



AL-UMMAH

Monthly Journal ■ Volume 1 ■ September 2026 ■ Issue 5

Website: www.al-ummah.org

Makkah Pact: The Changing Dynamics of Middle East Security





AL-UMMAH

Guidelines for Submission

Al-Ummah welcomes well-written articles that demonstrate depth, clarity, and analytical rigor. They must offer a structured analysis and a strong contextual understanding of the subject matter. We welcome contributions on global geopolitics, the Muslim world, political and economic developments, historical perspectives, and broader social, cultural and technological transformations. Please note the following requirements before submission:

- The article should be between 1,000 and 1,300 words and written in clear and polished English.
- It should present well-reasoned arguments supported by credible evidence where appropriate.
- It must be original and unpublished. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of facts, proper sourcing, and maintaining intellectual integrity.
- All submissions will undergo editorial review.
- Al-Ummah reserves the right to edit articles for clarity, style, and length.
- Publication is not guaranteed.
- Please include the author's full name and a brief bio with your submission.
- Submissions should be sent to: info@al-ummah.org.

Copyright Notice

All articles and content published on the Al-Ummah website and in its print and digital magazine are protected under applicable copyright laws and remain the intellectual property of the Al-Ummah Foundation.

Unless otherwise stated, no part of these publications may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means — electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise — without the prior written permission of the Al-Ummah Foundation.

By submitting their work, authors acknowledge and agree that, upon acceptance and publication, the copyright of the published material is held by the Al-Ummah Foundation. The views expressed in individual articles are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

Defining Moments for Regional Security and A Muslim Media

*T*his edition of Al-Ummah journal comes to you on the heels of a serious development—the formation of a regional defence bloc, centered around Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Even though it reflects on NATO's Article 5, which dictates that an attack on one member is considered an attack on all, it will be naïve to reduce the formation of the bloc to just a replica of NATO.

The development seeks a serious and sincere analysis of the things taking shape in the geopolitical landscape of the Middle Eastern region, at the center of which sits Israel's long-dragging destructive and genocidal policy, not to forget Iran's continued reactionary but suicidal tactics, which are laced with a hostile expansionist ideology.

Caught in between are several Arab nations that have sought peaceful solutions to the conflicts raging across the region while avoiding confrontations with either Israel or Iran. The United States' stated policy of shielding the sinister interests of Israel while providing a security umbrella to its Arab allies has compounded the situation.

The ongoing off-and-on war that Israel has imposed on Iran with US help has often spilled over borders, bringing countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, etc under attacks from both Israel and Iran. This has exposed the so-called US security umbrella, necessitating the need for a military alliance, which has multiple dimensions, and is rightly being seen as a transformation that may see the region redefining its own security.

In the cover story of this edition, we focused on the issue to understand the impact of the military formation by three of the most important Muslim countries, and its likely outcome in times to come.

Meanwhile, the good news is that we have opened Al-Ummah Foundation's central office in Dhaka, a detailed report of which underlines its significance and our resolve in moving steadily toward having a media umbrella to serve the cause of the Ummah. For now, we can only promise our readers that we will continue to improve the magazine's content and quality.



Editor-in-Chief



AL-UMMAH

Monthly Journal

Editor-in-Chief
Mohammad Zakir Hossain

Managing Editor
M. Nasir Jawed

Editorial Board
Dr. Mohammad Abdul Aziz
Dr. Abdul Mannan
Muhammad Zahidul Islam

Art Director
Mohammed Youssef Salem

Al-Ummah, a monthly Journal, is published by the Islamic Center for Research and Documentations, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

It is available in English, Arabic, Bengali and Turkish.

Dear writers, you can submit articles on current affairs, Islamic sciences, intellectual studies, history, and public policy etc.

We welcome original and neatly written articles in English, Arabic, Bangla and Turkish not exceeding 1300 words, to:

Email: info@al-ummah.org

Website: www.al-ummah.org



مؤسسة الأمة
AL-UMMAH
FOUNDATION

Bangladesh Islamic Center for
Research and Documentations
(BICRD), Dhaka, Bangladesh

Volume 1

September 2026

Issue 5



Makkah Pact: The Changing Dynamics
of Middle East Security

p. 4

Makkah Pact: The Changing Dynamics of Middle East Security	4
Al-Ummah's Dhaka Office Inaugurated	10
Al-Quds Office Opens in Istanbul as 'Eye on Al-Aqsa' Report is Launched.....	14
Gold, Paper Currency and Riba: Understanding the Difference	18
Civilization at the Brink: When Material Progress Reaches Its Limits	22



Civilization at the Brink: When Material
Progress Reaches Its Limits

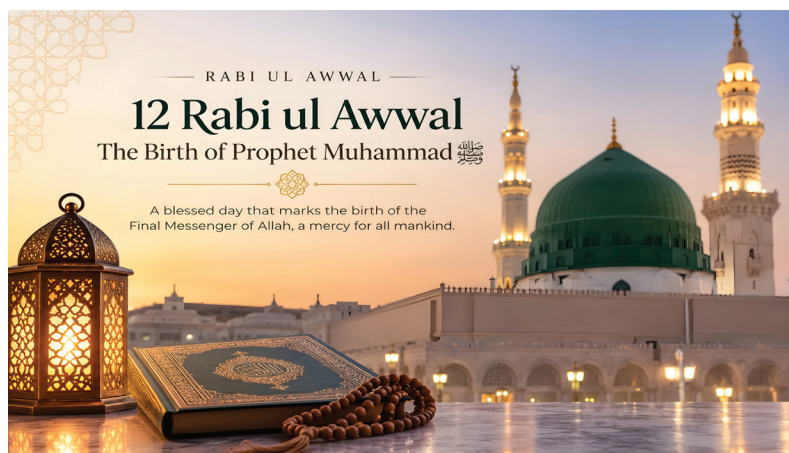
p. 22



Al-Ummah's Dhaka Office Inaugurated

p. 10

Aleppo artisan keeps ancient wood relief tradition alive	28
Adina Mosque Controversy: Politicizing History?	30
Hundreds mark 31 years since Srebrenica at London launch of Alija Izetbegović's	
Islam: Between East and West	35
Rabi Al-Awwal: A Month of Memory, Mercy and Renewal	40



Rabi Al-Awwal: A Month of Memory, Mercy and Renewal

p. 40



Our Contributors



Mohammad Nasir Jawed



Md. Mashiur Rahman



Masumur Rahman Khalili



Syed Iqbal Zaheer

Note to Readers

Disclaimer: The views expressed by the authors are their own. The publisher assumes no responsibility for them.

Copyright: Readers are welcome to use, reprint, or republish content from this Journal, provided they obtain prior permission from us and include a link to our website.



MAKKAH PACT: THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF MIDDLE EAST SECURITY



By M. Nasir Jawed

Ex-Editor, Yearbook of the Muslim World

captured global attention, prompting speculation that it could herald a new regional security architecture, reduce dependence on the U.S. security umbrella, counter threats from Israel and Iran, or even lay the foundations for a “Middle East NATO.”

A more sensible analysis would, however, require an understanding of the geopolitical landscape, taking into account the long-dragged conflict in the region, mainly involving Israel’s continued genocide of Palestinians for de-

*O*n Aug. 7, 2026, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan signed a Makkah Joint Defense Agreement at the Mecca Summit in Saudi Arabia. The landmark pact

cadec. The U.S. war on Iran at the behest of Israel has further compounded the situation, exposing neighboring Arab countries to military spillover from the neighboring conflicts. The U.S. failure to provide a security shield to its allies in the region necessitated the three countries coming together to have collective deterrence, facilitating regional stability, while further consolidating defense cooperation among the three countries.

Yet, such military arrangements have been in the making for quite some time in different forms and scales. A Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was already in place since September 2025, and a quadrilateral consultative mechanism that included the three signatories and Egypt (R-4 Group) meant that an armed attack against any one member of the alliance shall be regarded as an attack against them all.

Significance of the pact

The pact is loaded with symbolic significance. What makes this pact remarkable is the complementary power of its three potent middle power members. Pakistan, a nuclear power, Saudi Arabia, an affluent energy giant, and Türkiye, NATO's second-largest military and a defense-industrial powerhouse. While prior efforts by the U.S. to erect a Middle Eastern alliance comprising its closest partners have failed, this strictly regional undertaking sheds light on the

“ A landmark Makkah Joint Defense Agreement has been signed to herald a new security architecture and reduce dependence on the US ”

growing strategic agency and anxiety of regional powers. Having been concluded in Islam's holiest city, Mecca, the religious dimension adds to the agreement's symbolic significance and popular appeal.

Together, the three countries link the Arabian Peninsula, Anatolia, and South Asia. They sit close to the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea, the eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Indian Ocean. This is not merely an alliance of armies. It is a strategic triangle stretching across some of the world's most important energy routes, maritime corridors, and conflict zones.

The timing is not accidental, too. The Middle East has endured years of war, missile exchanges, attacks on shipping, proxy conflicts, and uncertainty over the future of American security guarantees. For decades, Gulf security rested on an unwritten bargain: the United States supplied protection, while the region remained central to the global energy system. But repeated crises have exposed the limits of that arrangement.



