Islam is one of the sharpest ever religions or may be the law of equality of humankind. All people are equal. There is no difference between black and white; north or south; anybody comes from any race; anybody comes from any nation; anybody comes from any tribe; or any country or any language. In Islam, this means nothing more than you are a human being; you are equal to others and the Qur'an telling us actually: It is very sharp; i.e. Allah says in the Qur'an: I have created you O humankind! And I have created you in tribes and nations so that you know each other; not actually that you are superior and others are inferior; No. You are equal; but to know each other I made you like this divisions; this is how I created you."

"So equality is very sharp in Islam and very clear. And the Qur'an said the best among all of you in the sight of Allah is the one who has fears in his heart more for Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala. It is not the one who has more money; it is not the one who is more handsome or more beautiful than others; or it is not the one who is descendant from this family or this king or whatever; No. The best amongst all of you





is the one who has this feeling or Imaan or faith or fears of Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala in his heart. This is very sharp and clear in Islam. That's why you see the Islamic Civilization or Islamic history is not made by certain people or by Arabs only. You will find actually the contributions by many many nations to create what we call now the Islamic civilization or Islamic culture or Islamic history. You will find there the contributions of the Arabs, the contributions of the Turks; contributions from the Kurdish people; the Persians, the Indians; the Africans; the Asians and from the Europeans in the last three centuries; from everybody. There is a contribution. It is not a religion for certain people; it is a religion for everyone; not a private one," explained Dr. Al-Dubayan the law of equality of humankind in Islam.

### **Message of Balance:**

The third characteristic of Islam is the message of balance. Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned about this message of balance. He said, "It is a message of balance; how is the balance? The balance is first of all your re-

lation with Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala. Balance with Allah; we know Allah God is different from our status. We cannot describe God like we describe human being. We know He is everything but HOW? We cannot say How. He is; it is a different level; we cannot describe it; we cannot reach it in our mind. That's one and God is here to be worshipped."

"My relation with Him is to worship Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala and to do the good within decent, so that He will reward me for that. That will control my life. For the sake of Allah, for the sake of God, I am doing this. I give charity; I am merciful with people; I take care of my parents; I do good for my neighbours; I do good for my friends; I do everything for my dog, my cat, my donkey; whatever; for everybody. Even doing good for the people you do not know; people walking on the street; may be somebody need your help you give this. When you have the intention I am doing this for the sake of Allah, Allah will reward you. Any action even if it is very tiny small thing; you don't care about it as long as intention is there; Allah will reward you for it and it is counted into your account. So there is an account which is more important than any account in any bank; which is this one which counted everything. Actually for everybody," explained Dr. Al-Dubayan the first relation with Allah with God in the message of Balance.

### **The Second Relation with the Prophet:**

That's the first relation. The second relation is the relation with the Prophet himself. Dr. Al-Dubayan then talked about the second relation in the message of balance. The second relation is the relation with the

Prophet (peace be upon him). He mentioned, “Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself is a human being. He is like us; like you, like me. He is man of flesh and blood like us. We don’t worship him at all. We respect him, of course. He is the highest person respected in Islam but he is a human being. Never be mixed or to be lifted to the level of Allah or to the level of God. This is different. So those people; sometimes some Muslims make this mistake because they love the Prophet so much they think Prophet is controlling the whole universe and he knows everything happened in the past and the things to be happened in the future. This is not correct; this is not Islam.”

“In Islam, Prophet deserves to be of course respected. But he is a human being. He knows only when Allah God tells him or told him to tell us; what is delivered in the Qur’an; what are delivered in his speeches; but the future Allah knows only. Only God knows what is going to happen. And all the things that the Prophet told us about what are going to happen; because Allah taught him to tell us that. But more than this he does not know. So worship does not go to the Prophet at all. Worship goes only to Allah. That’s it. Of course, we have all the respect and love for the Prophet (peace be upon him) more than ourselves and more than again our own children,” explained Dr. Al-Dubayan the second relation with the Prophet in the message of balance.

### **Third Relation with People**

The third relation is with people; with the society. After mentioning and explaining the first two relations in the message of Balance, ICC chief talked about the third relation with people, with society. He mentioned, “The third relation is with people;

with the society. There are, of course, values; values must be there; then we talk about manners; we talk about good behaviours, we talk about being honest with people; we talk about not chatting; not lying; doing the best to get the benefit of all your actions; to be just and fair; actually to do justice to everybody. The Qur’an says: if you want to deliver testimony or something, for example, in a court; then you have to be fair even if the other party is actually one of your family. Then you don’t tell lie because he supports your mum, your dad or your sister. You have to tell the truth; even if it is against yourself. Because this is the truth and because you have to be fair and just with people.”

### **Fourth Relation with Nature**

The fourth relation is with nature, with everything around you - forests, seas everything all natural resources. Dr. Al-Dubayan then mentioned about the fourth relation with nature, with everything around you I forests, seas everything natural resources. He said, “Islam forbids wasting. Wasting things is not allowed in Islam. Some Muslims forget sometimes; they even do not know - wasting thing, wasting water; wasting food; killing things which you do not need; destroying for example killing birds just like feasts or animals or going without need to eat - this is also not allowed in Islam. This is some kind of destruction of nature which is also forbidden in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told us: if you kill one single tiny bird without any need, this bird is going to ask on the Day of Judgement, why you killed him. Did you need to eat or just to finish the life of this creature which is not allowed.”

“The Prophet himself was telling us, ‘don’t waste water even if you live exactly on the bank of a river. If your house is somewhere very close to a river, don’t waste its water; of course if you are very close to river you will never think of wasting of water; because water is there. It is running in front of your door. You don’t care for this; but the Prophet was telling thus, don’t waste water. You have to protect natural resources whatever they are and wherever they are. This is very very important. So those people who go to a restaurant; they order lots of foods and they do not eat it; they just eat a little bit and the rest of it throw it in the bin. This is actually daily practice some people actually do this. This is haram, this is not allowed in Islam. It is really wrong; something wrong; Muslims should not do it. You should order something to eat or at least give it to someone to eat. But don’t throw it; don’t throw food; give it to animal or somebody. I like some people they take bread to feed people; to chicken or duck in the Hyde Park or any other park. Because they believe actually this is a kind of charity; giving to this animal or bird,” explained Dr. Al-Dubayan the fourth relation with nature in the message of Balance. In this connection, he mentioned about the wastage of water, of food and the unnecessary killing of birds or animals.