Top leaders of Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan stand at the signing of the historic Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, in Makkah Al-Mukarramah on Aug 7, 2026. Photo/Turkish Presidential Press Office.

Washington remains militarily powerful, but regional governments increasingly question whether American support will be timely, unconditional, or aligned with their interests.

At the same time, Israel's expanding military reach, Iran's missile capabilities and regional networks, Houthi attacks, and threats to the Red Sea have made reliance on distant protectors appear increasingly risky.

Shortly before the Mecca agreement, Saudi Arabia announced plans for a multinational maritime coalition to protect Red Sea shipping and energy routes. Representatives of 43 countries and the European Union attended the relevant meeting, while 14 countries - including Türkiye, Pakistan, and Egypt

- formally supported the initiative. The message is becoming clearer: regional powers no longer want merely to consume security provided by others. They want to produce it themselves.

Changing security order

The Mecca Agreement carries weight far beyond its military provisions. By bringing Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan into a formal security arrangement, it connects three major Muslim powers with complementary strengths: Saudi financial and political weight, Türkiye's expanding defense industry and strategic reach, and Pakistan's large military establishment and nuclear capability. More importantly, it signals how rapidly the Middle East's security architecture is changing.

For Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, the agreement marks a striking transformation. Their relationship has moved from rivalry to rapprochement and now to formal security cooperation. The two competed intensely for regional influence after the Arab Spring, yet today they increasingly see cooperation as more useful than confrontation. That alone gives the pact considerable symbolic heft. But symbolism is not deterrence.

The agreement reportedly contains a collective-defense principle under which an attack on one member would be regarded as an attack on all. Yet the response would be determined through consultation and consensus rather than automatic military intervention. Assistance could therefore range from intelligence sharing, weapons and logistical support to direct military involvement.

That flexibility may be politically necessary, but it also exposes the pact's central weakness: what happens when the interests of its members diverge?

The three countries do not necessarily share the same hierarchy of threats. Riyadh remains deeply concerned about Iran and its regional networks. Ankara increasingly regards Israel as a major strategic challenge. Pakistan must constantly calculate its security commitments against its rivalry with India and its complicated relationship with Iran. An alliance spanning these different threat perceptions will be tested not

by the declarations its members make in peacetime, but by the choices they make during crises.

History offers reason for caution. The Arab League's 1950 Joint Defense Treaty and the GCC's 2000 Joint Defense Agreement produced impressive language but limited collective military effectiveness. The Makkah pact will matter only if its members build institutions capable of turning political intent into operational capability.

Plans for a political-military committee and a Saudi-based secretariat are therefore potentially more important than the pact's headline-grabbing mutual-defense clause. Joint exercises, interoperable weapons and communications systems, coordinated threat assessments, intelligence sharing and eventually joint command structures would distinguish a functioning security architecture from another ceremonial agreement.

One area where cooperation could advance rapidly is the defense industry.

Türkiye has developed a formidable domestic defense sector, particularly in drones, missiles, electronics and aircraft development. Pakistan brings decades of military-industrial experience and an established defense relationship with both countries. Saudi Arabia brings financial resources and an ambitious program to localize defense production.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chat after signing a joint defence agreement in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, on Aug 7, 2026. Photo/Turkish Presidential Press Office.

Together, the three could pursue joint research, manufacturing, procurement and weapons development while reducing dependence on Western suppliers.

The nuclear question is more ambiguous. Pakistan's status as the Muslim world's only nuclear-armed state inevitably raises speculation about extended deterrence. Islamabad sent contradictory signals after its 2025 defense agreement with Riyadh, while Saudi officials subsequently stressed that the arrangements had no nuclear dimension. No explicit nuclear guarantee has emerged from the trilateral pact. Yet ambigu-

ty itself has strategic value: adversaries must now calculate not only what the agreement says, but what Pakistan might do in an extreme crisis.

A region hedging its bets

Neither Iran nor Israel is likely to ignore these developments. Tehran publicly says it has no reason to fear the pact, while Israel will inevitably examine what deeper Turkish-Pakistani-Saudi military cooperation could mean for the regional balance.

India, too, will watch closely. New Delhi

enjoys strong relations with Riyadh but difficult relations with both Pakistan and, increasingly, Türkiye. Pakistan's deeper integration into Middle Eastern security structures therefore introduces another variable into India's strategic calculations.

The larger significance, however, concerns the United States. The pact does not necessarily represent a rejection of Washington. Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan all retain important relationships with the United States. Rather, it reflects something subtler: the region is hedging.

Repeated wars, attacks on Gulf infrastructure and doubts about the consistency of American security guarantees have encouraged regional powers to build additional layers of protection. They are not necessarily replacing the American umbrella; they are preparing for the possibility that it may no longer be enough.

Seen this way, the Mecca agreement is not yet an "Islamic NATO." It may never become one. Its importance lies elsewhere. It is evidence of a Middle East increasingly determined to insure itself against uncertainty — and to acquire greater control over its own security. That may ultimately prove more consequential than the pact itself.

The Mecca agreement is historic in that it shatters Washington's decades-long

policy to integrate Israel into the Arab region and is a setback to U.S. President Donald Trump's ambitious Abraham Accord project that initially pushed its Gulf allies to recognize Israel.

The United States' strategic blunder in Iran has reinforced a perception of U.S. unreliability, prompting regional powers to take greater ownership of their own security. As Saudi Arabia aligns more closely with Pakistan and Türkiye, the prospect of Saudi-Israeli normalization appears remote. While the Mecca agreement is unlikely to supplant the three countries' privileged defense and security partnerships with the U.S., it provides regional actors with options beyond those offered by U.S.-centric frameworks.

The alliance faces multiple tests ahead, most urgently its response to renewed hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Iran's regional non-state allies, the Ansarullah (Houthis) in Yemen and the Popular Mobilization Units in Iraq. Continued coordination on key regional issues, including the civil wars in Sudan and Yemen, Somalia's territorial integrity, Gaza's peace plan and the success of Syria's post-Assad government, will also be a litmus test of its coherence. Furthermore, the pace of the alliance's institution-building process and defense-industrial cooperation will serve as a reliable indicator of the arrangement's credibility.



AL-UMMAH'S DHAKA OFFICE INAUGURATED

THE NEW OFFICE WILL STRENGTHEN KNOWLEDGE
AND CONSTRUCTIVE INTELLECTUAL DIALOGUE
ON A GLOBAL LEVEL.



By Al-Ummah Desk

Al-Ummah formally opened an office in Dhaka on Aug. 15 to manage its monthly journal and official website. This will expedite “strengthening knowledge, research, and constructive intellectual dialogue on a global scale,” according to Al-Ummah officials.

The inaugural function marked a step

forward in developing Al-Ummah as an international platform for researchers, academics, policymakers, journalists, and young thinkers to discuss and exchange views on contemporary global issues, the challenges facing the Muslim Ummah, and knowledge-based solutions.

Former Religious Affairs Adviser to the Interim Government Dr. A.F.M. Khalid Hossain, who attended the event as chief guest, emphasized the importance of developing a new generation of

writers. He said Al-Ummah could bring promising writers together on a common platform. Assuring his full cooperation with the initiative, he said it could help further strengthen the true spirit of the Muslim Ummah.

Presiding over the event, Professor Naqib Muhammad Nasrullah, former Vice-Chancellor of Islamic University, Bangladesh, said the Ummah was going through various hardships and lagging in several fields in the contemporary world. However, he stressed that there was no reason for despair.

Mohammad Zakir Hossain, Chairman of the Al-Ummah Foundation and Editor of Al-Ummah Journal, said that Islamic media does not differ from contemporary media in terms of its subject matter or means of communication. What distinguishes it, however, is its Islamic character, rooted in the spirit of Sharia, which is reflected in its content, form and messages. It is not confined to a narrow religious sphere, but covers a broad range of information, facts and news relating to the political, social, economic, cultural and moral dimensions of life, as well as the welfare of Muslims.

Mr Zakir drew attention to the challenges facing the various television channels, newspapers, magazines and news agencies that serve Muslim interests, and to the fact that some of them suffer from a degree of fragmentation and parochialism. He expressed a strong desire

“ Stressing a knowledge-based society, speakers at the inaugural event hoped Al-Ummah would contribute to the intellectual revival of the Muslim world, research cooperation, responsible media, and global dialogue ”

to see a robust media system capable of presenting the interests and realities of the Muslim world as they truly are. Such a media platform, he explained, should operate impartially, free from political currents and politicisation, with its primary objective being to serve the interests of the entire Muslim Ummah through the media and by harnessing the power of media.

Habibullah Muhammad Iqbal, Chairman of Tazimul Ummah Foundation, urged Al-Ummah Foundation to make an effective contribution to building a new Bangladesh. Calling on everyone to work collectively rather than blaming the government or others, he said: “Al-Ummah Foundation, established by Zakir Bhai, should be developed as a true symbol of a united Ummah.”

Sabbir Ahmed, Principal of Cordova School and College, said that if one wants to undertake any constructive work, the media is the first and foremost medium.



M. Zakir Hossain, Chairman, Al-Ummah Foundation and Editor-in-Chief, Al-Ummah Journal (2nd from left), and other office bearers during the opening of the Foundation's central office in Dhaka on Aug. 15.

Senior journalist Saleh Ahmed said that media professionals must play a responsible role as social spokespersons themselves. A social spokesperson carries enormous responsibility, and fulfilling that responsibility requires extensive reading, proper knowledge, and subject-based expertise, he said.

Writer and columnist Dr. Iqbal Kabir Mohon said that alongside producing quality and skilled writers, a strong editorial panel consisting of competent editors should be formed to properly edit their writings. He emphasized a strict editorial process to ensure the quality of writing, accuracy of information, and professional standards of journalism.

Dr. Khalilur Rahman Madani, Principal of Dhaka Tamirul Millat Madrasa, said that the day begins with the call, "Prayer

is better than sleep." Although human life is conducted around economics and money, there is a need to rethink various prevailing concepts regarding this matter. Quoting the Quranic verse, "Is it you who cause it to grow, or am I the One who causes it to grow?", he highlighted the need for deep thinking about wealth and economics.

At the event, the speakers said that everyone associated with Al-Ummah can play an important role in presenting genuine, informative, and truthful information before the nation. They also expressed the expectation that delivering accurate information to people would contribute to the welfare of society and the Muslim Ummah.

The speakers wished success for Al-Ummah Foundation, the journal, and the



Al-Ummah Foundation officials pray at the conclusion of a solemn inauguration ceremony of the Foundation's office in Dhaka on Aug. 15.

website and called upon people from all walks of life to extend their cooperation to everyone associated with the initiative.

The event also highlighted the importance of building a knowledge-based society, the intellectual revival of the Muslim world, research cooperation, responsible media, and global dialogue. The speakers said that in the present world, sustainable development, peace, and intellectual leadership can be established only through the integration of knowledge, technology, and strategic cooperation.

Those concerned said that Al-Ummah began its journey out of the need to expand research-based and intellectual discourse to address the political, economic, and cultural challenges of

the Muslim world in the current global system, rather than relying solely on emotion-based approaches. The journal aims to create a new field of knowledge-based discussion by publishing research papers, analytical articles, policy papers, opinion-based writings, and special reports on international affairs.

Currently, Al-Ummah is being published in four languages — Bangla, English, Arabic, and Turkish. The organizers said there are plans to add several more languages in the future. Through this, they expect the platform to further expand knowledge exchange and intellectual cooperation among researchers and thinkers from different regions of the world, as well as create a field for strategic connectivity and knowledge-based cooperation among the member states of the OIC.



Participants pose for a photo during a Jerusalem commemoration program in Istanbul, Türkiye, Aug. 23, 2026. (Photo by Al-Ummah Desk)

Al-Quds Office Opens in Istanbul as ‘Eye on Al-Aqsa’ Report is Launched



By Al-Ummah Desk

An event was held in Istanbul on 23 August 2026 to discuss the future of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque. Several scholars, researchers, and advocates participated in the program, which also saw the launch of the 20th edition of the Eye on Al-Aqsa report.

Held on the sidelines of the Istanbul International Arabic Book Fair, the event was also an occasion for a formal opening of the International Al-Quds Foundation’s

regional office in Istanbul. The new office aims to protect Jerusalem’s historical, cultural and civilisational identity and to raise awareness of the city’s universal significance among future generations. It also seeks to broaden its international engagement in scientific research, cultural heritage protection, public awareness and advocacy for Jerusalem.

Foundation Chairman Professor Ahmed Aghraja said that hopes for Jerusalem’s liberation had grown significantly following the events of Al-Aqsa Flood. The continued efforts to keep the issue of Jerusalem at the forefront of public consciousness helped to strengthen those hopes, he said.

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, the renowned

Egyptian Islamic scholar and Chairman of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS), established the Foundation in 2006, Aghraja said, and added that the Foundation had decided to continue and expand its international work from Istanbul after circumstances related to the war in Lebanon made it impossible to continue operating from Beirut.

"From today, the banner is in the hands of Turkey," Aghraja said, adding that the Foundation would continue its activities from Istanbul's historic Fatih district while seeking to expand its international reach.

Participants at the event also observed the 57th anniversary of a fire attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque 57 years ago, calling it one of the gravest assaults on the historic sanctuary. On August 21, 1969, Australian tourist Denis Michael Rohan set fire to the mosque. The blaze seriously damaged parts of the historic sanctuary. The attack sparked widespread protests across the Muslim world and intensified demands for the protection of Jerusalem's holy sites. It also became a major catalyst for the establishment of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in September 1969, strengthening collective Islamic action and solidarity.

Growing Threats to Al-Aqsa Mosque

The Foundation's Director-General Yassin Hammoud said the organisation publishes an annual report documenting developments affecting Al-Aqsa Mosque. He said the latest edition of *Eye on Al-Aqsa* identified three major threats facing the mosque:

- The possibility of imposing a de facto division of the mosque through increasing control over its eastern courtyards.
 - The risk of a large-scale attack amid growing provocations, including concerns over the possibility of arson or an explosion inside the mosque.
 - The complete dismantling of what remains of the historical status quo at Al-Aqsa Mosque and the removal of the role of the Islamic Waqf administration.
- These threats, Hammoud said, were being driven by the Israeli government, the police and what he referred to as "Temple organisations." He also warned of what he described as a fourth threat to the future of Al-Aqsa Mosque: the weakness and growing divisions within the Arab and Muslim world.

"The weakness and fragmentation of the Muslim Ummah have left Al-Aqsa increasingly exposed," he said, stressing that statements of condemnation alone were insufficient to meet the challenges facing the holy site.

A Question of Faith and Responsibility
IUMS President Ali Muhyiddin Al-Qaradaghi said Israeli groups that seek Al-Aqsa Mosque's demolition to construct a so-called "Third Temple" in its place are increasingly attempting to justify their objectives on religious, historical and archaeological grounds.

He said the issue had become a central objective for such groups and called on Muslims worldwide to assume greater responsibility for the protection and defence of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Al-Qaradaghi also described the future of Al-Aqsa as a matter closely connect-



Jerusalem: More Than a City

Turkish scholar Yasin Aktay said Jerusalem was not just a city, a geographical location or a chapter in history.

"Jerusalem is memory, a qibla and the place of Al-Isra and Al-Mi'raj," he said. "It is a blessed city walked upon by prophets and one of the most powerful symbols of humanity's shared religious and historical memory."

Aktay argued that the occupation of Jerusalem represented more than the control of territory or a city.

"It is an assault on Jerusalem's historical identity, its civilisational role and humanity's shared memory," he said.

The programme also featured presentations by Dr Hisham Yacoub, Head of Research and Development at the International Al-Quds Foundation, and Ali Ibrahim, a senior researcher at the organisation.

A recorded message of Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine, Imam and preacher of Al-Aqsa Mosque, and President of the Supreme Islamic Council in Jerusalem, was delivered on the occasion, which was attended by a number of scholars, researchers and public figures.

Al-Ummah Foundation Represented

Participating in this historic event, Mr Mohammed Zakir Hossain, Chairman of the Al-Ummah Foundation and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ummah Journal, stressed the importance of translating literature relating to Palestine and Jerusalem into a wide range of languages and

ed to religious belief, arguing that recent changes in public attitudes toward the Palestinian cause in Europe and the United States were among the broader consequences of the events that followed Al-Aqsa Flood.



making it accessible to diverse communities around the world.

Such efforts, Zakir said, could play an important role in expanding public awareness of the Palestinian cause and deepening understanding of the historical, religious and cultural significance of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque.

On the occasion, Mr Zakir presented a Bengali translation of The Forty Hadiths on the Frontlines of Murabata in Bayt Al-Maqdis and Its Surroundings, to Sheikh Essam Al-Bashir, a noted Islamic scholar and writer.

A Comprehensive Approach to Jerusalem

Al-Quds Foundation approaches the question of Jerusalem not solely as a political issue, but through a broader framework encompassing history, culture, law, education, urban planning, architecture, human rights and civilisation.

Its work includes scientific research, the production of reliable information, the protection of cultural heritage and a wide range of educational and advocacy initiatives.

The idea for establishing the Foundation was first proposed during the Third Arab-Islamic Conference, held in Beirut on 21 October 2000. The aim was to create an independent civil institution dedicated to protecting Jerusalem's historical identity, promoting scientific research and coordinating activities at the international level.

Following a period of preparation, the Foundation's founding conference was held in Beirut on 28 January 2001. It was subsequently registered with the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic and continued its international work within an institutional framework.

Today, the Foundation places particular emphasis on research and studies relating to Jerusalem and its cultural heritage. Its activities include the publication of books, journals, reports and academic studies; the preservation and documentation of the city's collective memory; co-operation with universities and research centres; and the organisation of international conferences, seminars and workshops.