### **The Fifth Characteristic of Islam: Manners and Ethics**

The fifth characteristic is manners or ethics in Islam. Islam taught the message of ethics or manners to us. While talking about the fifth characteristic of Islam, Dr. Al-Dubayan mentioned about Ethics or manners. He said, “Ethics and manners are very very important in Islam. Sometimes unfortunately is forgotten. Being honest

with people; being grateful to people to those who help you; being merciful to children; with women; with your neighbours; doing good for everybody; these are all the manners that Islam is asking you always to be like that. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Islam is not only about how many times you pray or about your fasting; or you go to Makkah for Hajj. It is also about how you behave yourself. In another Hadith, the Prophet is saying: Allah does not look at your properties, money, wealth you have; but Allah looks at your heart. And He also sees how much you feed and Taqwa and good manners you have carrying in your heart. This is the most important. This is what is working. Don’t working on your properties, or being handsome or beautiful or not; this is something outside the scale at all.”

### **Islam also asks for doing charity**

Dr. Al-Dubayan then mentioned about charity. He said, “Giving charity is something Islam is asking to do. Doing something to your parents; Mum is the first one in the Muslim life, then Dad comes after, then of course sisters, brothers everybody then to neighbours or relatives; then everyone. So now, for example, Zakat. Zakat is an annual charity. When Muslims give Zakat, he starts with his family; if you have cousins or sister or brother who is poor to start to give him; if you don’t have anybody poor in your family, then you go to the people around you; your neighbours; your friends; then if you don’t have anybody who is in need; then you go to the people even you don’t know those you give him. If you do not know anybody; you give to the charity. The charity will do for you. They will give it to any person in need of this.”



# No sign Rohingya will be allowed to return home

Bangkok - Agencies

*After facing international outrage and charges of ethnic cleansing, Burma made a pledge: Rohingya Muslims who fled the country by the hundreds of thousands would start their journey home within weeks. With so many obstacles, however, and no real sign of good will, few believe that will happen.*

*The returns are supposed to be voluntary. But many members of the religious minority, now living in sprawling refugee camps in neighbouring Bangladesh, are afraid to go back.*





They don't trust the nationalist-led government and feel widely hated by the general population. Meanwhile, the military, which violently ousted them, says the refugees shouldn't expect to return in large numbers.

Burma, a predominantly Buddhist country of 60 million also known as Myanmar, was basking in international praise just a few years ago as it transitioned to democracy after a half-century of dictatorship. Since then, a campaign of killings, rape and arson attacks by security forces and Buddhist-aligned mobs have sent more than 850,000 of the country's 1.3 million Rohingya fleeing.

Denied citizenship by the Burmese government and targeted by what other countries call ethnic cleansing, the Rohingya are among the most mistreated people on Earth. And within this traumatized population, women are uniquely vulnerable. All too often, a Rohingya woman is fated to be passed, like chattel, from man to man — father to husband, soldier to sex trafficker — even in the supposed safety of the refugee camp.

The mostly stateless Rohingya have been sequestered and preyed upon by Burma's military for years. Human rights groups have long accused the Tatmadaw, as the country's security forces are known, of reg-

ular assault of Rohingya girls and women. (The security forces have been accused of that pattern with women of other ethnic minorities as well.)

But the latest campaign of gang rape against the Rohingya has been so brutal and systematic that Pramila Patten, a United Nations special representative on sexual violence in conflict, deemed it "a calculated tool of terror aimed at the extermination and removal of the Rohingya as a group."

Their home for generations, the northern tip of Rakhine state, is now virtually empty.

Doctors Without Borders estimated this month that at least 6,700 Rohingya men, women and children met violent deaths in Burma from late August to late September. Nearly 70 per cent of the victims died of gunshot, the medical aid group said, adding that its mortality figure was almost certainly an underestimation.

With so many men missing, single mothers now head 17 per cent of Rohingya households in refugee camps in Bangladesh, according to the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

In an apparent effort to quiet criticism, Burma reached an agreement with Bangladesh last month saying refugees would start returning home before Jan. 23.

There is "no way" that will happen, says

Chris Lewa, a leading expert on the Rohingya and the policies that have made them one of the world's most persecuted minorities. The government, she notes, has done almost nothing to prepare.

While Burma said the Rohingya would be allowed to settle in their original homes, few of which remain standing, some officials have talked about putting them in "camps" in northern Rakhine.

Already, two barracks have been constructed next to a police post in the Rakhine state village of Taungpyo Letwe to receive returnees, the Ministry of Information said. The government has stockpiled material and started breaking ground for 41 modular houses.

The idea, the ministry said, is that returnees can stay there temporarily.

That scares Arif Ullah, a 34-year-old Rohingya living at the Balukali camp in Bangladesh. He worries it could lead to something more permanent like apartheid-style camps erected after violence broke out in Sittwe, the state capital, in 2012.

Though many Rohingya have been living in Burma for generations, they are seen by most people in the country as "foreign invaders" from Bangladesh. They have been denied citizenship, effectively rendering them stateless.

In addition to saying the Muslim minority should be allowed to return freely, safely and in dignity, Burma's agreement with Bangladesh says Rohingya will need to provide evidence of their residency — something many say they do not have.

While the agreement says that the UN High Commission for Refugees will play a role in the repatriations, Adrian Edwards, a spokesperson in Geneva, said they have so far been excluded from initial discussions



between Burma and Bangladesh.

Bangladesh wants them to be involved, sources say. Burma does not.

"After the widespread atrocities, safe and voluntary return of Rohingya will require international monitors on the ground in Burma," said Bill Frelick, refugee rights director at Human Rights Watch. This, he says, means a central role for the UNHCR.

But how that can happen and when is just one of the many obstacles to a Rohingya return to Myanmar that many fear, many simply don't want — and that, in the context of the months of violence that 2017 brought to so many people, is for the moment a political talking point and very little else.





## Charity launches festive TV ad to challenge view of British Muslims as anti-Christmas



The Guardian

The first mainstream television advertisement by a Muslim charity will be aired over the festive period, a development many hope will help to challenge the misconception that Muslims are anti-Christmas.

The 59-second advert for the West Yorkshire charity Penny Appeal highlights the often ignored role of British Muslims in helping vulnerable people across the UK over Christmas.

The commercial, which will debut on Christmas Eve and will feature on ITV and Channel 5 over the festive period, underlines the fact that for many British Muslims the festive season is about helping others.

Recognition of the charitable contribution made by Britain's Muslim community follows years of fake news stories claiming that Muslims are opposed to Christmas. The latest emerged on Thursday, albeit in Italy, and centred on claims – later found to be misreported – from

rightwing media commentators that officials in the north of the country had ordered the removal of a Christmas tree to avoid offending Muslims.

A UK parliamentary report published the previous day promoted a more accurate and competing view, concluding that Muslims are not recognised for the charity work they undertake, particularly over Christmas. The report by the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on British Muslims said that charitable acts by the UK's Muslim community were "wilfully" ignored by the UK media.

Former Tory cabinet minister Baroness Warsi, treasurer of the APPG, admitted that her own party, aided by sections of the media, had fostered negative and ill-founded allegations against Britain's 3 million Muslims.