As concerns over the future of Al-Aqsa Mosque continue to grow, the Istanbul gathering underscored the importance of sustained research, public awareness and international engagement in preserving Jerusalem's historical identity and keeping the question of the Holy City at the centre of global attention.



GOLD, PAPER CURRENCY AND RIBA: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE



By Md. Mashiur Rahman
Business and Economic Analyst

The history of money began with the barter system, in which goods were exchanged for other goods. Later, mea-

sured pieces of precious metals such as gold and silver came into use, as exemplified by the Lydian Lion coins. This was followed by metal coins bearing royal symbols and recognised by governments. Eventually, modern paper currency and digital transaction systems emerged alongside economic development. Today, the taka is the official currency of Bangladesh.

Regarding riba (interest or usury), Al-



lah says: “Those who consume interest will not stand except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, ‘Trade is just like interest.’ But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns to it—those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.” (Qur’an 2:275)

Riba is a commonly used Arabic term. Some interpret it as interest, meaning an additional amount charged in return for lending money, while others interpret it more broadly as economic injustice—that is, any form of econom-

ic wrongdoing. For example, denying workers fair wages or taking someone else’s money through manipulation or fraud in the stock market could also be considered forms of economic injustice.

History shows that during the early Islamic period, silver dirhams—coins associated with the Persian-Sasanian Empire—and gold dinars—coins associated with the Roman-Byzantine Empire—were in circulation. Later, Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan introduced fully Islamic gold dinars and silver dirhams. Images of people were removed, while Arabic inscriptions, Qur’anic verses and the phrase “La ilaha illallah” were inscribed on the coins.

It is worth noting that gold dinars and silver dirhams had certain distinctive characteristics that paper currencies do not have. First, they possessed intrinsic value; the coins themselves were valuable because they were made of gold or silver. Second, gold coins had two kinds of value: value in use and value in exchange. Third, even if a government discontinued or invalidated gold coins as legal currency, they would not necessarily lose their underlying value.

The characteristics of paper currency, or fiat money, are different. First, paper currency has little or no intrinsic value. Second, its value is maintained through the government’s credibility and its status as legal tender. In other words, it works because the government declares



that the note can be used to buy and sell goods and services, and people accept it on that basis. Third, paper currency may be viewed as a substitute for a monetary asset, but it is not the same as actual gold or silver. Fourth, if a government withdraws a paper currency from circulation, its usefulness as money may disappear, leaving the paper with little practical value.

The question, then, is this: Against what are the taka and the US dollar issued?

Until 1971, the US dollar was convertible into gold under the international monetary system then in place. In such a system, a unit of currency represented a specified quantity of gold. In 1971,

US President Richard Nixon ended the dollar's convertibility into gold. Today, neither the taka nor the US dollar is issued against a fixed quantity of gold. Modern fiat currencies derive their value from government backing, monetary institutions, economic capacity, and confidence in both the currency and the issuing state. This is known as the fiat money system—money created under government authority.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, monetary expansion followed another process. In 2020, governments and central banks around the world—particularly in the United States and Europe—introduced extensive monetary and liquidity-support measures, including quantitative easing (QE). New money was largely created electronically and added to the financial system rather than being issued against a corresponding quantity of gold or other physical assets. These measures provided economic relief, although inflation later increased in many countries. In this sense, the money created during the pandemic represented a significant expansion of fiat money.

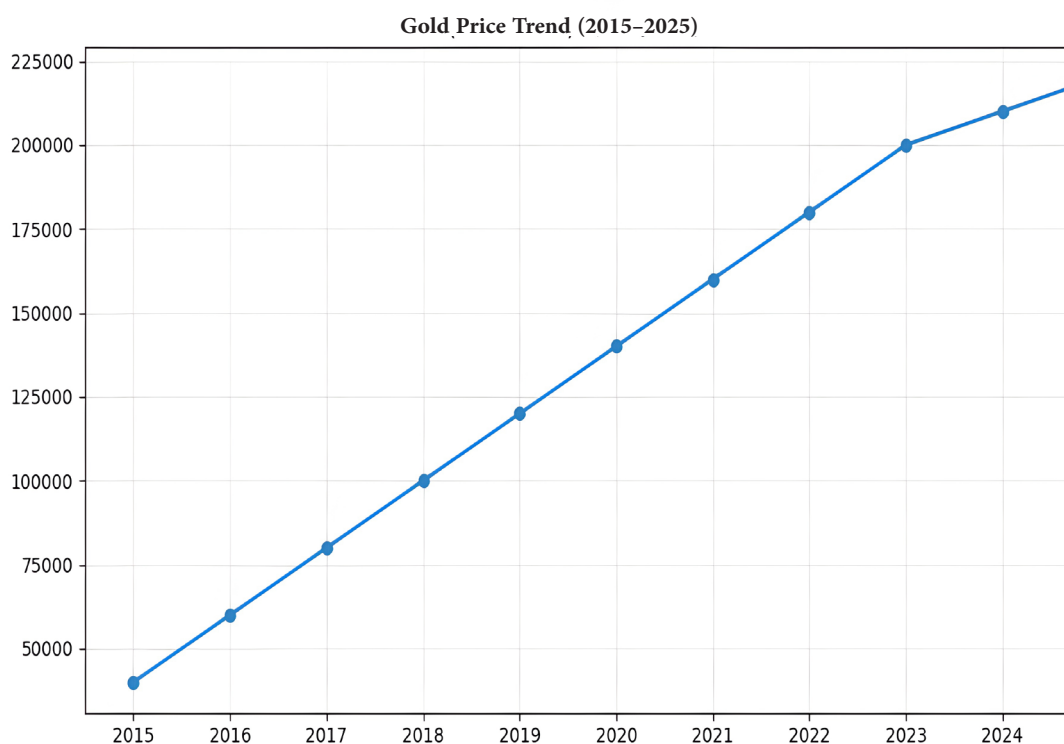
The main point of the discussion above is that gold and silver coins are fundamentally different from paper currency. Because gold has practical and intrinsic value, it continues to be bought and sold in the market even when it is no longer used as official currency.

We can also observe that the price of

gold has generally increased over the years, while the purchasing power of paper currencies tends to decline when measured against gold or other goods and commodities. In other words, when gold is used as the reference point, an inverse relationship may be seen be-

tween the price of gold and the value of paper currency: as the price of gold rises in paper-currency terms, the purchasing power of that currency declines.

Let us consider what happens in practice.



From this chart, it may be argued that an increase in the quantity of gold represents an additional amount, or interest, whereas an ordinary increase in the amount of paper money does not necessarily constitute interest in the same sense. However, according to this argument, if an amount greater than the increase in the price of gold is paid, the excess beyond that increase would constitute interest.

In other words, what is considered interest in transactions involving gold currency is not necessarily considered interest in the same way in transactions involving paper currency.

If this distinction is not properly understood, a person may unintentionally become involved in interest and suffer its consequences.



Displaced Palestinians return to northern Gaza. Photo: Amjad al Fayoumi/NRC

CIVILIZATION AT THE BRINK: WHEN MATERIAL PROGRESS REACHES ITS LIMITS



By Syed Iqbal Zaheer
Indian scholar and writer



22

Al-Ummah

The world is close to facing a decline that can lead to the collapse of the system that governs its life and environment. The Western system of life and thought,

which is the system that governs a large part of the world today, is a material-based system. (We differentiate between a system of life and thought, and a civilization. The West apart, the rest of the world is still not bowled clean over by the modern Western civilization).

In any case, our point is that a system and civilization based on material resources can, by their very nature, have only a limited lifespan. Since the planet's resources are finite, however abundant they may appear, they will one day be exhausted. The lifespan of a mate-

rial-based civilization can therefore be measured by the stocks held in reserve. Yet, instead of reducing consumption, governments plan ever-greater exploitation with each new year. This is likely to produce severe shortages of essential materials in the not-too-distant future.

As material resources dwindle, the greed to possess the remaining deposits will intensify and, consequently, a general scramble for them will break out. (In keeping with the spirit of modern civilization, the pretext for military intervention will be staged with civilized decorum: circumstances created, media hype generated, the culprit's crime established, resolutions passed... and the rest of the drama performed.)

Today, many maps are no longer merely political maps; they are resource maps. (Politicians are not difficult to buy in the self-same sweet Eastern world, the cradle of wisdom. Political maps therefore matter less today. After all, as Peter Mansfield said, the heart may be Eastern, but the pocket is Western.) The first commodity to be plundered, in any event, will be the lifeblood of modern Western civilisation.

To be sure, oil is not the whole problem. Every resource has its limits, and none will outlast human greed. Yet oil may become the first cause of violence and serious disruption to human life on Earth. This is not necessarily because there is too little oil. There may be enough for many decades at present-day consumption rates, in addition

“ A civilisation built on material consumption cannot outlast human aspiration, greed and adventurism. It will collapse when its material reserves are depleted ”

to unknown reserves in wells sealed and kept for a rainy day.

We learn that, in 1998 alone, the United States capped some 130,000 oil wells. And if the East believes that Western Europe contains no deposits that were sealed soon after discovery, that should come as no surprise. Easterners never seem ready to abandon their simplicity, however clever they may be in other respects. In any case, substantial reserves remain.

But today's consumption rates continue to rise. A decline in consumption appears both impossible and, to many, unthinkable. The very governments that could ask the public to consume less are committed to continuing economic growth. Annual growth of 5%-7% is considered reasonable in the West, while the East often aspires to double-digit figures. Growth is essential. Growth is promised. Votes are won. Grants are awarded to scientists. Yet all of this requires energy. At the same time, oil consumption must decline. Do we not face a contradiction?

“ Competition for dwindling energy and raw materials could intensify geopolitical conflict and military intervention ”

We might also point out, in passing, that natural forces ultimately prevail in any conflict between nature and human ambition. Human will may win in the short term, but often at a heavy human cost. That is how the forces of nature work: ultimately, they prevail. Yet present-day human ambition remains devoted to increasing wealth and material production and accumulating ever more goods.

Unlimited greed has become a mainstay of the modern human soul. In the face of this determination, and the growth it produces, is there a crisis in the making?

Moreover, when it comes to oil - or any other natural resource - the problem is not as simple as supply and demand. There are further complications. As demand for oil grows, prices must rise for several reasons. First, increasing demand drives prices upward. Second, supply cannot expand endlessly to keep pace with consumption and hold prices down; there is a limit to how much can be produced. If large numbers of technocrats are devoted solely to extracting oil, requiring substantial investment in wells, who will work on farms and in fac-

tories to meet ever-growing demand? (We are not referring here to the labouring class.)

Furthermore, where will investment for other areas of growth and development come from if a large share is absorbed by the oil sector? Third, as time passes, growth accelerates and scientists are rewarded, more systems of production, distribution and consumption will become dependent on energy. Rising demand is therefore inescapable, even if some restraint can be imposed on consumption.

This applies not only to oil but also to consumer goods. It is another matter that consumption cannot be successfully controlled while greed remains the foundation on which modern Western civilisation is built. Political parties come to power by promising a greater supply of consumer goods. Without that appetite, the civilisation may collapse anyway.

Furthermore, any restraint on fuel consumption can translate into rolling back development programmes. What would that mean? A return to the supposedly inglorious days of the past - a retreat towards the Middle Ages? If, for instance, more railway lines were laid to reduce the number of oil-consuming motorists, what message would that send? (The automobile is the pride of modern man who, robbed of many things, has little else of which to be proud. So do not touch his prized possession.) And what of faith in modern-day magic and

its magicians: science and scientists? What, in turn, would be the effect of cutting funds for scientific research? The equation does not work.

It is obvious, then, that every effort will be made to maintain the present pace of development, if not accelerate it. There will, of course, be attempts to reduce fuel consumption: to prevent costs from rising; to avoid protests that could bring down governments; and to avert the chaos, anarchy, revolutions and feared return to the past that might follow. Yet a material-based civilisation is linear. It can travel in only one direction: forward or backward. Raise your hands for a backward march. A foolish suggestion.

Greed, moreover, is not the only force shaping human action. What about pride? Will the United States, for instance - the qiblah of the world's greedy - overcome the pride of standing at the summit and initiate a worldwide reduction in growth, planned and monitored by the United Nations, while accepting even the smallest risk that another country might quietly reach the top first? Better to speak of something else.

The absolute optimist will easily laugh this off. What about alternative forms of energy? Yes, there are several. But which of them can substantially reduce the number of automobiles on the roads while transporting farm products to urban centres faster and at lower cost?

The locking of horns among nations seeking control of essential raw materi-

“ Economic growth, political promises and consumer culture make meaningful reductions in consumption exceptionally difficult ”

als is therefore increasingly likely. How long it will take, we cannot say; any precise prediction risks being disproved by time. But why bury our heads in the sand when a storm is gathering on the horizon? A deliberately engineered crisis cannot be ruled out. Simply allowing protests over high prices to continue might provide a sufficient pretext for accusing the supposedly greedy producers of being indifferent to human suffering... and the rest of the familiar story. Human beings are intriguing creatures; among other things, they are capable of considerable intrigue. Remember 1990?

Already, some powers have positioned their forces near major deposits. Others are unhappy with these moves, fearing that they may be denied their share. Some, though concerned, can do little immediately and are buying time. Still others are building massive power bases that could play a significant role in future politics, war and peace. The creation of the European Union is one such effort. But will events move faster than expected? Ask them.

Another factor may reinforce the age-

“ Muslim intellectuals must critically examine the prevailing material order and develop a responsible alternative vision ”

old conviction that, at least for the victor, violence ultimately pays. After its recent spectacular successes, the kind of science that brought immediate and tangible benefits to humanity now appears to be confronting its limits. This applies particularly to the search for materials that can replace conventional fuels in internal-combustion engines. Nor does a search in outer space appear especially promising.

A growing number of people are beginning to realise that humanity may never be able to travel to other planets - much less other planetary systems - and return with useful materials and minerals. Humanity appears bound to Earth. With that realisation, more vigorous struggles may take place within the human family on this planet, rather than through expanded efforts to establish supply lines from distant celestial bodies.

And any conflict that escalates to the scale of the two world wars could well be the last. Nuclear proliferation across the globe continues at full, though largely quiet, pace. After Israel, India

and Pakistan - the third-phase developers - other countries may join as fourth-phase developers. They are unlikely to announce their achievements. Those unable to produce such weapons may seek to buy products <ready for delivery>. In war, they may be used according to the central principle of so much modern human action: when you do something, do it thoroughly. Or, more ominously: <If we are not going to survive, let no one survive.>

Apart from military installations and supply depots, an enemy's nuclear facilities would become targets. Sparing cities would be no act of generosity: clouds of radiation would pass over them and drift into neighbouring countries. The resulting chain reaction could bring down the edifice of Western civilisation, carrying mighty nations with it and pushing humanity back towards a pre-industrial age.

Even if violent destruction is ruled out, a peaceful dissolution of Western civilisation remains possible for the reasons stated at the outset. To repeat: a civilisation based on material consumption cannot outlast human aspirations, greed and adventurism. It will collapse as essential reserves are depleted. If humanity cannot - and almost certainly will not - make steep cuts in industrial production, a slow decline could begin within decades.

What must be understood is that collapse will not wait for the complete exhaustion of essential raw materials.

GLOBAL CRISIS



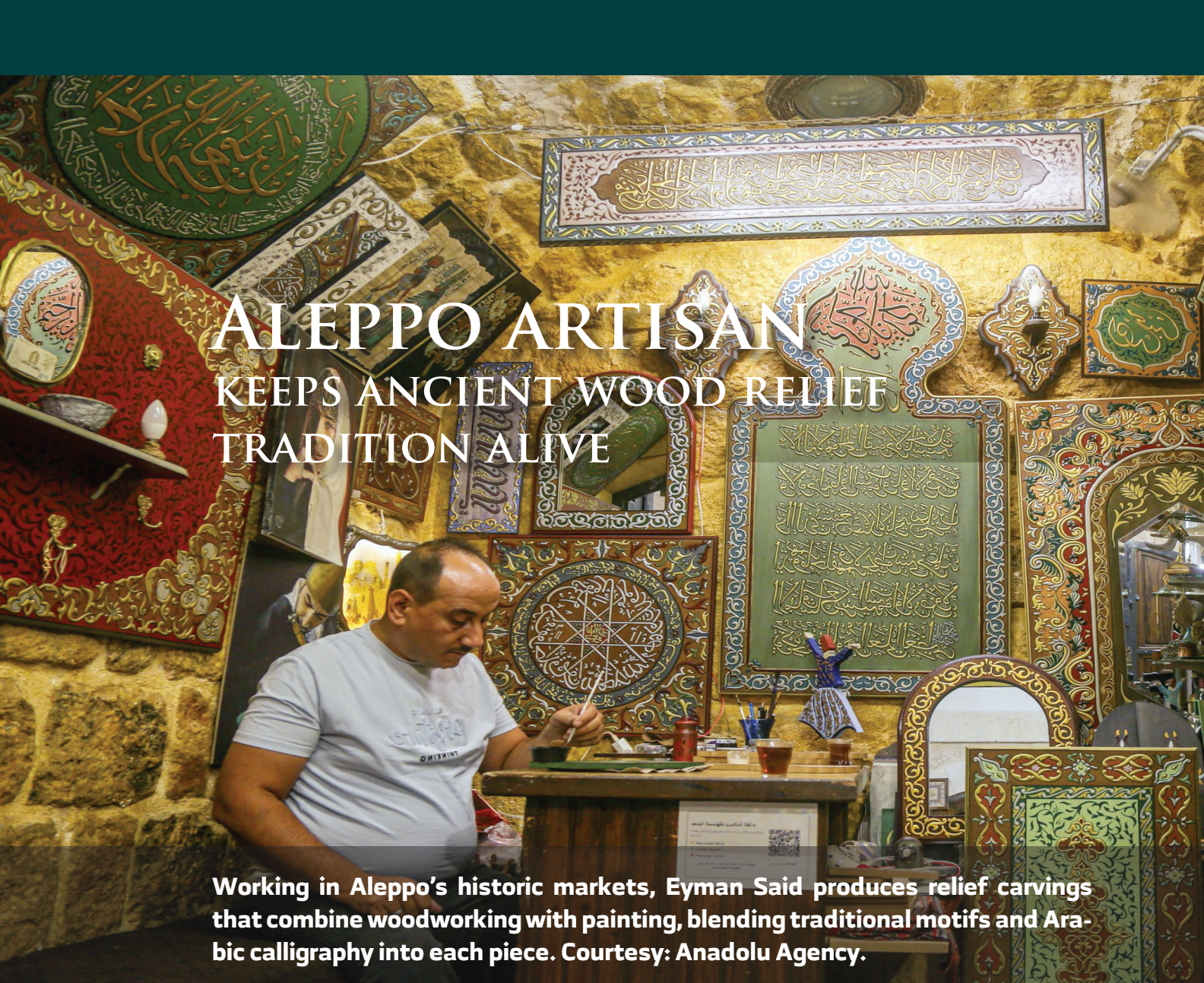
Once a significant proportion of resources has disappeared, prices will rise sharply, forcing nations - hawks turned doves, you tell me - to adopt simpler ways of life. This would have a chain effect on the world economy, producing rapid decline even while some deposits remained. High commodity prices, for instance, could make oil refining or coal mining so expensive that operations would be abandoned, triggering a broader contraction in industrial production.