"The narrative at this time of year has been that Muslims don't like Christmas, that they almost want to ban Christmas," she said. "My own party has done that in the past. When we were in opposition we would try to find 'Labour banning Christmas stories' and invariably it would have an ethnic minority link."

Despite the report trending on Twitter and receiving a positive reception, it also provoked a backlash from the far right. "The usual suspects who would normally say Muslims are trying to ban Christmas were furious that we were celebrating it," added the former chair of the Conservative party.

Last month, there were some protests on

social media over Tesco's Christmas TV advert which featured a Muslim family celebrating. Tesco said it was "proud to celebrate the many ways our customers come together over the festive season".

Bilal Hassam, creative director of British Muslim TV, said he hoped more people knew that Britain's Muslims embodied the true spirit of Christmas, explaining that the faith encouraged the helping of others but not the promotion of such good deeds. "People don't showcase their work. There's nothing more Christ-like than giving, serving and helping your fellow man."

Another element that Hassam said tended to be overlooked was that most of the charitable work by Muslims was for the benefit of non-Muslims, including around 70% of Penny Appeal's UK efforts. The charity, set up eight years ago, now operates in 30 countries supporting the poor and homeless for a few pence each day. ince you're here ...

... we have a small favour to ask. More people are reading the Guardian than ever but advertising revenues across the media are falling fast. And unlike many news organisations, we haven't put up a paywall – we want to keep our journalism as open as we can. So you can see why we need to ask for your help. The Guardian's independent, investigative journalism takes a lot of time, money and hard work to produce. But we do it because we believe our perspective matters – because it might well be your perspective, too.



## Muslim population in Europe projected to rise

**(Deutsche Welle)**

The share of Muslims living in Europe may double to more than 10% of the population by mid-century, according to new research on the continent's growing Muslim population.

The projections of the Pew Research Center are likely to fuel further debate over immigration after a record influx of migrants and refugees into Europe in recent years.

The U.S.-based public opinion and demographic research center modeled Muslim population growth in Europe, defined as the 28 European Union countries plus Norway and Switzerland, on three scenarios taking into account natural population growth, future regular migration — such as for work or school — and refugee migration.

Even under the unrealistic assumption that all migration to Europe stopped today, known as “zero” migration, the percentage



of Muslims in Europe would rise to 7.4% in 2050 from 4.9% in 2016. In Germany, the Muslim population in 2050 would rise to nearly 9% from 6% today.

Researchers cautioned that it is very difficult to anticipate the future and underscored that the projections are hypothetical. Push factors that impact migrant and refugee flows, such as instability in Africa and the Middle East, may wane or increase. Much also depends on economics and European governments, which have tightened migration policies domestically and on the E.U.'s borders.

The researchers based their projections on those people who identify themselves as Muslims using data from 2,500 data points,



including official statistics and polls carried out in countries that do not collect information on religious identity.

The percentage rise can be accounted for by differences in age structure and fertility rate between Muslims and non-Muslims. Muslims in Europe are on average younger (30.4 years) than non-Muslims (43.8), meaning more women are of child-bearing age.

The researchers predict that a Muslim woman will have 2.6 children, one more than

the 1.6 children that a non-Muslim woman living in Europe will bear. The researchers pointed out that while not all children born to Muslim parents will identify as Muslim, kids tend to take on the religious identity of their parents.

'Medium' and 'high' migration scenarios

Under two other projected scenarios, Muslims would account for between 11% and 14% of Europe's population by mid-century. For Germany, which has taken in many Muslim migrants and refugees in recent years, the percentage of Muslims is projected to lie between 11% and 20%.

The "medium" migration scenario assumes refugee flows will stop but regular migration will continue at previous levels.

"The zero migration and the high-migration scenario are really thought experiments, kind of what it could be like at either end of the spectrum," said Conrad Hackett, one of the lead researchers of the study.

Between 2010 and 2016, 7 million people from all religious backgrounds arrived in Europe as regular migrants or refugees. More than half (3.7 million) were Muslims.

Only 1.6 million of the total 7 million people were refugees. But the vast majority of refugees were Muslim (1.3 million), reflecting war-torn Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan as top origin countries.

However, in Germany's case, the country's increase in Muslims mostly come from

Importantly, the figure of 7 million regular migrants and refugees does not include some 1.7 million asylum-seekers who have had their asylum applications rejected or are not expected to receive protection. Around 1 million of these 1.7 million individuals are Muslim.

# A Lebanese Judgment Boosting Interfaith Coexistence

**By Ahmed Kamal El-Din**

*At the beginning of the second week of February 2018 a Lebanese investigating magistrate handed down a decision pertaining to three Muslim teenagers, aging between 16 and 18, ordering them to memorize or learn by heart certain verses of the Qur'an, after which they were set free. The Christian magistrate, Joceline Mata, was examining the youngsters in relation to acts desecrating a statue of the Virgin Mary. The statutory punishment under Lebanese Penal Code for this type of offence is fine and a term of imprisonment ranging from one month to three years. This incident involves some complex issues in both legal and cultural terms.*



The investigating magistrate's decision was widely reported throughout the Arab world and beyond, commended by most, and acclaimed by public figures, such as former Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, who tweeted on February 10, 2018, welcoming the decision which he depicted as "an example to follow in juvenile judicial rulings, based on proper religious tolerance and education ... whereby the negative is turned into positive". The current Prime Minister Sa'ad Al Hariri also hailed Magistrate Joceline Mata on her decision which he described as representing "utmost justice and education of principles common to Muslims and Christians". Numerous other notables and members of the general public supported the decision in various ways. The Arab newspapers and electronic websites carried several posts and opinion columns, with the vast majority commending the court's decision and positively relating it to the multi-religious milieu of the Lebanese state. The legal and cultural impact of the event is worthy of analysis.

### **The Legal Significance**

Magistrate Mata's decision broadly falls within the functions, in the civil law tradition, of pre-trial investigating magistrates, which are linked with and mostly rank superior to the role of the public prosecutor, or attorney general. The procedures relating to the functions of an investigating magistrate in Lebanon are primarily governed by the provisions of the new Principles of Criminal Judgments Law (PCJL).

Seemingly, the investigating magistrate in this case based her decision on Section 111 of the PCJL which provides that "Regardless of the type of offence an Investigating Magistrate may, after consulting the Attorney Generalship, substitute arresting



a defendant by placing him under judicial monitoring, coupled with ordering the application of one or more measures that he considers necessary to execute such monitoring, including ...". The Section then goes on to specify seven measures which include (a) house arrest, (b) prevention from being in certain places, (c) depositing the passport with the investigation authorities, (d) undertaking abidance by the restriction measures with periodical reporting, (e) restricting the performance of certain professions, (f) periodical subjection to medical and laboratory tests, and (g) depositing a specified bail amount. These measures may then be verified by the investigating magistrate as he thinks fit. Upon breach of any of these measures as ordered, the magistrate may consult the Attorney Generalship to arrest the defendant and confiscate the bail amount, if any.