Add other factors: an increasing number of automobiles and industries emitting carbon dioxide and toxic substances at a relentless pace and on a vast scale. The scenario then becomes easier to explain, even as the atmosphere becomes murkier. The emergence of unknown viruses, disrupted weather patterns, melting ice caps and related shocks could complete the process we are describing. «Heads» you lose; «tails» I

win. Nor would present-day stockpiling offer lasting protection.

If the economy of the rest of the world crashes, the United States, for instance, will not be able to build a Great Wall around its borders and insulate itself from the consequences. Unless it possesses sufficient reserves to supply the rest of the world's economies with cheap energy until the end of time, the biggest supplier could become the biggest sufferer.

There is more to say on this subject, including the vulnerability of modern civilisation. But enough offence to the ears for now. We shall return to the topic another time. For the moment, we must ask whether the Muslim intelligentsia has ever seriously considered the role it should play, rather than remaining a baggage carrier for a caravan blindly hurtling towards its destiny.

A man, Eyman Said, is seated at a wooden workbench in a workshop. He is focused on carving a piece of wood with a tool. The workshop is filled with numerous finished wood relief carvings, some featuring intricate Arabic calligraphy and others with geometric or floral patterns. The background wall is made of stone and is adorned with several large, ornate wood relief panels. The lighting is warm, highlighting the textures of the wood and stone.

ALEPPO ARTISAN KEEPS ANCIENT WOOD RELIEF TRADITION ALIVE

Working in Aleppo's historic markets, Eyman Said produces relief carvings that combine woodworking with painting, blending traditional motifs and Arabic calligraphy into each piece. Courtesy: Anadolu Agency.



By Al-Ummah Desk

28
Al-Ummah |

In the historic markets of Syria's northern city of Aleppo, artisan Eyman Said is working to preserve a traditional wood relief art that dates back about 1,400 years by teaching the family craft to his son.

Said, 42, has practiced the craft for three decades, creating raised decora-

tive wooden panels adorned with traditional Arabesque motifs and Arabic calligraphy in a workshop in Aleppo's historic souks. As demand for the centuries-old art has declined, he hopes passing on his skills will help ensure its survival.

Once widely used to decorate the ceil-



ings and walls of mosques, churches and palaces, the art has largely disappeared from modern architecture. Today, it is more commonly found on decorative boxes, wall hangings and other handcrafted wooden items.

Examples of the craft can still be seen in historic landmarks, including the Throne Hall of the Citadel of Aleppo and Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Said learned the family trade at age 12 and is now teaching it to his son

to help preserve a tradition that forms part of Syria's cultural heritage.

The process begins by transferring a design from paper onto wood, then applying a special plant-based paste to create raised patterns. The piece is then painted, coated with a protective finish and completed by coloring the relief with brushes and outlining the design with fine black lines.

"This craft never becomes boring," he said, adding that every piece offers new details to discover.

He said colors are carefully selected to complement a room's atmosphere, with cooler shades used in sunlit spaces and warmer tones preferred for darker interiors.

Visitors to his workshop often spend long periods studying the intricate designs on the walls and ceiling, he said.

Said called for greater support for traditional crafts, including the creation of a dedicated handicrafts market where artisans specializing in wood relief art, coppersmithing, weaving, and kilim-making could work side by side.

He said: "Bringing workshops together would help prevent these professions from disappearing while encouraging healthy competition among artisans, resulting in higher-quality craftsmanship."

Courtesy: Anadolu Agency



A New Controversy Surrounds the Historical Monument of Malda, West Bengal, India

ADINA MOSQUE CONTROVERSY: POLITICIZING HISTORY?



Masumur Rahman Khalili
Executive Editor, Naya Diganta



Standing in Pandua in West Bengal's Malda district, the Adina Mosque has witnessed more than seven centuries of Bengal's history, architecture and political change. Once regarded as the largest congregational mosque in the Indian subcontinent, it is now at the centre of disputes involving historiography, religious identity, law, electoral politics and cultural nationalism.

Organizations associated with India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) claim that the mosque was built on the site of an ancient "Adinath" temple. Mainstream historians and archaeologists generally maintain that, although materials from earlier structures were reused in the mosque, no conclusive evidence has established that a specific temple was demolished to build it.

The controversy, therefore, is not merely about the past. It concerns how history is interpreted—and mobilized—in present-day India.

A Monument of an Independent Bengal

Pandua, together with Gaur, was an important administrative, military and cultural centre of medieval Bengal. In the 14th century, Bengal emerged from Delhi Sultanate control as an independent political entity. Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah unified much of the region in 1342 and founded the Ilyas Shahi dynasty. His successor, Sikandar Shah, consolidated the state and commissioned the Adina Mosque.

Most scholars date its construction to 1373-75 CE. Bengal had withstood conflicts with Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq of Delhi, and the monumental mosque expressed more than religious devotion: it projected the authority and indepen-

dence of the Bengal Sultanate. Architectural historian Percy Brown viewed it as a reflection of its ruler's political stature. A Persian inscription at the site records Sikandar Shah's titles and celebrates his reign, but does not mention the destruction of an Adinath temple.

Influenced by the great congregational mosques of the Middle East, Adina also carries the unmistakable imprint of Bengal. Its immense courtyard, arcades, pillars and central nave make it one of South Asia's most ambitious medieval monuments. Hindu and Buddhist motifs - lotus designs, bells, foliage, carved pillars and sculptural fragments - appear in many of its stone components.

Evidence, Reuse and Interpretation

These features lie at the heart of the dispute. One interpretation is that the materials came from demolished temples and reflect political or religious domination. Another, advanced by scholars including Richard M. Eaton, notes that builders across medieval India commonly reused stone from older or ruined structures. Reused fragments alone, therefore, cannot prove that a particular temple stood on the site or was destroyed specifically for the mosque.

Colonial archaeologists helped shape the debate. Alexander Cunningham observed that several pillars and stones appeared to have come from earlier Hindu structures, but did not defini-

tively identify an Adinath temple at the location. Brown likewise noted reused elements while concentrating on architecture and imperial design. George Mitchell emphasized that local craftsmen naturally brought indigenous forms and artistic traditions into Bengal's Islamic architecture.

The name "Adina" has also prompted speculation. Some link it to "Adinath," suggesting an earlier Jain or Shaiva site. Yet linguistic and historical scholarship has produced no universally accepted explanation of the name. Possibility is not proof.

Historical inquiry rests on inscriptions, contemporary or near-contemporary accounts, archaeology and critical comparison. Surviving Persian histories, inscriptions and Bengal Sultanate documents do not directly record the destruction of an Adinath temple. Nor has a comprehensive scientific excavation conclusively identified a temple foundation, inscription, idol, puja mandap or garbhagriha attributable to such a structure.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) classifies Adina as a protected 14th-century Islamic monument. No official ASI report has conclusively identified the site as an Adinath temple. India's Ministry of Culture has also indicated in Parliament that the ASI has not published a separate official examination conclusively affirming or rejecting

the claim. The temple theory therefore remains an unproven hypothesis, not an established historical fact.

Politics, Law and Polarization

Why, then, has the issue gained urgency? The RSS has long promoted a cultural nationalism that interprets Indian history through civilizational identity. Supporters argue that disputed or neglected chapters deserve fresh archaeological investigation and that evidence should be allowed to speak. Some petitioners have consequently sought excavation and Ground Penetrating Radar surveys at Adina.

Critics fear that repeatedly reopening claims concerning protected medieval monuments will endanger archaeological heritage, deepen religious polarization and turn distant conflicts into instruments of contemporary electoral politics. They also argue that such campaigns can divert attention from employment, development and governance. Historical evidence cannot by itself determine political motives, but the timing and framing of these demands inevitably invite political scrutiny.