Magistrate Mata was apparently wary of



any possible implications of any order pronounced by a Christian magistrate against Muslim defendants (or accused persons in common law tradition parlance). But she must have also considered the ages of the youngsters and the requisites of juvenile justice. She accordingly decided to focus on the positive rather than passive aspects of the criminal law, and on the reformist rather than the punitive functions of such law. This prompted her to find a way out of the explicit punishments provided in the Lebanese Penal Code. She seems to have found a solution in Section 111 of the aforesaid PCJL, which provides for ‘alternative’ measures.

Section 111 is broad enough to provide a *quasitabula rasa* for the investigating magistrate to invent a measure of her own. While the Section promulgates seven specific measures for the magistrate to choose from, it uses a language allowing for an open extension to the list. This language is represented by the last word before the (a) to (g) list of measures in the text of the Section, which reads, ‘including’. Accordingly, the list becomes simply a list of illustrations on the basis of which the magistrate may mold a measure that suits the merits of the specific case being tried.

This solution, however, is not without a tricky legal impediment. Section 111 gave the seven listed measures a certain qualification, namely, that they should be “necessary to implement the [judicial] monitoring” of the defendant. Following a rule similar to that of *eiusdem generis* under the common law tradition which applies in the interpretation of legal statutes, any molded new measure the magistrate may decide to introduce should meet the criterion of being “necessary to implement” judicial monitoring on the defendant. The rule assumes the exis-



tence of a general term qualifying a list of specific terms, thereby denoting that other things should be similar to such specific elements. In the case of Section 111, the general term qualifying the list of measures is that their function should be essential to realize the implementation of judicial monitoring over the defendant in the case.

To the disappointment of the lay commentator, magistrate Joceline Mata did not get it right - in legal terms - when she ordered the young defendants to memorize verses of the Qur'an for them to be released. First, this measure could not appropriately be included within the ambit of Section 111 of the PCJL because, as explained above, the ordered measure (memorizing verses of



the Qur'an) would not result in the implementation of judicial monitoring over the defendants. Secondly, the decision hardly involves any judicial monitoring, since the defendants were to be released once they finish the memorization of the verses prescribed by the magistrate, which did not take much time to require any prolonged monitoring in the first place.

### **The Cultural Significance**

Regardless of any legal impediments to the order pronounced by investigating magistrate Joceline Mata, the cultural impact can by no means be disparaged or belittled. We live in a multifaceted world, in which law is but one component, however comprehensive enough to interfere with all

our other spheres of action, be that cultural, commercial, political, or social. In an unusual sense magistrate Mata's decision epitomizes a trial of law itself by the requisites of our cultural existence, and coexistence. The extent to which the utmost objectives of law can serve the function of cultural coexistence is, if at all, quite limited. Law only assists the preservation of rights, and merely works for the attainment of justice – that peace preserving value albeit non-generous and non-empathetic. It carries the meaning of synonyms such as fairness, equity, equitableness, even-handedness, egalitarianism, impartiality, impartialness, lack of bias, objectivity, neutrality, disinterestedness, lack of prejudice, and the like. What is needed for multi-religious, multi-cultural peaceful coexistence is far more than mere justice, which is indeed essential for a minimum level of peace. Magnanimity, benevolence and empathy can boost coexistence into further domains and broader horizons, and it is cultural discourse which has the potential to cradle such plentiful and bountiful values. The Islamic doctrine in this context differentiates between 'justice' and 'ihsan', which is a value higher than justice. The word 'ihsan' is loosely translated as 'the doing of good', or less accurately as 'charity', but it also involves generosity and magnanimity, the doing of what is more than being just and equitable.

It is submitted that magistrate Mata went out of her way to magnanimously serve the requisites of multi-religious coexistence, regardless of some deviation from the literal application of the procedural code of law. She transcended justice into benevolence, and it is now up to the Lebanese legal system to follow suit through an inventive legislation.

# Thematic Studies of the Qur'an: An Assessment



**Dr. Tauseef Ahmad Parray**

**SUMMARY:** In this article, an introduction of some important works falling in the category of the 'Thematic Studies' of the noble Qur'an are provided, with the purpose to get a clear idea of the developments and trends that have taken place in the field of the Qura'nic Studies over these decades, especially from the second half of 20th century to the present.

Writing on the noble Qur'an, and more significantly in the area of Qura'nic Studies, is an interesting and exciting academic discipline, spread over a number of branches, to which Muslims (from classical to contemporary era) and non-Muslims (or Western scholars) have contributed extensively. Besides the tafsir literature, 'Uloom al-Qur'an, translations of the Qur'an in various languages (especially Arabic, Urdu, and English), and other inter-related aspects, there

have emerged, from the last few decades, many new trends in this field—ranging from Qura'nic hermeneutics, contextualist approach to Qur'an/ Qura'nic Text, thematic interpretations of Qur'an, Qur'an for daily recitation, to simple introductions to the Qur'an, and personal wrestling(s) with the Sacred Text.

These categories and genres of works in the field of Qura'nic Studies reveal that, to put precisely, that there have been many attempts by various scholars and writers to study the Qur'an in a variety of ways, with different aims and purposes. And one such significant category, in the modern period, is the 'thematic' study of the Qur'an, with the aim to highlight some key concepts and important terms, vital and vibrant themes, occurring in the Diving Book. Thus, the 'Thematic Study of Qur'an' is a significant and recurring theme in the literature on Qur'an



and things Qura'nic. Below is presented an assessment of some important works (in the English language) falling in this category.

In English language, for example, Earlier, Toshihiko Izutsu (d. 1993), a Japanese scholar—following a 'semantic' approach—dealt primarily with religious ethics and attitude and on the general Qura'nic worldview, in his two books, *God and Man in the Koran* (1964), and *Ethical-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (1966/2002). Each of these works tries to define broadly a semantic range of vocabulary central to religious discussion, and the two works in combination provide "a significant view of the religious and cognitive structures of the Qur'an" through the "semantic method" that "has had a lasting effect on the discipline" of the Qura'nic Studies. Izutsu's works have been highly appreciated and are regarded as "remarkable" and "highly useful".

This was followed by works authored by Bashir Ahmad Dar, Qamaruddin Khan, and Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi. Dar (1960) and Khan (1973) focused—as becomes evident from the titles—specifically on the Qura'nic Ethics and Political Concepts in the Qur'an, respectively. Mawdudi (1977) specifically focused on the Four Basic Qura'nic Terms: *Ilah*, *Rabb*, *Ibadah*, *Deen* (God, the Lord, Religious Observance, and Faith), because they are, in his opinion, "basic to the whole teaching of the Qur'an" and that the "entire contents" of the whole Qur'an, "revolve around these four terms only".