Adina is increasingly mentioned alongside Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura, although their legal and historical circumstances differ. The Ayodhya dispute culminated in a Supreme Court judgment in 2019; the Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi and Mathura Krishna



Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah disputes present separate questions. At Adina, the basic issue remains evidentiary: whether a specific pre-existing religious structure can be demonstrated and how, if at all, it relates to the present monument.

The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, also shapes the debate. It seeks to preserve the religious character of places of worship as they stood on August 15, 1947, and to prevent the reopening of historical disputes. Supporters see the law as a safeguard for

communal peace; critics say alleged historical injustices should remain open to judicial remedy. The controversy thus reaches beyond archaeology into constitutionalism, secularism and the meaning of historical justice.

For West Bengal, the dispute intersects with longstanding tensions over religious identity, minority representation, Bengali nationalism and broader Hindu cultural nationalism. Its significance also crosses today's border. Medieval Gaur, Pandua, Sonargaon and Dhaka belonged to a connected political and cul-

tural landscape. Adina is therefore part of the shared heritage of both Bengals, not merely a local site in Malda.

History Cannot Be Written Through Slogans

The established record is clear on several points. Adina is a major monument of the independent Bengal Sultanate, built under Sikandar Shah. It incorporates material and artistic elements associated with earlier Hindu and Buddhist traditions. What remains unestablished is the claim that its construction required the demolition of a specific Adinath temple.

That distinction matters. Richard Eaton's wider research acknowledges that temple desecration occurred under Muslim rulers, while showing that motives could include political rebellion, symbolic conquest and economic calculation as well as religion. Each case must therefore be examined in its own context. Even historians such as R. C. Majumdar and Jadunath Sarkar, both critical chroniclers of Muslim rule, did not establish Adina as a definitive instance of the destruction of an Adinath temple.

The broader question is how societies choose to remember the past. They may convert old conflicts into weapons of present identity politics, or approach them through evidence, critical inquiry and a commitment to coexistence. Sci-

entific investigation can enrich knowledge, but it must be professionally justified, legally sound and protected from predetermined conclusions.

Adina's history should neither be insulated from research nor surrendered to slogans. Any credible resolution must emerge from archaeology, epigraphy, architecture, documentary evidence, academic peer review and the law. Until such evidence establishes otherwise, the mosque should be understood for what the available record supports: a monumental expression of 14th-century Bengal, layered with the artistic inheritances of the region and burdened, seven centuries later, with the politics of the present.

Selected References

1. Richard M. Eaton - The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier
2. Richard M. Eaton - Temple Desecration and Muslim States in Medieval India
3. Percy Brown - Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)
4. George Michell - Architecture of the Islamic World
5. Catherine B. Asher - Architecture of Mughal India
6. R. C. Majumdar - History of Bengal
7. Archaeological Survey of India - Protected Monument Records
8. Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991



HUNDREDS MARK 31 YEARS SINCE SREBRENICA AT LONDON LAUNCH OF ALIJA IZETBEGOVIĆ'S ISLAM: BETWEEN EAST AND WEST



By Al-Ummah Desk

The newly revised English translation of «Islam: Between East and West» — the philosophical work of Alija Izetbegovic, the philosopher, statesman, and Founding President of Bosnia-Herzegovina — was launched on Friday, July 10, 2026, at the London Muslim Centre,

during an evening that also commemorated the 31st anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide.

Hosted by The Cordoba Foundation and the Alija Izetbegovic Foundation, alongside several supporting organizations

(including the book's publisher, Ketebe), the launch drew over 400 guests from across the country. Attendees included many youth as well as a Turkish delegation. Streamed live on The Cordoba Foundation's YouTube and Facebook channels, the event proved highly successful, with nearly 300 copies of the book sold at the beginning of the evening.

Moderated by Dr. Abdullah Faliq, Managing Director at The Cordoba Foundation – who brings 25 years of advocacy for the victims of Srebrenica – the event commenced as he welcomed the panel of speakers and guests. He described Izetbegovic's magnum opus as "a major contribution to understanding the human condition, consciousness, and the metaphysical foundations of ethics."

Elaborating further, he said: "Many of us grew up reading this text, which positions Islam not just as a religion, but as an integrative worldview capable of harmonizing humanity's spiritual and material needs. The book has striking relevance for us today as we try to navigate conflicts, tensions, and the rise of right-wing populism across the globe."

Imam Sedin Sahman, Chief Imam of the Islamic Bosnian community in Britain and a survivor of the Bosnian War, recited verses from the Qur'an. This was followed by opening remarks from H.E. Osman Topcagic, Bosnian Ambassador to the U.K., who recalled working along-

side President Izetbegovic throughout the war years and the Dayton peace negotiations. "In all those situations, I had in front of me a statesman, but also a man who cared deeply for human beings: care for the people, care for others, and not just for one ethnic or religious group, trying to find a formula to enable life together," he said. "Bosnia and Herzegovina remembers the work and life of Mr. Izetbegovic. What we have today is very much because of his actions and his deeds."

The highlight of the evening was a keynote address by Sabina Berberovic, daughter of President Izetbegovic and a founding member of the Alija Izetbegovic Foundation. Speaking on the eve of the Srebrenica Genocide anniversary, she stated: "Thirty-one years on, we remember the victims of the genocide, and we stand with their families: thousands of women and children who lost their fathers, their brothers, their husbands. It takes immense courage to continue living after such a terrible experience," she said. "They are enduring the unendurable and accepting the unacceptable. The women of Srebrenica rose from being victims to become our heroes, and they raised their children with pride and dignity."

She shared the story behind her father's book, which Izetbegovic began writing as a high school student during the Second World War. The manuscript was hidden by his sister under a flower

chest in the family kitchen when police searched their home in 1946, and it was completed three decades later. By the time State Security agents targeted him again in the 1980s, the finished manuscript was safely in the possession of a friend in Canada. "As they were leaving, I asked my father what we were to do, and he just replied: 'Have the book published,'" she recalled.

The book was published in 1984 while Izetbegovic served a prison sentence. Sabina's brother and husband later drove the first copies from Belgrade to Sarajevo in the boot of a car, taking rural backroads to avoid being stopped and searched. "I hope that the book «Islam: Between East and West» will only bring good wherever and whenever it is read," she said.

Ömer Faruk Yeni, an arts and cultural heritage consultant and the London and Istanbul-based director of Ketebe publishing, provided an overview of the book. "This is not a book about East or West, nor is it a defence of one civilisation against another. It is a profound reflection on what it means to be human. More than forty years have passed since the book first appeared, yet its questions have only become more relevant. Increasingly, Izetbegovic is recognised not only as the founding President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but as one of the most original Muslim thinkers of the twentieth century."

In a recorded address, Dr Admir Mulaosmanovic, CEO of the Aurora Foundation in Sarajevo and a wounded veteran of the Bosnian War, framed the book within the context of the present day. "The question Izetbegovic posed rings even more powerfully today than when it was first written down," he said. "This is not a theological text. It is an attempt to translate Islam into a language spoken and understood by today's generation, and a call for both individual intellectual sharpening and collective social action."

Shaykh Prof Abdal Hakim Murad, Dean of the Cambridge Muslim College, recounted travelling to Sarajevo in the 1980s to write a report for Amnesty International on the trial of Izetbegovic and his co-defendants. Europe's response to Bosnia, he argued, exposed a lasting blind spot. "The Bosnian struggle was not just a military struggle. It was against a European determination to defend a cultural truth rather than a factual truth," he said. "We see this today in Gaza: so many hand-wringing politicians who have read the reports and know what is going on, but it is not their cultural truth, and so they are paralysed."

Murad warned that "Muslim communities across Europe are witnessing the storm clouds gathering on the horizon", adding that Bosnia holds a vital lesson: "Bosnians can teach us what that is like, and how to avert it. We need to challenge cultural truths with factu-



al truths. We need to go to Bosnia, we need to read this great literature, and we need to make that history part of our history.”

Shaykh Dr Yasir Qadhi, a prominent American theologian who sent a video message while travelling, described first reading the book as a teenager in 1990.

“This book is one of the few genuinely unique philosophical contributions of the Muslim Ummah in this century, in a similar vein to Iqbal’s *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*. What makes it especially important is not just the message, but that it comes from somebody who paid a personal price for what he wrote. Izetbegović was not a mere armchair

critic. He lived the life of a bona fide leader who had to navigate his nation through a war,” he said.

“This book should be mandatory reading for all who want to traverse the path of intellectual scholarship, especially in the Western world, because it answers the question: what vision of the human person makes Islam intelligible?”

Sarah Joseph OBE, a writer, broadcaster, and founding editor of *Emel* magazine, focused on the book’s chapter on progress. “Izetbegovic asks whether life will be five times fuller, happier, or more humane, and his answer is decidedly negative. Another forty years on, have we quintupled in our happiness? Again,

the answer is decidedly no,” she said.