Another significant contribution to this genre was in the form of Fazlur Rahman's *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (1980). Focusing on the concepts of God, Man (as individual and his role in society), Nature, Prophethood and Revelation, Eschatology, Satan, and Evil, it explores the theological, moral and

social teachings and principles of Islam, by engaging in a systematic study of the Sacred Text according to specific themes, instead of individual verses. The purpose of writing this book, in author's opinion, is highly noteworthy: the "extensive Muslim and non-Muslim scholarship on Qur'an", especially the "innumerable Muslim commentaries", which follows the style of verse-by-verse interpretation—the 'atomistic' approach—does not yield an effective *weltanschauung* and "insight into the cohesive outlook on the universe and life which the Qur'an undoubtedly possesses". So, by following a "synthetic exposition" and thematic approach, he authored "an introduction to major themes of the Qur'an" for giving the reader "a genuine taste of the Qur'an". By approaching "the scripture with a structure that reflects the central tenets of Muslim theology as conceived in the late twentieth century", Rahman's very proficiently provides "a full overview of the Qur'an while demonstrating a historical mode of analysis within the basic framework of Muslim assumptions".

It is noteworthy to mention here that Andrew Rippin, a well-known western scholar and expert on Quranic studies, in his article on "Tools for the Scholarly Study of the Qur'an" (in the *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, vol. 5, pp. 294-300) singles out the works of Izutsu (1964, 1966/2004), Rahman (1980), and John Wansbrough's *Quranic Studies* (1977)—the last one, primarily focuses on the 'relationship between form and content' and methodologically draws attention to 'the need for contextualization of the Qur'an as an essential part of the process of understanding it', and thus is considered 'controversial in its treatment of the Qur'an's contents'—as the four major books that have 'significant impact', in their own ways, in the discipline

of the Qura'nic Studies. These works, collectively, provide "not only an overview of the contents of the Qur'an but also a model by which the analysis of that content can proceed". These works are significant in: "setting models for how studies might proceed"; providing "significant overviews of major portions of the scripture"; and indicating "the range of concerns of more contemporary scholars".

This trend continued with more objectivity, rigor, and precision in the 21st century as well. For example, M. A. S. Abdel Ha-leem's *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and Styles* (2001) discusses—in an easy-to-understand manner and providing the reader with useful insights—some major themes of the Qur'an that are pertinent to modern debates on Qura'nic interpretation, including, the concept of life, marriage, war and peace, tolerance, paradise, etc. It is "intended to help the general reader, and also the scholar, to understand the Qur'an by combining a number of approaches: thematic, stylistic and comparative". The major themes covered in this book are marriage and divorce, war and peace, tolerance, Adam and Eve, Prophet Yusuf (Joseph)'s story/narration, water, Surah al-Rahman, dynamism, etc. In his other recently published work, *Exploring the Qur'an: Context and Impact* (2017) AbdeHaeem has focused on those 'specific' aspects of the Qur'an, which have been either highly debatable or have been 'misinterpreted' throughout the ages, especially in the West: examples are the verses related to Jihad, 'tribute' (subjugation of Ahl-i-Kitab), Paradise, etc. The author argues that "wrenching the verses out of the context of the whole has led to dangerous ideologies being built on isolated phrases which have then assumed afterlives of their own"; and

thus, for him, this "nuanced holistic reading has vital interfaith ramifications".

The Qur'an: Essential Teachings by Professor Abdur Raheem Kidwai (2005) mainly deals, in a lucid and coherent manner, with the articles of faith, basic Islamic Pillars, and with social ethics. Addressed to "the English-speaking reading public interested in grasping the meaning and message of the Qur'an", Kidwai's work is "intended to help readers get an idea of the Qura'nic worldview": and thus covers these concepts and themes: Almighty Allah, Allah's Messengers, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Life and Afterlife, the Qur'an, Al-Ghayb (the Unseen), Creation, Mankind, Prayer (Salah), Fasting, Charity (Sadaqah and Zakat), Pilgrimage (Hajj), Believers, the Straight Way, Man's Obligations towards his fellow human beings, Treating Parents, Children, Husbands/ Wives well, Good Social Behavior, and making Supplications to Allah (Dua'). In brief, it is "intended to help readers get an idea of the Qura'nic worldview" and thus contains and covers topics on the articles of Islamic faith, God-man relationship, religious duties, and the Islamic value system.

Another recent addition to this genre is Ziauddin Sardar's *Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam* (2011/ 2015). This is one of the significant, substantial, and latest works in the genre of 'thematic' study, which includes themes and concepts as well as contemporary issues. In *Reading the Qur'an*, Sardar approaches the Qura'nic Text with 'fresh eyes' to make an effort "to distinguish the possible and potential shades of meaning from the various interpretations that have accumulated over centuries", and "to read the Qur'an on its own terms, to engage with its text unencumbered by prejudices and pre-

conceived ideas, ..., [so that] to understand, and encounter its words anew". Sardar writes "as Every Muslim", "as an individual trying to understand what the Qur'an means to me in the twenty-first century", by identifying, combining, and exploring various methodologies and approaches to show its relevance in the light of the "needs and requirements in contemporary times" and of 'changing circumstances'. He believes, and applies the same in this work as well, in the thesis that "the Qur'an has to be interpreted from epoch to epoch, generation to generation"; and the 'natural corollary of this thesis', for Sardar, "is that it is legitimate for Muslims to reject, enhance, go beyond and differ significantly from the interpretations of earlier times".

Adopting this approach, *Reading the Qur'an* is divided into four parts: Overview; By Way of Tradition; Themes and Concepts; and Contemporary Issues, and includes, among others, a Preface, Prologue, and Epilogue. It is better to use his words in the description and rationalization of these parts: "Part One provides an Overview, discussing its style, nature and structure of the Qur'an, how the Qur'an has been read and interpreted conventionally, problems and strengths of translations, and the burning question: who has the authority to interpret the Qur'an?" In the second part, commentary on first two chapters of Qur'an—Surah al-Fatiha and al-Baqara—is provided: which are, respectively, 'the summary of the Qur'an', and the longest one in the Qur'an which provides 'a compendium, or précis, of the themes and concepts of Qura'nic teachings'—ranging from basic beliefs, fundamental Islamic practices, to basic legal injunctions related to various aspects of human life—individual and collective.

By looking at 'the Qur'an as a whole, an

integrated text', the major themes and key concepts, explored in part three, range from Prophets and Revelation, time and history, truth and plurality, humanity and diversity, individual and community, to reason and knowledge, crime and punishment, rights and duties, nature and environment, ethics and morality, and reading and writing. These are the themes, in Sardar's assertion, 'not normally addressed individually in conventional commentaries'. Similarly, by bringing together verses from various parts of Qur'an, to explore 'the position of the Qur'an and its possible potential meaning in relation to some of the pressing issues of our time', the 'issues and topics of contemporary times' Sardar highlighted range from "the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) to suicide bombing, politics and democracy, sex and homosexuality, science and evolution, to freedom of expression and the veil".

Reading the Qur'an, in the above-mentioned approach, leads Sardar to conclude that the "Qur'an is a dynamic, interconnected text", that encourages "to discover the underlying dynamics of the Qur'an", by connecting "one segment of the text to the next, and many other segments throughout the Sacred Text". An 'eternal' and 'religious text', it is "a source of guidance for Muslims everywhere at all times", inviting us "not to look backward but to see ahead", to the future, so that "to change individual and social behavior and transform society—things that can only be accomplished in the future".

Though the above list is in no way complete, however, it gives a clear idea of the developments and trends that have taken place in the field of the Qura'nic Studies over these decades and provides interesting insights into the genre of what can be better termed as the 'Thematic Studies' of the Qur'an.





## AESTHETIC TRENDS OF THE MUSLIM CARPETS

By Dr. Fatima Taneem

*Carpets have been popular floor coverings since a thousand odd years and to this day are essential décor items of homes, official places, religious institutions and luxury hotels. Several types and varieties of carpets are widely used for their decorative and utilitarian properties. One of the most acclaimed type of carpet among them is the 'Muslim Carpet'; also called the 'Oriental Carpet'.*

The term 'Muslim Carpet' or 'Oriental Carpet' is not a single entity but rather a broad term encompassing a diverse range of carpets traditionally produced in 'rug-belt' region of the world. This region extends from Morocco in North Africa into the Middle East, Central Asia, Caucasus region, Western China upto the northern part of India. The nomadic and tribal lifestyle of most of the 'rug-belt' inhabitants encouraged the production and use of carpets for furnishings and other utilities like bags, and blankets since ancient times. Moreover, with the arrival of Islam into this region, the carpets produced were held in high esteem as they were mentioned in different Quranic verses as one of the luxurious blessings being enjoyed by the Believers in Jannah.

Such carpets came to be known as 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' carpets as this 'rug-belt' region came under the banner of Islam at different periods of time. These carpets thriving under various Muslim Dynasties had absorbed and integrated different cultural traditions with distinct Islamic art influences. The Muslim Carpets came to be regarded as objects of high artistic value and prestige.

## HISTORY OF MUSLIM CARPETS

Muslim Carpets have originated in the 'rug-belt' region as archeological evidences and written historic sources indicate the carpet tradition to have been practiced here since ancient civilizations of the Babylonians and Assyrians. The World's Oldest Surviving Knotted Carpet is the 'Pazyryk' carpet dated to the 5th century BC, which was discovered in Southern Siberia. The dense weave of this carpet indicated advanced weaving techniques. Besides this discovery of ancient carpet fragments in other



locations of 'rug-belt' regions such as East Turkistan, Syria, etc. testify to the carpet tradition being widely practiced. However, the earliest surviving Muslim Carpets are only carpet fragments dated to the 9th century and the other fragments dated to 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries. Based on their weaving techniques and patterns, these fragments are grouped either as Anatolian(Turkish) or Andalusian(Muslim Spanish) category. Apart from these and few other fragmentary finds and scattered references to the Muslim Carpets in Medieval Arabic texts, the oldest significant group of Knotted carpets to survive comes from the 13th and 14th century Anatolia and Persia. These early Muslim Carpets are seen surviving in the European religious paintings of their times.

From these ancient locations of carpet weaving, the Muslims carpets spread far and wide into different regions of the world largely due to trade, political conquests and cross-border exchanges.



## GROWTH AND SPREAD OF MUSLIM CARPETS

Carpet weaving, being a deeply embedded tradition within the diverse Islamic societies was flourishing amongst its urban and rural as well as tribal and nomadic settlements. The subsequent Islamic Empire's expansion and infiltration into these communities resulted in the integration of their local traditional art and culture into the mainstream population. From Morocco and Al-Andalus in West to China in the East; Muslim Carpets of different regions were being exchanged and absorbed across the Islamic Empire as well as being introduced to the neighbouring foreign territories. The famous geographers, writers and travelers of their times such as Al-Idrisi, Ibn Battuta, Abu-al-Fida, Ibn Khaldun and even Marco Polo were raving about the beauty and richness of these Muslim Carpets, be it the 'Andalusian', 'Antatolic' or 'Persian'.

The beginning of the 16th century witnessed cross-cultural exchanges between the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal rulers resulting in increased production of finer and richer carpets which exhibited foreign artistic influences. Moreover, the small-scale carpet industry was nationalized with major exports to European and other Asian countries where they were considered as status-symbols. Though the inner political conflicts and the industrial revolution slackened the carpet industry for a while, it soon regained its form in the late 19th century. The diverse and distinct Muslim carpets produced across the rug-belt region, all contributed to the richness and quality of these carpets such as carpets of Andalusia, North Africa, Turkey, Persia, Central Asia and India. Below are described the major 3 carpets which had their lasting impact across the globe :-



## TURKISH CARPETS

The Turkish Carpets of the Seljuk era are called the 'Seljuk or Konya' carpets and those of the Ottoman era are called the 'Ottoman' carpets. Many historians consider the Seljuk Turks to be the real originators of the Muslim Carpets. The Seljuks developed sophisticated carpet weaving techniques and unique geometrical designs and spread their art and traditions into their conquered lands of Persia and Baghdad by the 11th century AD. Konya, Sivas, Keyseri and Aksaray were their important weaving centres and carpets from here were exported to other Islamic regions and elsewhere too. The discovery of the 13th century 'Konya' carpets and its fragments in Beyshehir, Konya and Al-Fustat testify to their fineness and artistry skills and apart from these samples, no other carpets have survived except in the religious paintings by European painters of the 14th century. The collapse of the Seljuk Caliphate in mid 13th century resulted in the decline of their carpet industry.

But the subsequent rise of the Ottoman Empire soon thereafter propelled the Turkish Carpets to newer heights of sophistication, both in colour schemes and designs as the Ottomans were great patrons of art and





architecture. The Turkish carpets of 13th and 14th centuries were widely exported to Persia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, India, China and Europe as cited by travel journals of Ibn Batutta and Abul Fida among others. Besides Istanbul, Ushak, Ladik and Gordes were major carpet weaving regions.