Addressing the rise of the far-right in Europe, she rejected fear: “This book is calling us towards civilisation. It is calling us to say: we are not victims. We are people inspired by ideas, and we have a vision for the future. The Prophet Muhammad did not come for the Muslims; he came as a mercy to mankind. That is a civilisational message, and that is what this book tells us.”

Dr. Mohammed Wajid Akhter, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain, remembered discovering the book as a child in Saudi Arabia during the genocide, noting it was one of only two English titles in his mosque. “The imam came to me one day and said: ‘This is why the Bosnians will win. You can kill a people, but you cannot kill an idea,’” he shared. Izetbegovic, Akhter argued, possessed the rare vision, courage, and pragmatism that eventually guided his nation to survival and left a timeless intellectual blueprint for future generations.

Izetbegovic, Akhter argued, possessed the vision, courage, and pragmatism every leader needs, alongside something far rarer. “He did something very few Muslim leaders do: he voluntarily stepped down,” Akhter noted. “Throughout 1,400 years of Muslim history, leaders have traditionally left office only for the graveyard. Izetbegović chose to leave before then, showing the true measure

of the man.”

Former BBC war reporter Martin Bell, who was wounded during the siege of Sarajevo, sent his apologies as ill health prevented his attendance.

Dr. Abdullah Faliq asked for prayers and reflection for ten genocide victims whose remains were identified this year, ahead of their burial at Srebrenica on July 11. He also highlighted the Bosnian Grand Mufti’s Friday Sermon delivered earlier that day in Sarajevo, noting its timely messages of steadfastness and enduring faith.

Faliq urged the youth to study the history of Srebrenica, recommending a special publication, *Srebrenica Genocide: 30 Years Later: Understanding, Remembering, Acting* by Dr Emir Hadzikadunic. The publication features insights from Bosnia’s Grand Mufti, the Bosnian Ambassador, and ICMP Director Kathryn Bomberger.

Sarah Joseph urged the audience to visit the country: “Go, support the economy, support the people, and know that their stories will never die.”

Closing the evening, Faliq reflected on the ongoing pain of families still recovering the remains of loved ones 31 years later. “Let us not do this once a year only,” he pleaded. “We must keep the flame of Srebrenica alive and tell these stories all year round.”

— RABI UL AWWAL —

12 Rabi ul Awwal

The Birth of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

A blessed day that marks the birth of the Final Messenger of Allah, a mercy for all mankind.



RABI AL-AWWAL: A MONTH OF MEMORY, MERCY AND RENEWAL



By Al-Ummah Desk

40

Al-Ummah

Rabi Al-Awwal, the third month of the Islamic lunar calendar, holds a distinctive place in Muslim history and devotion. Its name literally means 'the first spring', although, because the Hijri calendar follows the lunar cycle, the month moves through the seasons. Its importance does not arise from a prescribed fast or pilgrimage. Rather, it comes from the extraordinary events

associated with it - events that connect the birth of a message, the building of a community and the passing of the Messenger who delivered it.

The month is best known for the birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Makkah in the Year of the Elephant, generally placed around 570-571 CE. Muslim historians agree that he was

born on a Monday, but early accounts differ over the exact date. The 12th of Rabi Al-Awwal became the most widely recognized traditional date, while other reports identify different days. A balanced remembrance can acknowledge this historical diversity without allowing it to overshadow the meaning of the event itself.

The Prophet's birth gave Rabi Al-Awwal its enduring emotional resonance. Muslims see his mission as a divine mercy that renewed belief in one God and established a comprehensive moral vision founded on truthfulness, justice, compassion and responsibility. The Qur'an describes him as 'a mercy to the worlds' (21:107), a description reflected in his care for the poor and orphaned, his fairness in public dealings, his patience during persecution and his forgiveness when he held power.

Rabi Al-Awwal also marks one of the great turning points in Islamic history: the completion of the Hijrah from Makkah to Madinah in 622 CE. After years of hostility and persecution, the Prophet and Abu Bakr undertook a carefully planned migration. Their journey ended first at Quba and then in Madinah during this month. The Hijrah later became the reference point for the Islamic era, although the Hijri year begins with Muharram.

The association with Hijrah gives the month a meaning that extends beyond

“ The Prophet's birth, migration and passing-all in Rabi Al-Awwal give an unusual historical completeness ”

commemoration. Migration transformed a persecuted group into an organized community. At Quba, a mosque was established as a place of worship and fellowship. In Madinah, the Prophet helped build institutions, strengthened the bond between the emigrants and their hosts, and developed a society in which faith was joined with social duty. Rabi Al-Awwal therefore recalls not only a journey between two cities, but a movement from vulnerability to responsibility and from belief held privately to values expressed collectively.

The month also carries a note of sorrow. The Prophet passed away in Madinah in Rabi Al-Awwal, 11 AH (632 CE), on a Monday. The 12th is the date most commonly cited in traditional accounts, although scholars have discussed other dates. His death deeply shocked the Companions, but it also demonstrated the maturity demanded of the new community. Abu Bakr reminded them that the Prophet was mortal, while Allah is Ever-Living. The Messenger had departed, but the Qur'an, his example and

the community's obligations remained.

These three associations - birth, migration and passing - give Rabi Al-Awwal an unusual historical completeness. Birth represents the arrival of guidance; Hijrah represents the translation of belief into community and civilization; and the Prophet's passing represents the transfer of responsibility to succeeding generations. Together, they turn the month into a period of memory, gratitude and moral accountability.

Muslims around the world observe Rabi Al-Awwal in different cultural forms. Many communities organize Qur'an recitations, Seerah lectures, devotional poetry, charitable activities and gatherings in which peace and blessings are invoked upon the Prophet. Others mark the month through quieter study, worship and reflection. The forms differ across societies, but love for the Prophet and respect for his authentic teachings remain the common ground. A sensitive account of the month should recognize these differences without turning an occasion of remembrance into a source of division.

Rabi Al-Awwal is also an opportunity to bring the study of the Seerah into everyday life. Learning about the Prophet should not stop at a sequence of dates. His conduct offers practical guidance on family relations, neighbourly duties, honest trade, leadership, reconciliation and care for the vulnerable. The month

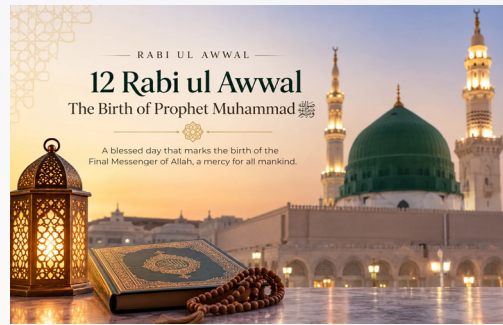
becomes more meaningful when admiration produces imitation: when praise is accompanied by truthfulness, charity, patience, humility and service.

This message is particularly relevant in an age marked by conflict, social fragmentation and indifference to suffering. The Prophet's model shows that strength can coexist with mercy, disagreement with dignity and leadership with humility. Remembering him should inspire Muslims to repair relationships, assist those in need, resist injustice and contribute positively to the societies in which they live.

Rabi Al-Awwal, then, is more than an anniversary on the calendar. It is a month that gathers the central movements of the Prophetic story into one frame: the coming of the Messenger, the founding of a community and the continuation of his trust after his death. Its deepest observance lies in renewing the values he embodied and carrying them forward with wisdom, compassion and integrity.

Major Events Associated with Rabi Al-Awwal

Events that took place in this month are central to Islamic faith and history, shaping the beliefs, practices, and identity of Muslims worldwide. Because early historical reports sometimes differ on exact dates, the chronology below states only the month where a particular day is not firmly established.



Event	Historical Significance
The Prophet's Birth	Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in Makkah in the Year of the Elephant, generally placed around 570-571 CE. His birth on a Monday is widely accepted; the exact date within Rabi Al-Awwal is disputed, though the 12th is the best-known traditional date.
The Migration	In 1 AH/622 CE, the Prophet and Abu Bakr migrated to Makkah. They reached Quba and then entered Madinah during Rabi Al-Awwal, beginning a decisive new chapter in Islamic history. It marked the beginning of the Islamic year (however, the first year of the Islamic Calendar is still Muharram).
Construction of Masjid Quba:	The Prophet laid the foundations for Masjid Al- Quba. (12 Rabi Al-Awwal)
Daughter's Marriage:	The Prophet's daughter Sayyida Umm Kulthum was married to Sayyiduna Uthman. (3AH)
Expeditions:	The Expedition of Ghatfan (3 AH); Expedition of Banu Nadir (4 AH); The Expedition of Dumat Al-Jandal. (5 AH)
Son's Death:	The Prophet's son, Ibrahim passed away (10 Rabi Al-Awwal, 10 AH).
The Prophet's Death	The Prophet died in Madinah on a Monday in Rabi Al-Awwal, 11 AH/632 CE. The 12th is the date most commonly cited, although scholars have also discussed other dates
The Prophet's Death:	On Monday, 12th Rabi Al-Awwal/12th June 632 CE, the Prophet of Allah passed away at the age of 63 years.



Email: info@al-ummah.org

Website: www.al-ummah.org