From 15th century onwards, the Ottoman carpets were much-sought after by the European upper class and noted Renaissance painters painted these carpets along with their religious saints, royals and later on even the aristocrats had their portraits done with these carpets depicted so much so that these carpets patterns were named accordingly to the painters painting them (Painter Carpets). The most famous are the 'Holbein' and 'Lotto' carpets painted by Hans Holbein, the Junior and Lorenzo Lotto respectively. Later on, other carpet patterns too were known by their painters like 'Memling' Carpet and so on. By the 16th century, after Ottoman conquest of Egypt and Persia, these carpets were made with their influences. Greater number of carpets were produced in factories to meet the European demands with the style of Ottoman Court Rugs spreading to other weaving centres, yet they never completely overtook the various regional carpet traditions.

From mid 18th century, the European imports of the Turkish carpets receded due to the Industrial Revolution as imitated Turkish carpets began to be produced in Europe. These Turkish carpets were back in demand in the 20th century as 'exotic art collections' of the rich and royals.

## PERSIAN CARPETS

The Persian Carpets have been renowned since the ancient times as their history of carpet traditions dates back to more than 2 millennia. However, the first documented evidence dates only to the Sassanian Era (224-641 CE). Unfortunately, no carpets of this era survive except in historic records with the most famous being the 'Spring of Khusran', owned by Khusrao I (reigned 531-579 CE), which was vividly described by the Arab conquerors for its sheer beauty and grandeur. Earlier, the 11th century Seljuk conquerors left their remnants of art and tradition within certain regions of Persia and till date these regions have 'Turkish' elements in their carpet weavings.

The invading Mongols caused a demise of the Persian art and culture but the later Mongol Kings rejuvenated the Persian arts and the carpets once again began to be weaved with single geometrical motifs. But it was only in the 16th century AD that the Persian carpet industry reached its zenith under the Safavid Dynasty who developed trading pacts with European countries to export silk and carpets. The Safavid ruler Shah Abbas I (reigned 1587-1629) transformed the carpet weaving industry into a national industry resulting in a large variety of carpets for export purposes produced in Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan and Kerman with the few carpets being even being personalized bearing the coats of arms and monograms of the

European rulers who commissioned them. The carpets of the Safavid Era were famous for their artistic designs and colour schemes and are still treasured in various museums and private collections. Among them, the most famous Persian carpet is the Ardabil Carpet which is the oldest dated handmade Muslim Carpet known.

In the early 19th century, the Persian Carpet industry suffered major set-back due to inner conflicts and the decrease in exports because of establishment of European Carpet industries which popularized the 'imitated' Muslim Carpets among its upper middle-class. But the last quarter of 19th century, saw the revival of Persian Carpet industry under the Qajar rulers. Also the American and Europeans firms set up their headquarters in Persia and started modifying the Persian Carpets to suit their European clients resulting in these carpets being back in demand.

### **INDIAN/MUGHAL CARPETS**

The carpet-weaving traditions in India have been largely influenced by the Mughal Kings, especially Emperor Akbar(reigned 1556-1607) Prior to this, very few carpets were made in India and these were mostly imitations of the Persian Carpets. However, Emperor Akbar in 1580 AD commissioned the establishment of carpet –weaving factories in his palace in Agra. The earliest carpets produced here showcased strong Persian influences as the Emperor had got the skilled weavers from Persia who taught the skill to the Indians(Prison Carpets) . But by the 17th century, the Mughal carpets presented their own distinct style with Chinese and European influences admixed with Indian arts and Mughal prayer rugs bearing the innovative mille-fluer designs were

much in demand. Among them, The Girdlers Carpet is the most famous documented 17th century Mughal carpet. These carpets soon spread elsewhere in India with each region adding its local influences.

During the 16th, 17th, and 18th century, the Mughal carpets were very popular abroad, especially the Silk Carpets and the traders took them to Far East as well as Asia and Europe. The steady demise of the Mughal Empire was accompanied by the decline in carpet production that was revitalized by the British in the 19th century with modifications as per their tastes. Though the 20th century witnessed a generalized decline in the carpet industry due to independence struggles within; the traditional carpet weaving families in Srinagar, Amritsar and Agra retained their legacies which post-independence provided an impetus to this intricate art to regain its former glory days.

### **IMPACT OF MUSLIM CARPETS IN EUROPE**

By 11th century AD, Muslim Carpets entered the European cities along with Crusaders and also through the neighbouring Muslim Spain( Al-Andalus). Initially, these carpets of Al-Andalus became a part of the court life of the Christian Spanish Kingdoms and from there they were introduced further North into the castles of France, Italy and England.

By 14th century, bilateral relations and trade with the Muslim Empire intensified and carpets along with other Islamic artefacts entered the European markets primarily through the Italian merchants with the Venice and Genoa becoming the major carpet trading hubs. The Muslim Carpets soon became popular among the European elite

class and were held in high esteem and reverence. They were also accurately depicted in numerous Christian religious paintings and frescos done by various European artists of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries like Van Eyck, Giotto, Giovanni, etc.

By early 16th century, these carpets adorned the great courts of Europe like those of Charles V, Catherine de Medici and King Henry VIII. The mid 16th century also witnessed the carpets appearing in the portraits of the aristocratic class such as the Court portraits of King Henry VIII and his son Edward VI. Muslim Carpets were considered too precious to tread upon and the Europeans hung them instead on walls, windows, galleries and also used them to cover their furnishings. The Italians were famous for spreading these carpets along streets and on gondolas.

Initially, only the Spanish and Turkish carpets were in vogue but from 17th century onwards, carpets from Persia and India also made their entry through the Dutch, British and the French East India Companies who signed trade treaties with the Muslim rulers and even established trading houses in a few regions like Persia, where they began to modify the carpets produced for export to suit their Western tastes. However, the Industrial Revolution caused the mass production of these Carpets as imitations in European factories making them affordable to the newly emergent middle class. This caused a decline in carpet imports from the rug-belt region which coupled with their internal conflicts halted this industry for a while. But in the late 19th century, Europeans and Americans developed interests in the exotic Muslim décor and crafts prompting the nobles and fervent art collectors to possess the 'Muslim luxury objects' includ-

ing carpets with even the museums eyeing to possess them. The carpet industry in the Muslim lands was revitalized by foreign investments resulting in their increased commercial production and these carpets were also gifted in diplomatic missions to Europe. For instance, the Persian Emperor, Nasir-al-Din Shah in 1876 presented Queen Victoria 14 royal Persian carpets.

From the late 19th century, several carpet exhibitions were being conducted in various cities of Europe and America with even literature and academic research on Muslim carpets being widely instituted. All this rekindled their passion for Muslim carpets as classic symbols of high Islamic art. Depiction of these carpets in their paintings continued throughout the 20th century and the carpet industry gained wider markets; although the nationalistic movements in Asia curtailed foreign economic activities. Muslim carpets were becoming treasured family heirlooms and museums across the globe were actively collecting both the 'antique' and 'current' types. They were also being auctioned in noted auction houses, be it the Sotheby's, Bonham's or Christies at exorbitant prices. The most expensive Muslim Carpet to be auctioned till date is a Pesian Sickle-leaf carpet for a huge sum of almost 34 million dollars testifying to their universal appeal.

## **WEAVINGS AND DESIGNS OF THE MUSLIM CARPETS**

The centuries-old principles and techniques of carpet-weaving has remained almost intact among the rural and tribal communities of the rug-belt region, being invariably linked to their culture and tradition. Sheep or goat wool, cotton or silk were woven usually on vertical or horizontal



looms with carpets being either 'flat-woven' or 'piled'. Traditionally, two distinct knot-formation techniques have been applied depending on the local traditions. These are the 'Turkish knot' also called the 'Symmetrical' or the 'Ghiordes knot' and the 'Persian knot' also called the 'Senneh knot'.

The Muslim Carpets were produced in parallel at all the different levels of society- in court manufacturers, provincial workshops, village houses, tribal settlements and even nomadic tents. The tribal and rural weavings differed considerably from the urban weavings and these were usually done by the womenfolk who spun, dyed and weaved the yarn into their traditional carpets having distinct local patterns inherited from their ancestors and passed down to their next generations as family traditions. Meanwhile, the weaving centres of the cities and



towns generally employed skilled men and these carpets were patronized by the royals and the rich upper class with the weaving done either manually or on factory looms. These urban carpets exhibited the trending patterns and were more formal in style. Different regions had their popular and signature patterns with specific preferences for colour shades. The carpets were named usually after the city or the region where they were first made.

The Muslim carpets were dressed in vibrant and exotic colours which were region-

specific and the natural dyes were obtained from plants, animals and insects with the cities also utilizing the synthetic dyes. The standard design of Muslim carpets usually showed a field with repeating patterns, framed by a main border in elaborate design and several secondary border. While the carpet patterns were similar over wide geographical areas and sometimes were sent from Court workshops to provincial production centres; each region had their specific weaving techniques. The patterned motifs were either weaved through memory or traditional customs or with sketches at hand. The grand carpet designs of the Court

workshops were imitated for the wealthy nobels and also for export purposes. Even in the present times, the carpet designs of the 16th and 17th centuries are still being produced in large numbers.

The urban weavings had modern innovative designs and techniques incorporated depending on the political setup, trade and cross-cultural exchanges during the different eras. On the other hand, the rural and the tribal weavings retained most of their age-old techniques and unique 'motifs' reflecting their culture and heritage. This is still witnessed in the indigenous tribes of the rug-belt region such as the Berbers of North Africa, Persian tribe of Qashqai etc, wherein the carpet traditions have been a richly guarded legacy which has been acknowledged and appreciated world-

wide. No doubt, this resulted in 2010, the UNESCO inscribing in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity the 'Traditional Art of Azerbaijani Carpet-weaving' and the 'Traditional Skills Of Carpet-weaving in the Iranian town of Kashan'.

Some of the regional Muslim Carpets with their designs are described as follows-

**Turkish Carpets :** The early carpets of 13th and 14th centuries exhibited two distinct patterns- One was characterized by geometrical drawings and hemmings with 'kufic' characters and other had stylized animal figures decorative within. Later, by the 15th century, the animals motifs in Turkish carpets ceased to exist.

In the 16th century, post Ottoman conquest of Egypt and Persia two distinct carpet patterns emerged- the Ushak Carpets displaying the essential motif of medallion and the Ottoman Court Rugs with prominent naturalistic motifs and rich colours.

These carpets were woven with 'Turkish knots' but the Ottoman Court Rugs started using the 'Persian knot' to accommodate the delicate floral designs and patterns.

**Persian Carpets :** These carpets generally comprised of a rectangular center dominated by a medallion and a border which sometimes took the form of several bands of various widths. Human and animal scenes were often depicted here too. Later, intricate floral patterns were common with dominant interplay of red and blue colours.

They were woven with 'Persian knots' except for the North Western region which used 'Turkish knots' for weaving.

**Indian/Mughal Carpet :** Initially, these carpets were woven in Persian style with vegetal motifs being generalized vines or palmettes but later on by the 17th century

a distinct Mughal style emerged with vines and floral patterns, animal and bird figures and geometric as well as calligraphic patterns. The Mughal prayer rugs presented with innovative 'mille-fluer' designs being influenced by European and Chinese arts. These carpets also were influenced by traditional Indian arts.

**Egyptian Carpets :** Carpets of Mamluke Era (1250-1570) were characterized by geometric rectilinear drawings with limited palette of colours and shades but these carpets under the Ottoman rule exhibited a variety of transitional designs in curvilinear style and ultimately these 'Cairene Carpets' were designed in Ottoman style with rich colours, vegetal motifs, floral pattern and circular medallions.

**Azerbaijani Carpets :** These carpets conveying ancient carpet traditions are characterized by a variety of ornamental motifs consisting of animal and human figures and abstract geometrical forms with distinct colour palette- unusual scheme of cherry-red, yellow-green and sky blue.

Thus, in conclusion, it is seen that these carpets are iconic symbols of Islamic art and cultural traditions and have contributed to the development of European art too. These carpets have established themselves completely in the art world with them being housed in 'permanent collections' of renowned museums around the world such as the Louvre Museum in Paris, Victoria and Albert Museum in London and Los Angeles County Museum of Arts. The Muslim carpets have appealed to the people of the past and continue to mesmerize the present generations with their timeless beauty and decorative Islamic patterns representing the rich legacy of the Medieval Islamic Civilization.

## Malaysia: The right path



JITRA: The recognition given by the Muslim World League (MWL) to Malaysia as a model country for national harmony in the world despite its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, proves that the Barty National (BN) government is on the right path in upholding Islamic teachings in the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the acknowledgement coming from Makkah, Saudi Arabia-based organization is indeed very significant.

The latest MWL endorsement is to recognize Malaysia as an exemplary” country due to our introduction of moderation (wassatiyah) approach which is the basic principle in Islam”.

“It is not easy...the league is not

someone that we pay a fee to but a body which is based in Makkah and they look at all the countries in the world before recognizing Malaysia as a role model” he said in his speech during breakfast session with Tahfiz students and teachers at Madrasah Al-Ulum Ad-Diniah Al-Usmaniah Pondok Tanjung Kapor, near here Today. Some 1,000 people from tahfiz schools statewide attended the session. Also present was Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah. Najib also presented 4 million RM for repair works for mosques and suraus in the state, 2 million RM for hostels at 25 public religious schools and 162,000 RM for 11 tahfiz schools.

MWL secretary general Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa reportedly said that Malaysia is a great example of national harmony in the world despite its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society.

Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa said Najib made a wise move in introducing wassatiyah, which would ensure no elements that could threaten the nation’s harmony.



**Kobe Mosque  
Japan**

